

# The Gospel Witness

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

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 14, No. 35

TORONTO, JANUARY 9, 1936

Whole Number 712

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

A Sermon by Rev. E. E. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 5th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;  
"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus,  
which delivered us from the wrath to come."—I Thess. 1:9, 10.

God said to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

It is probable that when the Apostle Paul sent for the elders of Ephesus, and took them to record that he was clear of the blood of all men, for he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God, he alluded to God's word to Ezekiel; and he certainly regarded himself as equally responsible with Ezekiel to declare the whole round counsel of God, including promises of blessing, and warnings of wrath.

It would be very depressing to dwell, constantly, upon judgment to come, and the state of lost men; but we should deceive ourselves if we were to blind our eyes to the fact that great numbers of men never will accept Christ. They will come and go "from the place of the holy", and they will be "forgotten in the city where they had so done". They will go out into the darkness, into the night, into eternal perdition. This is an issue of life and death. Here is eternal wrath, eternal judgment; and that is that from which Christ's sacrifice and His mediatorial work have saved us. That is the apostolic conception: "Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come".

I really wish that we were not compelled to think of the awful doom of the wicked, of the eternity of God's judgment. Would it not be a joyful thing if we could contemplate the entire world as being won to the knowledge of God? Would it not be a joy to think that of all

the people who come to this place and hear, and go out again,—that everyone, at some time, would come to Christ? But we should be deceiving ourselves if we were to suppose any such thing. This gospel is "the savour of death unto death", or "the savour of life unto life", to them that hear it. It ever has been that some believe, and some believe not. Some are redeemed, and others trample upon the precious blood, and go out into eternal night—and that notwithstanding the unbelief with regard to eternal judgment which is abroad in the world to-day. That is a strange obsession which blots the thought of judgment from the minds of men. The heathen believe it. Go to India, go to China, go to Africa, go to the Islands of the Sea, and men everywhere are seeking to expiate their guilt. In past days they have sacrificed their children, and perhaps are doing so to-day. They punish themselves; they fast; they inflict all kinds of tortures upon themselves in the hope of at last getting rid of their sins. They know they have sinned; even conscience tells them that they must meet that sin again somewhere, somehow. And their lives are largely given up to an effort to rid themselves of the burden that breaks them. Only a few years ago I read of a great number of people in the Philippine Islands—if you please—who came together and had a regular celebration of self-thrashing. And after they had thrashed themselves thoroughly, they put themselves into the hands of a priest to be further tortured.

But why go further? We know it is true the world over, except in so-called Christian lands—where some who may have had some knowledge of God have even denied the Lord that bought them, and have invented the theory of evolution, which means that men are coming up instead of having gone down, and that, therefore,

there is no sin, no judgment, no hell, and therefore no need of a Saviour. But the word of God holds, notwithstanding human unbelief. With the swiftly passing years, the world hastens ever nearer the Great White Throne. Men scoff at it; they laugh at it. They talk about Doomsday. Doomsday will come all too soon for everyone out of Christ.

Now I want to speak about the Christ Who has redeemed us, but first I would paint the background of the picture.

### I.

#### ETERNAL JUDGMENT—"THE WRATH TO COME."

When does it begin? I think in part, in a certain sense, it begins now. Some people forget that. They are putting all judgment forward until the judgment day, and they forget that as there is a future wrath, so there is a present wrath: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." He is the Judge of the nations to-day! He is the Judge of individual men to-day! God is judging in Toronto every day, judging in the lives of men. But there is coming a universal and final judgment, and I want to call your attention to several facts with reference to that event to which the whole creation moves.

First: *the day is set*: God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." The prisoner waiting in the cell is apprehensive as to the day set for his trial. He is afraid of judgment. He employs counsel. He tries, even though guilty, to make himself appear innocent. He spends money. He gets his friends to intervene. He does everything he can to stay judgment upon himself when he is charged. But men in their blindness, are going on to eternal judgment, without the slightest care as to whether they will be damned or not. And that is true of you, if you are out of Christ. You do not care as much for your own soul as Jesus did nineteen hundred years ago when He died for human sin. But the day is set—set—set! God has set a day "in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."

Again—*the Judge is Jesus Christ*. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son". There are those who while rightly regarding Christ's sufferings and death as expiating human guilt and warding off the wrath of God, fail to appreciate that as God is one, the Son's attitude towards sin is precisely the same as that of the Father. They overlook some of the plainest statements of the word of God. We read in the Book of "the wrath of the Lamb". The day is coming when Jesus shall come in His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and when He shall so come, He Who said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do", will then pronounce the everlasting doom upon the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And these words fell from the lips of love: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Now unsaved one, if you can extract hope for your unregenerate state out of that, try it. If you have any hope of heaven out of Christ, then it is contrary to everything that is written in the Book. It is not there. There is nothing for you out of Christ, but unending wrath.

And it is said here that the Father will judge the world in righteousness "by that man whom he hath or-

dered". Not only will He be the Judge, but also He is to be the *standard of righteousness* by which men will be judged—and, indeed, they will be judged according to their relationship to Him, the Judge. There is coming a day when those who heard the Saviour in Jerusalem will cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us . . . We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." But He shall say: "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Here it is in a word: The perfect life of Jesus Christ is the exemplification of the law. The law drew the outline of a perfect life upon the background of a world's sin. Jesus came and stood before the picture, filling the outline to its utmost detail and making the picture to glow with the holiness and glory of God. Sin is the transgression of the law. But the law is spiritual and is a transcript of the heart of the Eternal. Sin, therefore, is not only positive: it is also negative. All unrighteousness is sin. Sin is not the breaking of a merely abstract law: Sin is the failure to live up to the perfect life of Jesus Christ. In the measure in which we fail to attain to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, in that measure are we sinners. And some will say, "But what, then, is the enormity of our iniquities!" Exactly. That is what the Scripture says. It is not what we do; it is not what we say; it is not what we think: sin is all that, but it is more: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and *intents* of the heart." "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". So far from loving the Lord with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, we have hated God. The carnal mind is not only at enmity: it "is enmity" against God.

There was a case, they tell us, of a man languishing in jail waiting for the day of trial. There came to him a stranger, advising him, begging him, to acknowledge his guilt, and offering to intervene in such a case to secure his pardon. But the man resolutely refused to confess, and rebuffed the stranger, who, nevertheless, came again and again. At last the day of trial came, and the prisoner was brought into the dock. He looked up, and there he recognized in the person of the judge, the friend who had come to him in the prison house and had begged him to sue for mercy. But the judge was changed now. His office was changed. With face stern and set he listened to the evidence, and at last, when the man was found guilty, pronounced upon him the sentence of death.

An illustration? Yes; but it is an illustration of that which is recorded in the Scriptures. The same Saviour Who died for human sin, Who stands at the sinner's heart's door meekly beseeching, tenderly entreating, saying: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"—the same Saviour, because of His righteousness, because of His hatred of sin, will pronounce the sentence which shall waft the sinner to his eternal doom! Remember: "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to" this gospel. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." It will be a terrible day when all

the sins of humanity are blazed out before heaven, before angels and devils, and men; and men who have concealed their iniquity here will find that they will have to acknowledge it there, and will have to confess to God—when it is too late. They would not confess here, in order that they might be saved, but God has sworn that every tongue shall confess to Him. You will either acknowledge your transgressions and be absolved by the atoning and cleansing of His precious blood; or, in the gathering gloom of the nether world, the power of God will come upon you, and you will be compelled to bow and to acknowledge your sin to God. Moreover, you will be compelled to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord—the thing you will not do now in order to be saved. And this includes all men: it is as all-inclusive as salvation. The *living* are to be judged. But John says: "I saw the *dead*, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

You cannot escape it. People commit suicide sometimes in their despair. They go to meet God the sooner. Others plunge into deeper sin in order to forget—but they will go to perdition the more swiftly. Sometimes men seek to drown their sins and their sorrows in drink, yet such a course does but hasten their condemnation. "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." Men say that God is slack concerning His promises. Peter says: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

And so judgment, while it is set, seems to be stayed. God is waiting, giving men an opportunity to repent and to have eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. But let not men misunderstand. God is patient. He is waiting; but judgment is absolutely sure: "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." In cases of crime in this country and in other countries there is some hope even after a case has gone to trial. There may be, perhaps, some error as to the evidence, and the case may be thrown out on some technicality. The jury may fail to agree, and if another trial is held they may fail to agree a second time. In some way or other the man, even though the case has gone on to judgment, finds a way of escape. He retains a clever criminal lawyer and the lawyer makes one move after another, and so dodges judgment. He is able to show a mistrial, and the judge is obliged to agree. There may be a retrial. And then there may be an appeal to a higher court, and the higher court, reviewing the case, may reverse the judgment of the lower court. It seems most certain that some really guilty men escape condemnation by some of these means. But there is one Great Assize from which there is no appeal. There is one great judgment day in which justice cannot err, where no power can move for a retrial. Sentence is final; it is eternal; and that is described in the scripture as "eternal judgment". It cannot be altered through the reaches of eternity—no clemency, no blood to plead, no Daysman, no Mediator,

no possible way of escaping the wrath to come, once the Judge of all the earth pronounces final and eternal sentence.

And it will be "*wrath to come*." I remind you that again and again in God's Holy Word judgment is spoken of as being absolutely without end. "For ever and ever" is one phrase in the New Testament which in six cases speaks of the eternity of the Being of God. In one case it speaks of the eternal happiness of the blessed, and in other cases of the everlasting doom of the wicked. Can it have one meaning with reference to God, and another meaning when it refers to the happiness of the redeemed or to the duration of the punishment of the lost? No: it means exactly what it says: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." The doom of the finally impenitent is as eternal as the being of God.

I have stood by the seashore, and have watched the waves pour in, and I have reflected that yesterday, and the day before, and this time last year, and the year before, and back through the generations, that sea has broken upon that shore. And I have said: "Will the last wave ever come?" Yes, it will, for the Word speaks of a time when there shall be no more sea. But when millions of millions of years of waves of wrath have broken upon the souls of the damned, it will still be "wrath to come". Eternal judgment is the merit of eternal sin. And those who resist Christ put themselves eternally beyond the possibility of mercy.

Someone says: "That outrages reason!" Nay; this outrages reason, that God should send His Son to this world and should clothe Him in our humanity; that He should bear in His own body our sins upon the tree; that He should send His Spirit, and send His messengers throughout the world for generations, and men in millions should hear and heed and turn to God, and that others who not only hear the Gospel, but see the Gospel and the life of Jesus manifest in the lives of men, should yet reject His love, trample upon His blood, do despite to the Spirit of grace—that is that which outrages reason. That is that which causes angels to wonder at the forbearance of God. If any man under heaven—I say it reverently—were in the place of God for twenty-four hours, this world would immediately become a smoking ruin.

## II.

BUT ETERNAL SALVATION FROM ETERNAL CONDEMNATION MAY BE SECURED THROUGH "JESUS, WHICH DELIVERED US FROM THE WRATH TO COME". God is "plenteous in mercy"; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." But there is a way out—if your name is written there, if you have repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen you folks who have insurance, do you read your insurance policy, those things that are written in fine type, you know, to discourage you from reading? Some of you know enough to read your insurance policy in spite of that discouragement. And if you do that, you ought to be interested, surely, in the things that belong to your peace, and you ought to be ready to read something that may seem dry, and may seem a little difficult to understand at first.

But surely you ought to address yourself to it. You ought to read and study it. You ought to know just what God has to say as to how you may be delivered from the wrath to come.

Notice this: "Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come". Oh, I am glad God has made it so simple. It is all wrapped up in Him "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He it was Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree; He it was Who rose triumphant over the grave, and went into the glory, and there makes intercession for us. He it is Who is coming again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And it is by His power the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Yes; it is by His *voice* that the dead shall be raised: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

You see, it means coming to Christ. It means accepting Him. It means giving yourself to Him. It means identifying yourself with Him. It means to be one with Him. But specifically, and in order that you may not misunderstand, let me quote a few of the plain texts of Scripture that you may get hold of it for yourself. Listen to this, if you never heard it before: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." It is very simple, is it not? But that will be a very precious text in the light of the judgment and the wrath to come. Oh, to have believed on Him then will be worth while! Let me read again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath"—I have said this before, but lest there be someone here who has not "got it", and in order to help them, let me say it again: Moody used to say that HATH spells "got it". It is in the present tense: we have it now—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." No fear of death. No fear of judgment. No fear of eternal wrath to those who are in Christ Jesus: "Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come".

Let me read on: "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Of course it is to be understood in a spiritual sense. His body was broken, His blood was shed; He is made available for us. We repent and believe in Him. We have

spiritual fellowship with Him. We feed upon Him in a spiritual way, and that clearly is what He means by eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

Now just two more verses: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." No condemnation of heart, no condemnation of conscience, no condemnation before heaven's court now! No condemnation before God the Father, no condemnation before God the Son, no condemnation in the Holy Ghost! No charge of a broken law against us. The indictment is quashed. The slate is clean. Sin is put away from us. No condemnation here or hereafter!

There it is. Simple? Yes; simple enough. Just plain brown bread-and-butter gospel, just a simple statement. And if I have brought it before you in its utter simplicity it is because the utter simplicity of the gospel is the thing that has to do with the eternal life of the saved, and the eternal condemnation of the lost who reject God. And the day is coming when you will be glad you had people speak plainly in this place throughout the past years.

Oh, may God give to you that which He has given to so many of us, to repent and believe on Him, and find peace, find redemption through the precious blood! You may have Him now. There is enough for you, enough for all, enough for evermore. He will not cast you out: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Someone says: "But you don't know my black heart!" He says: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "But if you knew my backsliding, the light I have had, and how I have failed and wandered from God!" But He says: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Says someone else: "If you knew what a profligate I have been, how far I have gone away from God, you would not offer salvation to me." But we are authorized to offer this salvation to all: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

It does not matter what your sin, how far you have gone, if you will but come back, if you will only come to Him, you will find redemption through the blood.

May I read to you some verses of a hymn which is very dear to me:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

"There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in heaven;  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgment given.

"For the love of God is broader  
Than the measures of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

"There is plentiful redemption  
In the blood that has been shed;  
There is joy for all the members  
In the sorrows of the Head."

Oh, unsaved men and women, will you flee from the wrath to come, and take hold of the refuge set before you in the gospel, "even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come".

### ABOUT MILK AND STRONG MEAT

The Holy Ghost through Peter admonishes "new born babes" to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". In the first epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul, by inspiration, recognizes the same principle when he speaks of "such as are carnal", and whom he had been obliged to feed with milk because they were unable to bear strong meat. Again, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews laments that those to whom he wrote, by reason of the time, "ought to be teachers", yet had made such little progress in the divine life that it was necessary they be taught again the first principles of the gospel of Christ.

From these scriptures we learn the Christian life should be one of constant growth and development, of enlarging capacities, and increasing spiritual desire.

We have recently been impressed with the superficiality of modern religious life, even among Evangelicals. Being shut in for a while, we have had opportunity to listen occasionally to addresses broadcast from certain evangelical churches, and have been amazed that any considerable number of professing Christians could be satisfied with the skim milk—for it was not even "the sincere milk of the word"—served up to them. In song and in sermon it was assumed apparently that souls could be nourished on a diet of watered milk. If it was without poison, it was almost equally devoid of nutritious elements.

We have sometimes seen certain kinds of pies—so they are called in this country—the tops of which were covered with some kind of white froth (we believe it is made from the white of an egg). Our understanding is that this froth, or whatever it is called, is put on for ornamentation; and perhaps it may serve some such purpose. But usually there is some kind of pie under the froth, so that if you do not like the froth you may put it aside, and get out what is underneath it. But some modern sermons we have heard suggest a plate covered with froth, with not even a pie under it.

Surely stalwart Christian characters cannot be developed on such pabulum! Strong men can be produced only by strong meat. We enter a plea for doctrinal preaching. That does not mean dry-as-dust, biblical doctrine. We are of the opinion that if some of our dispensational friends were to turn their thought to the business of systematizing their theological thinking, and were to deal with the great verities of the faith, laying a foundation for such faith as is indispensable to salvation, they would be far more usefully employed than in turning the thought of their people to profitless speculations about the future. We may well delight ourselves in the prospect of faith, and rejoice in the certainty of the Lord's coming again; but, as Spurgeon once said, the best preparation for the second coming of Christ is to preach the first coming with all one's might.

So then let us get back to a consideration of the great themes of the Bible. We cannot have great preaching without great subjects, and great subjects require sermons, not sermonettes, for their adequate treatment. The being of God; His majesty; His sovereignty, and all that grows out of that, should be offered as subjects of meditation; the Deity of Christ; the personality of the Holy Ghost; the doctrine of the Trinity, and its implications. These subjects are as interesting as they are important. The doctrine of man's natural state, his utter helplessness; and, growing out of that, as its inevit-

able corollary, the doctrine of grace—salvation by grace alone; and, wrapped up with that, too, the election of grace; justification by faith; the eternal security of the believer; and, in addition to all this, the plain principles and precepts of the gospel, given for the regulation of daily life, and for the upbuilding of Christian character.

These are the subjects that should engage our thought. We must, of course, remember the babes. We must preach the gospel in simple fashion, and deal with the elementary things of the Christian life in due proportion. But surely a church should be something more than a nursery. It should be a nursery, of course, where spiritual babes can be instructed in the ways of God. But it ought to be a place where preachers can address their hearers as John did his readers, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you."

### THE EXPLOITATION OF CRIMINAL EXPERIENCES

For some time a certain church in Toronto has been advertising a woman preacher as an "ex-convict". (This Editor does not believe in women preachers of any sort, we frankly admit, but that is beside the point of this discussion.) We believe the grace of God can save the greatest of sinners, whether man or woman; and from whatsoever "excess of riot" a man or woman may have run, the grace of God can bring him or her back—from the utmost limits of the far country—and restore such an one to the fulness and felicity of the Father's house.

If a woman has been led into such outrageous sin as to come under the condemnation of the law of the land in which she lives, if she has belonged to the criminal class, and is really saved by the grace of God, we take second place to none in our rejoicing in such a triumph of the grace of God. But when a criminal career is exploited, is used to advertise either a man or woman, we feel confident it is a grief to the Spirit of God. If one is thus saved from some shocking sin, such an one must have been brought to true repentance; and when one is really penitent, he is led to cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He abhors the sin that necessitated the death of Christ in order that he might be redeemed, reckons that the time past was sufficient for him to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, and recognizes that he has no fruit now in those things of which, by the illumination of the Spirit of God, he has been led to be "ashamed".

But here in Toronto week after week a woman's criminal record has been exploited in the advertisements. Surely it is an appeal to all that is basest in human nature, publicly to announce that a woman who presumes from the public platform to preach the glorious gospel of the grace of God is going to tell of her "prison experiences". We do not believe that any movie show in the land could be productive of more harm than such a so-called religious service.

As to the character of the addresses delivered, we have nothing to say, for we have not heard them. We have heard of them, but hearsay evidence has little value as proof. We discuss only the practice of exploiting such experiences in the interests of a crowd.

Psychologically, we have the same objection to this sort of thing as we have to the Oxford Group's practice of "sharing". We used to have a brother in Jarvis Street Church who frequently in his prayers referred to those

who "rolled iniquity under their tongues as a sweet morsel". Surely a really saved man—or woman—would want to spit it out, and have his mouth cleansed of the foul thing which he had entertained.

Sometimes we are led to wonder whether some forms of so-called evangelical religion are not just as dishonouring to God as Modernism itself. By what an immeasurable distance are these things removed from the evangelism of a D. L. Moody, a Spurgeon, a Whitfield, or a Wesley! How can we hope for revival to result from such religious piffle? Once in conversation with the late Dr. James M. Gray, we referred to someone as a "spiritual" man; upon which Dr. Gray remarked, "I hope he is a biblically spiritual man." We do well to recognize that many false prophets are gone out into the world, and we have reason to "try the spirits whether they be of God". We must not assume that they are safe spiritual guides who hold the Bible aloft and declare they believe it "from cover to cover". That is a very cheap sort of orthodoxy. Let us try everything by biblical standards; and, in the light of God's Word, "prove all things; hold fast that which is good".

### OUR HUNGRY CHILDREN

It must be a great comfort to parents who have an assured income sufficient to provide for all the requirements of their family, to know that the children will never be in want. We have often wished we had money enough to be relieved of all anxiety respecting the Seminary Fund. But perhaps if we had it might make us presumptuous, and minister to a sense of self-sufficiency. As it is, we are paupers, and must remind our friends of the continuing needs of this really great work.

With every passing day our estimate of the value of the Seminary and its work increases. We believe we are laying foundations upon which succeeding generations will build.

Our fiscal year will end March 31st. Our chief anxiety respecting the Seminary has ever been a financial one. This Editor is supposed to be off duty, but he has been unable to go away, and so is near enough to be constantly enquiring respecting the needs of the Seminary and other interests. It is indeed no small part of our burden, and it would lighten the load wonderfully if our Seminary friends would not wait until near the end of the financial year, but immediately send us in their contribution. Once more we say that, while the smallest gift will be most gratefully received, there is room for substantial donations. Please send us help as soon as you can.

#### The Gospel Witness

Our other special care is THE WITNESS FUND. We usually appeal to all our GOSPEL WITNESS family toward the end of the year, as we shall have to do this year; but mean-

while if our regular readers who get blessing from these pages, and who recognize in the weekly issue of the gospel message through its pages a great missionary enterprise, would immediately send us their contributions, it would make us feel far more comfortable.

During the years of the depression, many religious papers have ceased publication. We are grateful to the God of all grace Who, through His interested people, has enabled us to continue the issue of this paper. Once more we say, "Having therefore obtained help of God, we continue unto this day." But it is ever God's way to use His people as channels of blessing. Therefore we make our appeal to the whole GOSPEL WITNESS family, to begin at once to help us to meet the end of the year with balanced books. Meanwhile we express to all our great gratitude for their "fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now".

### NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

#### Saanichton, B.C.

Word has come from Rev. E. V. Apps, pastor of the Saanichton Baptist Church, that God is working in that district. Two have recently professed conversion, and last Sunday evening without invitation, at the close of the address, a Christian came forward broken down because of backsliding. We pray that he is only the first.

#### Pastors' and People's Conference

The Hamilton and Brantford Pastors' and People's Conference will be held in the Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church, Brantford, on Tuesday, January 14th, 1936. The afternoon session will open at 2.30, and the speakers will be Rev. E. E. Shields, and Rev. R. LeDrew.

The evening address will be given by Rev. J. F. Dempster of Niagara Falls. A Quartette from the Six Nations' Reserve will sing at both services.

A hearty invitation is extended to all to attend these meetings. Bring your own lunch basket with you. Tea and coffee will be provided by the Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church.

#### Cent-a-Meal Boxes

It is time that the Cent-a-Meal Boxes now out should be gathered in and emptied and the money sent on to the Union Office. We have a number of these left, and shall be glad to forward them to anyone upon request.

#### Maps of Liberia

May we urge all our Churches to procure one of these splendid Maps prepared by Rev. Gordon D. Mellish. They will help the members to understand just where our Missionaries are working, and show them the opportunities that await us. The price is one dollar postpaid.

#### Mt. Pleasant, Toronto

Evangelistic Services will be held in the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, from January 14th to 26th. The Evangelist will be Rev. J. M. Stowell, of Gary, Indiana. Mr. Harry Bundy of Buffalo will be the soloist. Friends in Toronto are requested to keep these meetings in mind, and a hearty invitation is extended to all to attend.

#### A Reminder

We should like once more to remind the Church Treasurers, and the Treasurers of the various organizations in the Churches, that all cheques and money orders should now be made payable to the Union of Regular Baptist Churches, 337 Jarvis Street. Thank you!

Also, we remind the Churches who have not had a visit from Rev. and Mrs. E. Hancox, and Miss F. Stacey, that they should write us at once for an evening, before January 31st.

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 11

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, Editor

Lesson 4 First Quarter January 26th, 1936

### THE CALL OF ISAIAH

Lesson Text: Isaiah, chapter 6.

**Golden Text:** "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."—Isaiah 6:5.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 6:1-13.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:** Monday—2 Kings 26:15-23; Tuesday—Rev. 4:1-11; Wednesday—Lev. 16:11-19; Thursday—Jer. 1:13-19; Friday—Acts 9:1-9; Saturday—Acts 28:23-31.

#### THE VISION OF THE LORD (vs. 1-4)

In this lesson we come to a most interesting and significant part of Isaiah's prophecy, and a most important event in the prophet's history. He informs us at the beginning of his writing that he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah; but the experience recorded here occurred in the year of the death of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:7). Isaiah therefore must have been at least a short time in the service of the Lord before receiving this vision which gave direction respecting the nature of the work which he was called upon to perform. In the whole incident there is a remarkable explanation of the way in which God calls men into His service in all ages. There is first the revelation of Himself to the individual, followed by conviction, confession, and cleansing of sin; leading to the call to service, the obedient response thereto, and the direction concerning the service.

In the vision, Isaiah "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple"; and attended by angelic beings. These cried one to another words indicative of the holiness and glory of the Lord; the posts of the door moved at the cry, and the house, or temple, was filled with smoke. Several attributes of God are manifest in this description: majesty, in relation to the throne; imminence, or nearness, respecting His presence in the temple; and holiness, indicated in the cry of the seraphim. God is King over the whole earth (Ps. 59:13); He is near unto every one of us (Acts 17:22-28); and He is the absolutely Holy One (Ezek. 39:7). Note further the attitude of the seraphim, indicating reverence and readiness for service; the extent of the divine glory; and the awe manifest in the movement of the posts. The scene was one never to be forgotten, and its effect upon Isaiah was of a lasting character. And in these days when God reveals Himself to man, though not in the same way, there is a likewise permanent effect. Observe the way in which God has called other men into His service, as Abraham (Gen. 12:1-5); Moses (Ex. 3:1-10); Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1-21); Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-10); Amos (Amos 7:14, 15); Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Mark 1:16-20) and Paul (Acts 9:1-7).

#### THE CONFESSION OF ISAIAH (v. 5)

After the vision of the Lord there comes the confession of sin. It isn't likely that Isaiah was a great sinner in the world's estimation—the opposite was probably the opinion generally held. Yet the prophet confesses to being "a man of unclean lips". In the presence of God all man's righteousnesses are but as filthy rags (Is. 64:6), because they are then seen in the light of absolute purity and righteousness. Isaiah therefore saw himself as he really was in the sight of God. It is impossible for one man to convict another one of sin. He may intellectually convince him that he is wrong respecting a certain matter, but he cannot produce within him the realization of his entire and utter sinfulness in the Lord's sight. This, God alone can do. This implies that in preaching and in personal work we are dependent on God to do His own work. We therefore require to be in touch with Him. Note Peter's congregation on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37), and the work of the Holy Spirit at the present time (John 16:7-11). Observe also the nature of sin as God sees it, and the necessity for conviction of sin and repentance

(Acts 17:30, 31). It may further be noted that Isaiah's confession was real, sincere, deep, instant, manifested a desire for cleansing from sin, and arose from a work of God on his heart.

#### THE CLEANSING OF ISAIAH (vs. 6, 7)

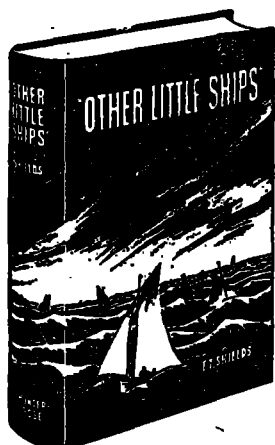
When sincere confession is made of sin, the cleansing of God is immediately experienced. He is found faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Several things are of significant interest respecting Isaiah's cleansing. It was accomplished through the instrumentality of the live coal from off the altar. This live coal was laid upon his mouth, and his iniquity was taken away and his sin purged. The altar was that of the burnt offering, whereon the sacrifices were offered to God (Lev. 4:1-10), reminding us of our Lord's offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, of which it was a type (Eph. 5:2). Forgiveness and cleansing are based on the sacrificial death of Christ (Eph. 1:7). Following His example, or obeying His teaching, however perfectly we may do either, or both, will never save us, or fit us for His presence. We must be washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5). God taught His creatures this, all through the Old Testament period, by the use of the offerings; and the New Testament is equally clear in teaching respecting Christ. The touching of Isaiah's lips was also significant when we remember that the prophet was to use these in the service of his Lord. They must therefore be clean, powerful, and consecrated. The saint of God in the present time is also enjoined to use his lips for his divine Master, and requires continual cleansing (Acts 1:8). The cleansing of God, it may be noted, is complete, satisfactory, entire, continuous, freely granted, and in great contrast with whitewash as seen on the Pharisee (Matt. 23:27). The cleansing of God washes white; whereas the whitewash only covers the dirt. The blessedness of the divine cleansing may be explained in its relation to comfort, safety, peace, joy, example, usefulness, and divine glory.

#### THE CALL AND RESPONSE OF ISAIAH (v. 8)

After divine cleansing, the ear is open to hear the call to service. Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" This question implies God's desire for human servants. It also indicates His need of these, and the necessity for each one professing to serve Him being sure of His call. Respecting the call, it may be noted that it is general in its nature, though specific in relation to its authority and representation. It was a call appealing for a voluntary response to go anywhere, and do anything at the Lord's command. To be in very truth His representative or ambassador. God's right to give such a call, and expect such service, must be recognized. Men in wartime give such complete trust and obedience to their governments; then surely the servants of God should not be behind them in faithfulness. Observe New Testament teaching concerning bond service and ambassadorship (Rom. 1:1; 2 Cor. 5:20). The response of Isaiah was instant and wholehearted: "Here am I; send me." He was going to a difficult service, which would cost him something, and show little return externally; yet he was willing to go. God's grace is sufficient for every experience (2 Cor. 12:9). Note the many who have laboured for the Lord in hard places, and have been sustained by divine power, as Noah (Gen. 6:1-8; 2 Pet. 2:5); Joseph (Gen. 50:20); Daniel (Dan. 1:8); and Paul (Acts 9:10).

#### THE DIVINE COMMAND (vs. 9-13)

The first part of the command is to go and tell the people something. This is also the duty of the servant of God in the present time (Matt. 28:18-20). The effect of the message is stated. The people were given over to judicial blindness and hardening. They had rejected the messages of God, and despised His messengers; and in such an unyielding condition, they would become more hardened as they heard the divine messages. Hosea proclaimed that the people being joined to their idols, they would be left alone by God (Hos. 4:17); and Paul applies the passage to the unbelieving Jews of his day (Acts 28:26-28). The people would not change their attitude, and so would be carried into captivity, it was predicted; yet a remnant would be spared, and such it is promised would be blessed of God. Note the danger of rejecting the call of God. How does God call men in these days, and how may we be sure of His call?



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