

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

A Sermon by Rev. E. E. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 13th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."—I John 5:13.

I am glad that the Premier of this country was not ashamed to say before the entire continent, the other day, that his supreme interest in life was that of being sure of his eternal salvation—or of obtaining eternal salvation. And if the Premier of the country is not ashamed to say that, you ought not to be ashamed of it, should you? Is it not the greatest thing in the world to know that you have eternal life?

There are two classes of people to whom this text will especially appeal this morning. There are those who are under conviction of sin; and there are also those who do believe on the Son of God, but do not know what their believing has done for them. It is implied in our text that there are some people who have gradually come into an understanding of the gospel, so that they believe on the Son of God, and yet, although believing, they do not know that by believing they have eternal life. And so John wrote this letter.

Do you know what an epistle is? It is just a letter. And our text is a kind of postscript. Sometimes postscripts are longer than the letter. Sometimes a postscript is the most important part of the letter. Sometimes a postscript calls attention to, and sums up, all that has gone before. Thus John says at the end of his letter: "These things have I written [that is, all the foregoing] unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

I wonder whether there is anyone here this morning under deep conviction of sin? Is there anyone here with whom God has been dealing, perhaps for weeks, months, or years; and to-day you are in this position: You know that you are a sinner? Perhaps you have even been

brought to the place where you are as willing to confess your own sin as to confess other people's sins. Perhaps you have come to this point, that you know that God would be just if He were to damn you because of sin. Perhaps you believe that. That is one of the things of which the Holy Spirit convinces men. He convinces the world of sin; of its real sinfulness: of the fact, the fault, the folly, the filth and the fruit of sin. And whatever sin may be to anyone else, this man, who is under the power of the Holy Ghost, knows that he is not right; he knows that he himself has sinned against God. He is an individual sinner. He is not only ready to acknowledge that "all we like sheep have gone astray", but he knows that he has turned to his own way, and he, himself, is a sinner. Are you there? Do you desire to have a proper appreciation of Christ; of His holiness, of His life, of His power? Have you a real desire to know God? Have you a real desire to be saved? If you have such a desire, it has been inwrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. No man, of himself can, by any possibility, come to know that he has sinned against God. The only righteous One upon earth now that Christ is gone, is the Holy Spirit. When Christ was going away, there was no possibility of man coming to a knowledge of sin and of righteousness until the Holy Ghost, the Holy One, came down. Christ said of Him: "He will reprove the world of sin". And if you are convinced of sin, make no doubt about it, it is a hopeful sign.

It may be that you have been writing bitter things against yourself. Perhaps you have said: "There is no hope for my soul." Perhaps you have said: "I am lost!" Thank God for that. If you think you are lost, you may be saved. Perhaps you are there. Be assured that it is

by the operation of the Holy Spirit that you have come to that knowledge.

There are some people who go on for years seeking, hoping, doubting, wondering. Sometimes they sing:

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His, or am I not."

That is not a very satisfactory state. Are you there, just hoping and wondering, but not sure? You do not *know* that you have eternal life. Well, it seems to me that this verse may suit both classes, and may, and I trust it will, bring you into some assurance of salvation this morning.

This passage shows that we may know we have eternal life. Is it not reasonable that we should know? Can it be imagined for a moment that God would have formulated a plan of salvation before the foundation of the world and sent His Son in the fulness of time, only to bring people into doubt and wonder, as to whether they were saved or not? Is it not reasonable that there should be a salvation which would give us absolute knowledge, absolute assurance of that salvation?

I remember a day years ago when my father, toward the end of a long and painful illness, and when the end of life was in view,—he could not speak very clearly, he could not get hold of the necessary words—and so he said, "Read me something about 'We Know'." It was your Pastor, I remember, who turned to the Word of God, and read some of these passages—the precise passages I do not know, but I think these would be amongst the passages which he read at that time:

"For *we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"*I know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

There is not much doubt about that, is there? Then let us turn to the Epistle of John, which says he wrote to those who believed in order that they might have greater assurance.

"*We know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

"Hereby *we know* that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: *that ye may know* that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Now the question naturally arises, *How may we know?* Just as briefly as possible I want to say three things, and I want all of you up there in the gallery to think about this.

There are three ways by which we may know that we have eternal life. Now listen, so that you can tell it to your parents when you get home. The first is, *by the testimony of the Word of God*. In the second place, *by the witness of the Spirit of God*; and in the third place, *by the testimony of the life within*. I shall speak very simply this morning that the boys and girls may understand.

I.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WORD OF GOD. John says: "These things have I written unto you that believe on

the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." That is to say: that particular epistle was written to those who believed in order to bring them to assurance of salvation; in order that they might come to know what they had; that they had eternal life because they believed in Christ.

The Word of God says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Suppose you want to be forgiven, and suppose the Word of God is true. Suppose that to be the case, and you really confess your sin to God; will He not forgive you? And will you not know that you are forgiven by the fact that God's Word says that those who confess shall be forgiven?

I wonder if I may tell this story again? I told it in this church two years ago, but I want to tell it to you children, and I want you to listen carefully so that you may tell it to your parents when you go home.

My father had a certain regulation in our house. He used to say to us: "If you would confess when you do wrong, I would not be angry, but it is this concealment that I cannot bear." And so he encouraged us to confess. I am afraid we did not do it very often. But I can remember an occasion when a certain ornament had come into the house, and had been put on a shelf, and we were told: "Now, you must not touch that." I suppose that word stirred us up, at any rate it stirred me up, and I was very curious to handle that thing and to know all about it. So I went to the shelf to see the ornament myself. I took hold of it, which was most unfortunate for me. I ought to have obeyed and let it alone. The minute after I had done so, I wished I had obeyed. But it had happened! So I picked up the pieces and went to my father's study. He was sitting in his study, writing. I went to his desk and laid the pieces of the ornament on the desk beside him, and told him about it. I had to fight with myself to do it. But I told him what had happened. He looked up, pushed the pieces of the ornament aside, and then went on writing. He did not say a word. I waited, rather hoping he would say something, but he did not utter a word, and so I went away.

Was I forgiven, do you think? What do you say, was I? Well, I will tell you the way I reasoned it out. I had told my father. Now he had said before I sinned that if we would confess he would forgive us. Well, I had now confessed. He did not repeat what he had said. I do not know that I felt forgiven, particularly; but he had said it, and so I just took him at his word. And as nothing else happened, I went away. But *I received the assurance of being forgiven by believing the word which my father had spoken before I had sinned*. Do you see the point? Do you see how simple it was? We are to rest upon the word of God!

Again, the Word says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." That is the word of God. Moody used to say H-A-T-H spells "got it"; not, shall be saved, but, is now saved. Do you see? "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." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not, God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." Christ said: "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." Do you believe on the Son of God? Then, do you not see that the Word says if you believe on Him, you have everlasting life?

II.

WE MAY KNOW WE ARE SAVED BY THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. If the Spirit convinces us that we are lost sinners, then just as soon as we have believed and are saved sinners, the Spirit being the Spirit of Truth, could not possibly continue to convince us that we are lost; but being the Spirit of truth, He must, in harmony with Himself, convince us that we are saved sinners. Do you see that? We have believed; we are saved; therefore the Spirit of God will no longer tell us we are lost, but will say: "You are saved now, when you are able to believe God's Word, and to rest in it." That is one way in which the Holy Spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

Let me quote again: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." When we have believed and so have become children of God, then the Holy Spirit tells us—bears witness with our spirit—that we are the children of God. The same Spirit that convinced us of sin, when we have believed, convinces us that we are saved. And as the Spirit uses the Word in convincing us of sin, so also does He use the Word in giving us assurance of salvation. The Spirit speaks through the Word, and the Word gives voice to the Spirit.

But listen also to this word: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Do you know what that is? That is the cry of the child, the cry of little children who cannot form words. It is just: "Papa, papa!" "Father, father!" The Spirit has come to us by which we cry, "Abba, Father", a spirit that goes out to God, a spirit that cries out to God. We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

I do not know whether "Little Sister" speaks through any of the Toronto papers, but in the Hamilton Spectator last week "Little Sister" said: "I couldn't remember the name of it, but when I told muvver to get me a piece of her great big cucumber, she knew I meant watermelon." That is the idea. Now we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit knows. He knew before we knew our need, and provided for it abundantly.

Then, do not overlook this verse: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also *after that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*"

III.

WE KNOW WE ARE SAVED BY THE TESTIMONY OF THE LIFE WITHIN. After all, as we go on following the Lord, and obeying His word, we do certain things at which we may marvel ourselves. We know that Christ has done these things in us: they are not of ourselves. Let me read to you a few passages of scripture:

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

This is a part, in one sense, of the witness of the Spirit.

But here is the argument: if we believe in Christ it is by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. No man has seen Jesus made Lord; no one saw Him rise from the dead—they saw him ascend into heaven. They did not see Him seated on the Father's right hand. And if that knowledge has come to us, it could only have come by the Spirit Who has knowledge of it. No man can say that Jesus Who died on Calvary was raised from the dead and has been seated at the Father's right hand—no man can know that save as the truth has been communicated to Him by the eternal Spirit, Who witnessed it. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Take another scripture:

"He that believeth on the Son of God *hath the witness in himself*: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

Then another step: we know we are saved because of the fellowship we have with God's people. Just as soon as anyone is converted he begins to seek the company of God's people, and to shun the company of the ungodly. If a man, having professed conversion, is afraid of the company of the saints, and goes on in the company of the ungodly, you can put it down—and you will see it in his life later—that his profession is a lie.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Again:

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

If we love God's people, it is an evidence of salvation.

Then again:

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

Have you got hold of that? Have you eternal life? You ought to know that you have eternal life if you have it. Some people think they are dead when they are alive. Is not that strange? And some people think they are alive when they are dead. I read only last week of a man who was knocked down by a motor car, and two doctors examined him and pronounced him dead. A nurse came along after he had been taken to some place on the way to the morgue, and she noticed some signs of life, and began to minister to him. In about an hour he was sitting up and taking a little nourishment. The nurse left him for a while, and went back about an hour later, and Mr. Man had gone. Don't let anyone tell you that you are dead if you are alive. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Don't you believe you are dead if you are alive.

I heard one time of a man who was very ill, and he closed his eyes. The doctor said: "He is dead." But the man spoke up and said, "I am not dead." His wife said, "Hush, John, the doctor knows best!" Don't allow any voice to tell you to the contrary, when the Word of God tells you you have eternal life.

Will you take His word for it? Will you take God's word for it, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

How many of you brought Bibles to church this morning? Will you raise them, please. (Practically the whole of the congregation held up their Bibles). Do you know why you brought your Bible? Because this Book lives. That is why men have baked it in bread to hide it from its enemies. And it has come forth to be the Bread of Life. It has been burned by its enemies, and from the flames it has come out to spread its fire over the world. It has been proscribed in Russia, and soon will be in Germany, but notwithstanding, the Word of God liveth and abideth, and you may trust your all to the Word of God that cannot lie. It is an indestructible word: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." You can bank your all on it.

One time there came to me a cheque—only once—for ten thousand, five hundred dollars. Only once! I had a hard time getting that, too. I had to go to Philadelphia and appear in court—not as a prisoner, or anything like that—as a witness in order to get that money. It was a legacy. After a lapse of a few months, in a very simple way that cheque was sent to me, with a simple note enclosed. We got the five hundred dollars as interest for waiting. I called our bank and said, "I have a cheque for ten thousand five hundred dollars, and I want to get it on its way to Europe right away. What shall I do about it? How soon can I get word back about it?" They said, "Oh, in regular course it would take several days. But, we could telegraph. What bank is it on?" I told him. He said, "Bring it over." I took it over to the bank, and he said to me, "It looks pretty good." But he got out a big book and looked up the bank and its rating. Then immediately he said: "That is all right. You can do anything you like with that cheque." I drew out that ten thousand five hundred dollars that very day and shot it over to Europe before the day was done. The bank accountant explained that the bank on which the cheque was drawn was so strong and of such standing that they (our bank) would not on any account have the other bank think that it was questioned for one moment.

Now, if men will say that about a mere human institution that may pass away, what ought they to say about this Word that cannot be destroyed? You cannot sink with such a prop. It bears the world and all things up. If you will this morning believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if you will yield to Him, if you will just believe, how can you be lost, if God's word be true?

NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

Messages have reached us from time to time from Dr. Shields, who is in Florida for a few weeks' rest, the more recent of which tell of definite improvement in health. Dr. Shields has asked us to convey his hearty greetings to THE GOSPEL WITNESS family, together with his warm thanks for the scores of enquiries that have been received at the WITNESS office since his illness. We expect Dr. Shields will be home to edit THE WITNESS two weeks from to-night—February 20th.

WHO WILL RESPOND?

Requests have reached us from two missionaries, one in Switzerland, and one in Africa, for copies of Dr. Shields' book, "Other Little Ships". Is there someone among our readers who will send us \$1.50 to enable us to meet one of the above requests—or \$3.00 for both?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Trekking in Liberia with Rev. G. D. Mellish

In the December News Letter from the Geah-bar Zondo station, Mr. Mellish tells of some of his experiences trekking, as follows:

"During the past month it has been a privilege to visit many towns in our immediate district, and also further out, on four short treks of half a day each, and one longer one of three days. The more we see of these people in their towns, the more it comes to us of their need of a Saviour, for now they have no loving Father such as you and I have. Trekking is not always easy under the burning heat of the tropical sun, and sometimes exposed to the torrential rains, but it is worth while, and we only wish that we could do it day after day. But there are other duties on the station which must be attended to as well.

"When planning our three days' trek, it was my purpose to visit Gedyu district, which was the home of one of our school boys. To reach there we would see some of the towns which we had passed through on our treks to the interior in our first term in Liberia. Then my boys told me of another path we could take to this place which they considered shorter than we had known before. I agreed to this because even if it was not shorter it was taking me through districts which I was anxious to visit anyway.

"We left the Mission at six a.m. on Tuesday morning, passing through four towns within two hours where we had held services a week or so previously, so we did not stop this time. From there on the path was new to me, and we had no idea how many towns we would find, or how far apart. At 9.25 Mano Hwie Town was reached. This is the home of some of our school boys, and so we received a welcome in this town, and about fifty people, including children, gathered to hear the Word of God. So interested were the people there that we spent a much longer time than we should have, so it was 10.15 before we were ready to go on. 'How far is the next town?' I asked our head boy. 'I don't know, I have never been there', he replied, 'but the boys ate before leaving the mission this morning, so are not hungry now. Let us go on.' 10.15 was just a little early to stop for chop (dinner), so I agreed to go on, hoping to see another town where we could eat within one hour. Now we found the path much harder going than before reaching Mano Hwie Town, it not having been cleaned probably for years. There was just a semblance of a trail leading through half grown bush, with plenty of undergrowth. Occasionally we came to an open place which marked the sight of an old town some years before, but there, the bush being low, the grass had completely overgrown the path, so we just waded through it. There are snakes in the grass, too, but we just have to trust the Lord, and we know He cares for us.

"After walking over an hour we reached the place where another path joins on, supposed to be a main path, and so we hoped it would be cleared of underbrush. In over an hour we had walked only two and a half miles, according to the road measuring wheel which we now carry with us. The boys wanted to rest for a few minutes, and I did not object to that because I was more than ready for it, though I had not been carrying any load, as they had. Some boys now said the next town was just as far as the town we had left, and others said it was farther, and it was now almost twelve o'clock, and I had eaten nothing but a banana since 5.30. After a rest we went on, soon finding the path had been cleaned after we entered the territory of another Clan Chief. But still there were many hills, streams, and very heavy bush with great tall trees. Now we were in what the Bassa people call, 'Elephant country'. The next town was over three and a half miles, and it was 1.15 when we arrived, so we were just about ready to eat. All along the path I had been taking compass sights in order to map the path, and this had taken some extra time, but it would have been late enough anyway.

"Walking all that long distance we would expect to find a large town with many people, but instead there were only 13 houses, about 45 people when they were all there, but even so it was a privilege to bring the gospel to that small group, many hearing it for the first time. There were thirteen altogether in our party, two small boys, seven Christian boys, three who have made some profession, but have not yet come out and out, and myself, and so we pray that the

testimony of that number may leave a definite impression on the people of Di Town, where we stopped.

Again we could tell you much about the afternoon's walk, but it will be sufficient to say that it was 5.45 when we reached the town we wanted to sleep in, which was over an hour later than we usually stop after a day's walk, but we wanted to reach Sada-kpede Town, where the Clan Chief lived. This was a splendid town as Bassa towns go, 32 houses, and everyone in the town welcomed us, as we had passed through there twice before on our two interior treks. Each time before it had been in the morning, and we had not stopped for a service, but now the people were happy that we had come to stay over night. The Chief himself had been called away on a palaver (court case). He returned about nine in the evening, after I had gone to bed, and left very early the next morning about the same case. He left word that we must stay in his town all day because he was returning, but we had to press on in order to reach other towns as well, as we had to be back to the mission on Thursday. About nine in the morning we met him on the path returning to his town, and now we have a very urgent invitation to come back to his town as soon as we can.

"From Sada-kpede Town our path took a different direction, first going for about a mile over a succession of swamps and hills, then through a wet swamp, across a small stream, up a hill, and then down again immediately. I just thought when I was going along that path about hitch-hikers at home. Well, we would like to have some of those 'hitch-hiking' pastors out here for a while. They might sit down by the side of the road for some time to wait for the next motor car to come along. And then I thought, too, of the parish which the Lord has given us here. Well, what we are trying to do now is just to conduct a 'house-to-house' canvas, or rather 'town-to-town'. It cannot be done in a few evenings, but will take many days, for as we go along these paths our boys tell us of town after town either to one side of the path or the other, which we have not time to visit now, but we pray that some day before too long that may be possible.

"Our first day's walk was almost 23 miles; the second day was 11½ miles, and the third was 13½ miles. The gospel was preached in every town in which we had not previously given forth the Word; thus many heard it for the first time. Now we are planning other similar treks in slightly different directions, where the gospel will be preached as well. When these are all mapped out it should give us a good idea of the territory within about 15 miles in each direction of Geah-bar Zondo, and then there are many places beyond that. So there is no shortage of work to do in this land. Not once did we see the people falling down on their knees and begging us to tell them the gospel story, for they know nothing of it; but they do want us to come back again. As we were leaving Sada-kpede Town a young man followed us out on the path and told us that he and his sister were the only ones in that town who had prayers there. In other words, he has heard something of the Word before. Previously, in visiting the towns close to Geah-bar Zondo we tried to leave with the people a Christian calendar with the Bible pictures (of a previous year), telling them the story of each picture. Now our supply is almost exhausted so that on this trek we could only leave one sheet off a large picture roll in a town. Picture rolls are large and cost considerable to send out here, but if we may be allowed to drop a word as to what we could use, your old Christian calendars for 1935 would not cost very much to slip in an envelope and send to us, that the Bible pictures may tell the gospel story to the people. The words mean nothing, for the people cannot read or write. These can be sent as printed matter, or at newspaper rate, and do not cost so much as sending a parcel.

"Christ said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.' Still we have a great territory, and a great opportunity before us here, and a great interior behind us all untouched. Next week some Mano men who have heard the Word on the Mission leave to go back to their own people. Pray with us that the seed which is the Word of God may be proclaimed and that many may receive the word ere it is too late."

Otterville

The Otterville Baptist Church is having an Evangelistic campaign with Rev. Rolfe Barnard of Texas as the special speaker. All friends within this district are cordially invited to attend the services, and the prayers of our readers are requested that many may come to know Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Mt. Pleasant Rd., Toronto

The Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church has just completed two weeks of evangelistic services under the ministry of Rev. J. M. Stowell, of Gary, Indiana. Mr. Harry Bundy of Detroit was the soloist on this occasion. Mr. Stowell preaches warm gospel messages that are simple and sane, with a definite aim to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Bundy is an exceptionally pleasing singer of the gospel, and all were delighted with his ministry. The results were most gratifying, between thirty and forty professing conversion, and in addition a number of backsliders were restored. The people enjoyed the ministry of these workers so much that they desire a return visit from them in the Fall. On Sunday, February 2nd, eight followed their Lord in baptism, five women and three men. Two more have applied for baptism, and it is hoped others will follow their example.

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews of books recently published by Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, England.

"CONCERNING PERPLEXITIES, PARADOXES AND PERILS IN THE SPIRIT-LED PATH", by Rev. A. S. Wilson of Auckland, New Zealand. 128 pages. Shilling Series, 35c in this country.

The purpose of this little book is "to call the attention of believers to the gravity and urgency of the Spirit-filled life" (p. 120). To "be filled with the Spirit" is both privilege and command. The writer adorns most every page with some apt quotation, drawing upon devotional writers from the mystic Tersteegen and Madame Guyon to Dr. A. J. Gordon and the Unknown Christian. Here is the victory of the Christian, here is "the rest of faith", to use the Keswick phrase.

"Jesus, I am resting, resting
In the joy of what *Thou* art."

It is not annihilation of the old Adam, "but the fact remains of sinful tendency and bias making us every moment dependent on a power not our own" (p. 54). "Let us say again *sin* is not dead in us, but we may take our God-appointed position as dead to sin, so that it shall not bear the deadly fruit of sins" (p. 67). Thus "the Irishman's definition of sanctification seems correct. Sanctification, like marriage, is an act done once for all and continued ever afterwards" (p. 57). May we "cease from striving to 'attain'" and be "willing to 'obtain' the only holiness with which we can see the Lord—His holiness" (p. 71).—W.G.B.

* * *

"OVERCOMING LIFE'S HANDICAPS", by K. M. McRitchie.

The author of these messages of comfort begins by laying down the principle that everyone is beset by handicaps and difficulties. While it is impossible to understand the philosophy of suffering, we may take advantage of the means of grace offered to us by our Lord. We must lay hold of the sure promises of the Word of God.

Each chapter deals with some passage of the Word where-in are set forth the principles for our guidance and encouragement in the time of sorrow and suffering.

The force of the argument is strengthened by the citation of the examples of many who have made life's handicaps the stepping-stones to glorious victory in Christ.

The author discusses this universal problem in an earnest and sympathetic spirit, setting forth the Scriptural grounds for consolation and victory. Life's handicaps may be overcome in the power of the Holy Spirit.—Dr. O. L. Clark.

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"STANDING BY THE CROSS", by J. T. Mawson, published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 174 pages, price 2/6.

In this new book are a dozen "reported addresses" from a gospel preacher and writer who, it is refreshing to find, really believes in the doctrines of grace. In a winning way the reader is shown that "invincible love and omnipotence dwell in Him; the tenderest heart and the strongest hand in the universe are His. How matchless He is! How worthy to be trusted! Supremely blest are all they who

(Continued on page 8)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 11

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 7 First Quarter February 16th, 1936

MESSIANIC RULE

Lesson Text: Isaiah, chapters 11 and 12.

Golden Text: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."—Isaiah 12:2.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 11:1-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Zech. 3:1-10; Tuesday—Zech. 14:16-21; Wednesday—Mal. 4:1-6; Thursday—Acts 10:34-43; Friday—Rom. 11:19-28; Saturday—Rev. 19:11-21.

THE BRANCH (11:1-9)

From a prophetic message respecting deliverance from the Assyrian domination indicated in the previous chapter, Isaiah passes on quite naturally to the time of the Messiah with its marvellous blessing for Jew and Gentile. The nation was shorn of most of its power and glory, and before the judgment of God was complete, it was intimated it would be like a stump of a tree with only the roots left. But the comforting message is given, that from this stump there would come forth a tender shoot which would be a blessing to the whole world. History gives evidence of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Our Lord, Who is referred to here as the shoot, was born of a poor family, into a nation which was dominated by the Roman Empire, both family and nation having lost their former external greatness. Such a wondrous event could only be of divine origin. Note other prophetic statements relating in a similar manner to the coming of Christ (Is. 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The miraculous preservation of the Jewish race is evident, together with the certainty of the fulfilment of the word of the Lord. With God, all things are possible (Matt. 19:26), even to the bringing of life out of death.

Several things are then stated respecting the life and work of Christ. First,—"the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him"—a reference no doubt to the third person of the Trinity, Who in the form of a dove rested upon Him at His baptism (Matt. 3:16), and led Him in the carrying on of His labours (Matt. 12:28). The characteristics of the Spirit are mentioned as: wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. A study of our Lord's life gives evidence of the manifestation of these characteristics. He was the perfect Teacher and Worker, perfect in attitude toward God the Father and man. He was, and is, the Omniscient One, knowing all things in time and eternity, and understanding the Father's will, and heart of man (John 2:25). He was, and is, the Omnipotent One, able to do all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11; John 1:1-3). We should therefore believe Him, trust Him, obey Him, serve Him, counsel with Him, and keep close to Him. Note our need of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and His gifts (I. Cor. 12:1-11). Also observe our Lord's wondrous life while on earth.

The work of Christ is thereafter indicated. First, in relation to His general attitude: "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord"—implying that He would take pleasure in the fear, or service, of the Lord. He delighted to do His Father's will (Ps. 40:8; John 4:34). This raises the question as to our pleasure in acting similarly. Do we delight to do God's will? Reference is then made to His work of judgment, and certain things are stated concerning this: He would not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither would He reprove after the hearing of His ears. Man's judgment is influenced by both of these senses, inasmuch as he looketh upon the outward appearance. God looks on the heart, therefore His judgment is just (I. Sam. 16:7). It is the state of the heart which concerns God (Rom. 10:9, 10), and not simply the external appearance. It follows then that He would judge the poor with righteousness, re-

prove or argue with equity on behalf of the meek, and smite the wicked with the word of His mouth. Note our Lord's attitude toward the poor (Matt. 11:5; Mark 12:42, 43), and the wicked (Matt. 23:13), and His present advocacy on behalf of His own (Heb. 7:25; I. John 2:1). He is the eminently Just One (v. 5; Acts 7:52). The result of the judgment (reign) of this Just One is depicted as peace, affecting even the lower creation: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." During these days we see the power of God manifest in the changing of lives. Wicked people become new creatures in Christ Jesus (II. Cor. 5:17), and peace comes to the restless heart (Rom. 5:1). But the complete fulfilment of the prediction is still future, and will take place under the Messianic rule (Zech. 14). Note the importance of spreading the knowledge of the Lord over the world in these days.

THE ENSIGN (11:10-16)

In this section, two results of the Messianic rule are indicated. First, in relation to the Gentiles. Our Lord shall stand as an ensign, or standard, of the people; and "to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious". Note the joyous wonder of the Jewish Christians that God should grant repentance unto the Gentiles (Acts 11:18), the great numbers of heathen who have turned to the Lord since Pentecost, the rest which He gives to the burdened soul (Matt. 11:28), and the future time when every knee shall bow unto Him (Phil. 2:10, 11), and the kingdoms of this world shall become His (Rev. 11:15). Thus in relation to Israel the recovery of the remnant is promised from various lands, together with their victory over enemies, and the clearing away of all obstructions to their progress. God may punish His people, but He never forgets them. He still has them in mind (Ezek. 37). Note the fact that we are gathered unto Christ in the present day (Matt. 18:20), not unto an organization, or a human being. And our duty is to call men and women to Christ (John 3:18). He is our Ensign, lifted up from the earth that all men might be drawn unto Him (John 12:32).

THE SONG (12:1-6)

After the deliverance, comes the song. Bondage produces no song of the Lord (Ps. 137:1-4), but salvation puts a new song in the heart, and on the lips (Ps. 40:3; Eph. 5:19). The song of this section has a national significance, but it is also applicable to the experience of each child of God. In sin, each person dwells under the wrath of God (John 3:36), but at conversion he is delivered therefrom (I. Thess. 1:10); and this is cause for great rejoicing. There is thereafter no fear of judgment (John 5:24), and we become members of God's family (John 1:12). Note the real comfort of such knowledge; and the fearful state of the ungodly (Heb. 10:31; Gal. 3:10). There follows the statement that God is salvation. This requires emphasis, for there are many who are depending on other things for salvation, such as good works, church affiliation, lodge association, baptism, or confirmation. Salvation becomes an individual experience only as we receive the divine Lord (John 1:12). This means we trust Him, with the result that we are not afraid, either of the things of this life, or of our safety in eternity. It is the privilege of each child of God to possess this assurance of salvation (I. John 5:13; John 10:27-29). It is our privilege likewise to be conscious of His indwelling presence aiding us in our daily life. He strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). He also becomes the subject of our songs. The world's songs lose their taste after we have had a real experience of God's company. We love to sing about Him, and become jealous of another taking His place. "Therefore with joy . . . we draw water out of the wells of salvation." This implies a daily experience of God's grace. The wells of salvation are deep, abundant; in their supply of life-giving water, and accessible to all. Note the necessity of water for the sustenance of life, the likeness of water to salvation (John 4:14), and our Lord's use of water to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). Then follows the reference to personal testimony concerning the Lord. His doings are to be declared among the people. And the exhortation is given to cry out and shout respecting Him. A real experience of His salvation will constrain us to confess it unto others. This is our duty, as well as our privilege (Acts 1:8). How may we become happy Christians?

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 11

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 8 First Quarter February 23rd, 1936

DIVINE JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

Lesson Text: Isaiah, chapters 13 and 14.

Golden Text: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

—Isaiah 13:9.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 14:1-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ps. 102:1-12; Tuesday—Jeremiah 50:1-8; Wednesday—Daniel 5:25-31; Thursday—Matt. 11:16-24; Friday—2 Thess. 2:1-10; Saturday—Rev. 18:1-8.

OVERTHROW OF BABYLON (13-1-22)

Babylon was the great enemy of Judah destined of God to accomplish her overthrow, and lead her people into exile. Habakkuk could not understand why such an ungodly nation should be permitted to deal thus with the Lord's people, but he was assured that divine judgment would be meted out to it (Hab. 2:8). And in this lesson Isaiah predicts this judgment. The overthrow of the Babylonian Empire took place in the time of Belshazzar, at the hands of the Medo-Persians (Dan. 5:30, 31); but it was many years afterward in the Christian era before the city was destroyed, and became as herein depicted. But in detail the prophecy was fulfilled. In Isaiah's day, Babylon was a great city, and a great empire; but, as predicted, the empire has passed away, and the city is a series of heaps in which no human beings find habitation; and only animals dwell in it. The site bears an evil reputation, and is a constant witness to the truth of God's Word, and the certainty of judgment on sin. Note the wondrous nature of fulfilled prophecy respecting Israel, the Gentiles, and Jesus Christ. In reference to the Israelites, note predictions concerning the greatness of their nation (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 1:7, 9); their sojourn in, and deliverance from, Egypt (Gen. 15:13, 14; 37:36; 46:1-6; Ex. 1:11, 14; 7 to 12); their possession of the promised land (Gen. 13:12-18; Josh. 3:9-17; 2 Chron. 9:26); their captivity (I. Kings 14:15, 16; II. Kings 17:6, 21, 23; Jer. 5:19; 25:11; II. Kings 25:1-12; Ezra 1:5); and their world-wide dispersion (Ezek. 12:15; Luke 21:24). Respecting Gentile nations, note may be made of the ancient world empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2), Egypt (Ezek. 29:19, 20; 30:10, 11); Tyre (Ezek. 26:1-14), and Sidon (Ezek. 28:20-23). And concerning our Lord we may observe references to His birth (Mic. 5:2; Is. 7:13, 14; Gen. 3:15); His lineage (Gen. 12:3; 17:19; 20:14; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:16; Rom. 9:5), His work (Is. 61:1-3); His special appeal (Zech. 9:9); and His suffering and death (Zech. 11:11, 12; 13:7; Is. 50:6; 52:13-15; 53; Ps. 2:2). There is just one explanation for the marvellous manner in which these and other prophecies have been fulfilled, and that is divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16). Unfulfilled prophecy will, in a like manner, be fulfilled.

In the first part of the chapter the gathering of the armies against Babylon is described, with its probable reference to the Medo-Persian host. The banner is lifted up upon the high mountain, the soldiers assemble, and there is a voice "like as of a great people." Note the purpose for which these people gather together, and its lesson respecting the sovereignty of God among men. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." But sensible people recognize not only the existence of God, but His interest in, and purpose for, His creatures. The divine judgment on Babylon is related in a vivid manner. It is intimated as coming "as a destruction from the Almighty", and as creating great fear in the hearts of the people (vs. 6-8). Then follows a reference to the effect on the land, the heavens, and men (vs. 9-18). The desolation of the land is predicted, together with the darkened heavens, and a suffering people. The proud would be brought low, the population would flee, and many would be slain. The human instrument of this destruction is stated (v. 17), and the perpetual desolation of the city is described (vs. 19-22). Babylon would be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gormorrah. It would never be inhabited. The Arabian would not pitch his tent, neither would the shepherds make

their folds within its precincts, but beasts and doleful creatures would dwell therein. Note the fearful nature of this judgment, the certainty with which it has been executed, and the divine wrath which rests upon all sin.

THE PROVERB AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON (14:1-20)

This chapter contains encouragement for Israel in the knowledge of their return from captivity, as well as in the destruction of their enemies. Their captivity is implied in the prediction of their return to their own land. Several things may be noted respecting this return. It would be effected by the power of God, and due to His mercy and grace. Strangers would join them, would assist them in their return, and the Israelites would rule over their oppressors. This would mean rest from sorrow, fear, and hard bondage for the people of God (Luke 9:42, 43). This is based on the work of Christ on Calvary (Col. 1:14), is effected by the grace of God (Eph. 2:8), and results in victory over spiritual enemies (I John 5:4), and rest of mind and spirit (Matt. 11:28-30). The Jews again through sin lost their national home, but the salvation of the child of God is eternal in duration, and is dependent not on man's puny efforts, however well intentioned they may be, but on the almighty power of God (John 10:27-30).

The proverb against the king of Babylon is then explained. Therein we find first, the rejoicing of the earth at the downfall of the king (vs. 4-8). The oppressor had ceased. The Lord had smitten him with an overwhelming stroke. The whole earth was at rest, and the very trees rejoiced thereat, because no feller had come up against them. There is expressed in this section general relief at the cessation of activity on the part of this wicked power, resulting in rest for the nations formerly troubled. It implies the rejoicing of the downtrodden over the persecutor. Following this, the astonishment of hell, the unseen abode of the dead, is recorded (vs. 9-11). The dead are said to be stirred at the coming of the king into their midst. The princes are recorded as rising from their thrones on his arrival. And taunting language is used concerning his downfall. No sympathy was expressed respecting his condition, and none was deserved. He is then addressed by the living as a fallen star (vs. 12-15). "Lucifer", or day star, "son of the morning". His unbounded ambition is mentioned, together with his punishment. He would exalt his throne "above the stars of God". No man could literally do this, although his desire might be couched in such ideal language. He wanted to be "like the Most High". Satan placed before our first parents a temptation to this end (Gen. 3:5). Men since then have striven to attain this. At the end of the age one human being, in the person of antichrist, will come the nearest of all to the accomplishment of this purpose (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:1-9). But in the devil himself this scripture finds its most apt fulfillment. He is referred to as "the prince of this world" (John 14:30), and of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4), and the head of principalities and powers (Matt. 12:26; Eph. 6:12). He was evidently placed by God in an exalted position from which by pride he fell. He opposes God at the present time, and accuses the brethren before Him (Rev. 12:10), but his doom is sealed. Into the bottomless pit he will be cast, and thence into hell (Rev. 20:2, 3, 10). And those who serve him will be cast in with him (Matt. 25:41).

The description of the fallen condition of the king of Babylon is continued, with a reference to the dishonoured position of his body (vs. 16-20). He would not have proper burial. His body would not be placed in a tomb. And this, because of his sin. After this, prediction is made respecting the overflow, and subsequent, desolate condition of the city of Babylon (vs. 21-23). The wonder of this prophecy may be appreciated when we remember that at the time at which it was made Babylon was a great city, with little likelihood of such utter desolation ever coming to pass. But God knows events before they transpire, and never makes a mistake in making them known to men. The closing verses of the chapter gives a further word of comfort to the Lord's people in predictions relating to the overthrow of the Assyrian power (vs. 24-28), and the inability of Philistia to harm Israel (vs. 29-32). God's power is omnipotent, and, exerted on behalf of His own, it is irresistible. Sinful persons may continue in their wicked ways for a time, but judgment is sure to come. How may we live so that, at the end of life, we shall receive a reward from God, instead of suffering loss?

BOOK REVIEWS

(Continued from page 5)

follow Him!" (p. 75). Chapter III. "And in the Garden—a Tomb!" is particularly suggestive to the student of the Word. The author is aware of the dangers of Modernism and modern cults, and here and there contrasts them with the faith which is in Jesus. The book's clear type presents a writer's style which is simple and strong. Here is one more example: "Remember me." What a 'me' he was! Poor drudge of the devil, hanging over hell fire, saturated from top to toe with sin, with nothing to commend him but his need. Yet he presented himself in all his foulness and his guilt and his need to the Lord. Presumption, was it? Nay, it was faith, and it honoured the Lord. Listen to the answer, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." What an answer! An answer of grace to the cry of faith." (p. 112.)—W. G. B.

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"THE GREAT SHIKAR IN QUETTA", by E. B. Fisk, M.B.E., Marshall's Shilling Series.

Miss Sandes established thirty-seven homes for British soldiers in all parts of the world. The Great Shikar in Quetta is a volume written by a worker in the home in India. Each chapter describes a character with whom she

came in contact or an incident of the work there. Shikar is an Indian word, meaning "quest for game". The souls of soldiers stationed in the barracks was the prize for which the workers laboured. This small volume testifies eloquently to the power of God in the lives of the soldiers, in converting the most sinful, restoring the backslider and keeping the believer under all circumstances.—F.R.W.

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"THE MASTER'S WAY", by Frank Mangs.

These messages of a Swedish evangelist delineate the Christian life as centred about the significant command of the Master, "Follow me".

"The way of the Master is that of the disciple. Jesus began His earthly career by way of a supernatural birth; your life and mine must begin the same way if we are to be His followers." The Christian may then live a new life which is a marvellous reality, a reflection of the life of the Lord, a life characterized by power, testing, self-denial, persecution, fellowship with God, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension.

The earnestness of the writer, his fidelity to the Lord and to the Word, and his love for the souls of men, are clearly seen in the tender and strong appeals to the unsaved, as well as appeals to the saved, appeals which grip the heart. This book should be widely distributed.—Dr. O. L. Clark.

What Others Say of "Other Little Ships"

THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER
New York

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

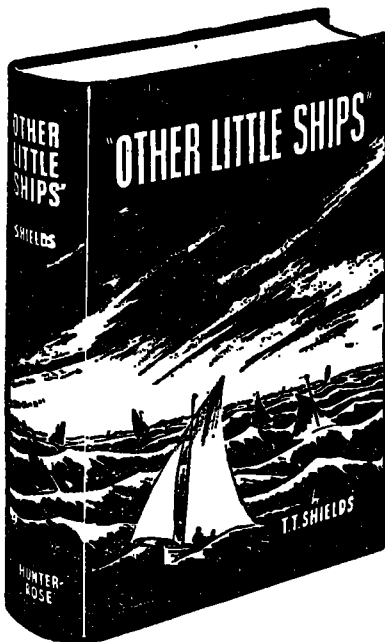
Preaching is still the most fascinating art in the world. Millions listen to sermonic themes every week. The rich discoveries of the study and the still richer treasures of personality and attestations of divine power make the sermon the center of Protestant worship. Thus books of sermons are interesting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

readers will profit by the thoughtful earnestness of these sermons. They are refreshingly human and deeply spiritual.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES
Philadelphia

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

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



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