

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

REPENT, BELIEVE, BE BAPTIZED, BE ADDED, CONTINUE!

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 23rd, 1936
(Stenographically Reported)

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.
"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."—Acts 2:41, 42.

There is nothing in the Bible which is unreasonable. There is much that is beyond the understanding of the finite mind, and there is still more which comes only within the comprehension of minds that are spiritually illuminated; but there is nothing in the whole Christian revelation of God in Christ which is unreasonable. It is, indeed, eminently reasonable to believe that behind the natural order of things, this material universe, all moving so frictionlessly, harmoniously, in obedience to its complicated laws—it is reasonable to believe that behind it all there must be a divine Intelligence from Whom this, and other worlds of wonder, have their being.

I go further and say that it would be unreasonable to assume that such an One, having created the world, and having put within it such human creatures as now occupy it, endowing them with powers which enable them to read something of His handiwork, and to observe the operation of His laws—I say, it would be unreasonable to assume that such an One would not communicate Himself to the creatures He has made. Indeed, I think there could be nothing more unreasonable than to suppose that One so infinite in wisdom and in power should be content to remain anonymous, or in any sense unknown.

We in this place believe that God has come out of the unknown, that in time past He spake unto the fathers by the prophets, and that in these last days He has "spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds", that He might gather up in Himself the testimony of all ages, and speak with final authority to man respecting God: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

Thus too we believe that we have in the Bible the divinely-inspired and therefore accurate—and again, therefore—supremely authoritative record of God's Son. We believe in this place that the Bible is the Word of God. Personally, I can find no reason for the existence of a church if that be not true. Many men have many minds, and unless there be a pole-star, unless there be some extra-mundane revelation, shining upon this world to give us direction from death to life, from time to eternity, I see no reason why men should waste their own or other people's time in merely discussing their opinion of things; for the reason that, while human opinion may be of value respecting the realms of knowledge that are open to human investigation, in the nature of the case, human opinion can have no value in respect to worlds men have never explored, and from which, if the Bible be not true, they have received no communication. We are shut up to the principle of revelation, and we confidently believe that we have the divinely inspired record of that revelation in the Bible. It is to us the very word of God.

I read to you this evening an account of the first great service held by a company of disciples who had been the daily companions of the Man of Nazareth, who had heard Him teach, who had seen His miracles, who had seen Him die, who had held converse with Him after His resurrection from the dead. They had seen Him depart until a cloud received Him out of their sight; then they waited for a message from heaven signifying His arrival there: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues"—not with unknown tongues, please ob-

serve; but in tongues which were immediately recognized by the different races that had come together at Jerusalem. These recognized their own tongue was being spoken by men who naturally had no knowledge of it.

Peter rose with the eleven to explain that phenomenon, and declared that it was none other than the fulfillment of the promise of the ascended Lord, and proof that God had made Him "both Lord and Christ". When Peter said that, the great multitude which had come together said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Then comes our text, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

I ask you once again to think of these familiar words. They never wear out; though we have traversed this ground many times before, yet we may derive some further spiritual profit from our meditation upon this story.

I.

A CERTAIN WORD WAS SPOKEN. Here at least you have an example of what preaching ought to be. The subject of the sermon, the method of the interpretation of events, and of the Scriptures by one filled with the Holy Ghost. Oh that all preachers would study this model sermon! *The subject of the sermon was Jesus Christ.* Peter had nothing else to preach about. I think we shall never have done speaking about Him. "His name shall be called Wonderful." We use that word so carelessly sometimes, and sometimes lightly. But when it says of Jesus, "His name shall be called Wonderful", it means what it says, that He should be full of wonders, full of surprises; and that through all eternity we shall never exhaust the marvels of His grace. Peter preached about the Lord Jesus, told them Who He was, reminding them of His death (which was a matter of common knowledge in Jerusalem). But he explained—mark it well—that the death of Jesus Christ, although it was effected by human hands, was no accident; that He had been "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Jesus Christ came into the world to die. He was never under any misapprehension on that score. He knew from the beginning that He was the Lamb of God Who, by His death, should take away the sins of the world. Peter said to these people, "Although you crucified Him by wicked hands, remember that the superintending, sovereign, hand of God was upon it all, and that He died on the cross by divine appointment." Certainly not because He was a sinner, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

The man who denies the vicariousness, the expiatory value, of the death of Christ, the old-fashioned theological dogma of substitution, that Christ died for sinners,—the man who denies that, impugns the moral government of the universe; for Jesus Christ was Him-

self absolutely sinless. The only explanation of His death, if God be just, and if His death was of divine appointment, is that He must have died for someone else—and so He did.

Then the great question was—and upon it emphasis was laid—that of the resurrection; for Peter said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." There was no doubtful note in Peter's statement. He did not say, "I am rather inclined to believe that Jesus Christ may have risen from the dead." He did not preach after that fashion. He said in effect, "I know that He is not in the grave, but in glory; that He did actually rise from the dead." He stood up with the eleven and said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, *whereof we all are witnesses.*"

There is no fact of history more certainly attested than the fact of the real, corporeal, resurrection of Jesus Christ. If that be so, that fact demands an explanation of every reasonable man. If He died, why did He rise again? "Because", said Peter, "it was not possible that he should be holden of it (death)." He was the Lord of life. That agrees with His own words when He said, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." He laid down His life, and took it again. He came forth from the grave as a conqueror, the keys of death and the grave swinging at His girdle, the Lord of life and power. Thus did Peter proclaim Him: so do I proclaim Him this evening.

Let me remind you further that *this apostolic preacher quoted, in support of his argument, the scriptures of the Old Testament.* He quoted from the prophet Joel, from the sixteenth Psalm, and from the one hundred and tenth Psalm. Nor did he say, "I apologize for quoting from a book that is called in question in some quarters." He declared that the word of Joel, and that the word through David, were none other than the word of God. Peter, the first apostle, preached that he at least believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament.

We are rather peculiar here in that we believe that still. *The Daily Star* asked me yesterday what I thought of a congregation in which a man would rise and protest against the preacher's saying he did not believe in the inspiration of the Old Testament. I replied, "I should most heartily congratulate the man who protested, and the congregation that supported him." I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that no man has any right to speak in the name of the Lord, who denies the authority of the Book upon which his commission is based. The pulpits of our day are doing the devil's business far more effectively than Ingersoll, Tom Paine, or Voltaire, ever did. The Bible is a revelation from God, or it is not. And if the Bible be not true, what do we or can we know about the future?

The coming of Christ into the world was the fulfillment of Old Testament scripture, and the man who says the Old Testament is not the very word of God only manifests his profound ignorance of the whole subject. Upon that was the Christian church based. The apostolic preachers so believed; and it was the preaching of that word which cut men to the heart.

Some years ago I dropped into an evangelistic service where some young men were exhorting people to come

to Christ, telling people they were sinners, but without quoting much Scripture. A man sat immediately in front of me, apparently a man of intelligence, and at the conclusion of the service I said to him, "Excuse me, sir; for intruding upon you, but I should like to ask you a question. Have you been interested in what these young men have said to-night?" "Certainly, sir. What man of intelligence could fail to be interested in a matter of such importance?" "Do you find yourself with some desire to settle this great question?" I pressed. "Of that I am not sure," he said, and then pointing to the platform where some of the young men were still standing, he said, "But I should like to know by whose authority these young men dare to tell me I am a sinner."

It was a point well taken. What right have I to tell you that you are a sinner? I cannot read your heart. I do not know the record of your life. What do I know—or what business is it of mine? But if there is One Who knows all about you and me, if there is One Who sees our hearts, and if He be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and if He has a sovereign and inherent right to our allegiance, and He says, "Go and tell that man he is a sinner, a rebel against my law", we may dare to speak. Otherwise upon whose authority dare we tell men that they have sinned? Only upon the authority of the Book. When pulpits and churches get back to the Bible, we shall find men and women again being slain before the Lord, cut to the heart. I pray it may be so of some here this evening.

It was conviction of that great truth that overwhelmed the people gathered on the day of Pentecost. Peter said, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Then he reached this tremendous conclusion, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." It is no wonder they said, "Men and brethren, if we have made that terrible mistake, if we put a crown of thorns upon the brow of Deity, if we nailed to a cross of wood the hands that laid the foundation of the world, if we drove our spear to the heart of the Son of God, and He lives again to be our Judge, what shall we do? How shall we adjust ourselves to that situation?" Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, is seated at God's right hand, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We may well ask, What shall we do?

II.

THEY "RECEIVED HIS WORD". What was it? When they asked that question, what else did Peter say? "The way to get right is to repent, to change your mind, to right-about-face, to take up a new attitude toward Jesus Christ." You thought He was an imposter? Then down on your face before God, and ask Him to forgive you. Repent! It is of no use for me to ask you to believe unless you repent. No man can believe the gospel unless he repents. The gospel has no meaning or logic for a man who loves his sin.

I heard of a little girl in our Sunday School who had been very naughty one day. Finally her mother said to her, "I think you must have a little devil in you to-day. You had better ask Jesus to take him away." The little girl thought a moment, then said, "No, Mummy; I like him in there"! She was only a little girl, but she expressed a great principle. Many grown people have a devil in them—and they rather like to have him there. I heard a Modernist preacher say once, "I always had

a sneaking regard for Milton's satan." I knew the gentleman, and I said to myself, "You have a sneaking regard for some other satan than Milton's."

We cannot believe without repentance. It is not until we come to see that sin is a heinous thing, an outrage against the divine nature, the transgression of the moral constitution of the whole universe—it is not until we see that sin is an alien thing, as alien to the man made in God's image as cancer to the human frame, and as incurable—not until we loathe the thing can we obtain deliverance from it.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter did not mean that baptism would save anybody, of itself; but he did mean that the eyes of faith, beholding in Jesus Christ the sinner's Substitute, and knowing that He died "the Just for the unjust that he might bring us to God", that He lived our life for us, died our death, and was buried, and rose again, and ascended into heaven—he did mean that those who know that and believe that, should be baptized.

We ought to preach baptism. I make no apology to you who have been taught otherwise; if you do not follow the Word of God, so much the worse for you. Read the Bible. That is what the Word of God says. We have no other authority. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." The Bible does not say anything about godfathers or godmothers. There is no scriptural warrant for the practice of infant baptism—infants who do not know their own father's name. Baptism is an act of obedience on the part of repentant believers. The man who believes goes down into the water symbolizing his union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection—an outward token that he is one with Christ.

III.

Observe, HOW THE WORD WAS RECEIVED, AND THE RESULT: Some "gladly received his word." I can almost see that great congregation. First of all, upon their countenances a look of profound concern as many asked the question—asked it for themselves and for others, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They must have said in their hearts, "This is terrible news, to find that we are guilty of the blood of the Son of God. This fills us with fear. I did not know who He was, but I joined with the rest in crying, 'Crucify him!' What shall I do?" Can you not imagine the concern on every countenance when Peter thus charged them, and the transformation when he told them that the Lord, in His mercy, had effected a way of escape: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." They "gladly" received the word. Not reluctantly, or with reserve. They threw wide their hearts to the truth of the gospel; they welcomed it. It was not written for very many centuries afterward, but I am sure they could have sung,—

"O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad."

"They . . . gladly received his word."

What did they do next? *They did not consult with anybody.* I beg of you, consult the Word. Let the Spirit of God speak to you. When God has spoken, there is only one thing for any of us to do: that is,

obey. "They that gladly received his word *were baptized*." They did not make any excuse. They did exactly as they were told. If you know that Christ died for you, and that He rose again and ascended into heaven, and that the promise of the Spirit is offered to those who obey Him, say in your heart, "Thank God for a salvation like that. I will take the first opportunity of being obedient to His command. I too will be baptized."

"And the same day"—*they did not wait a long time*—"the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In our day the devil is very busy denying the gospel, the great central truths which I have set before you in the simplest terms. But I would remind you that the church—and when I speak of the church I mean the visible, local, church as at Jerusalem—is a *divine institution*. Those three thousand people did not say, "We will be baptized, but let others carry on the work of the Lord. We accept no responsibility. We will come to see you occasionally, but please do not depend upon us." That is not what happened. The three thousand were baptized, and were "added". They joined the company of believers, and were reckoned with the number of the disciples. That is to say, speaking plainly, every one of those baptized joined the church. They became part of the church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, and they confessed their union with Him Who is the Head of the church, and their union with their brethren, by that act of baptism.

It is very necessary that those who believe should be baptized, and it is just as important that they join the church. I think what is sometimes called the tabernacle movement is utterly unscriptural. I do not refer to the type of building, that is unimportant; but to the form of organization. With no church membership, no household of faith—that is not scriptural. People should be converted, they should be baptized, they should be "added" to some company of believers where they will share the responsibility—and the privileges—of that fellowship. There are many religious waifs in the world. They have been born again, we trust, but they have no home. They have not identified themselves with any company of believers.

What a beautiful thing a real home is! How mother watches the children, to see that they are properly fed and clothed, that they are in health! How anxious she becomes if she sees the first sign of ailment among the children! Why? The home is a divine institution. It is God's method of propagating the race. It is right that children should have care. The young of other species can at least partially take care of itself almost as soon as born; but a human infant is the most helpless thing in the world. It would die were it not given tender care. So of the household of faith, and of that "holy nation" which God would multiply by spiritual birth, by regeneration—not by natural generation. The babes in Christ, believing, and being baptized, should be "added". They should have a home where someone will care for them, and shepherd them. Have you been "added"?

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." You cannot learn everything at once. The young man who would be a physician or surgeon must give himself to long years of study before he is given a license to practise. He must go to college and pursue a long course of study, then he must enter a hospital as an interne for a course of practical experience. In due course he is recognized as a physician or

surgeon when it has been proved that he has knowledge and experience, and can be trusted. Very well; you cannot be anything that is worthwhile without learning. We are born again, and thereby become babes in Christ. What then? *We need to go to school*. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine", getting line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; learning first the elementary principles, and by and by the deeper things of God. But "they continued" hearing at the lips of these men what God the Lord would have them to know.

The church ought to be a teaching institution, not a place of Sunday amusement. It is the real pastor's business to teach—and teach—and teach—until by and by he can see a few people, men and women, who are grounded in the things of God, who will go on testifying when the Pastor has passed on to higher service. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine." You cannot become a saint, a sanctified man or woman, a mature Christian, without continuing stedfastly at school, learning the things of God.

"*And fellowship*." How we need fellowship! How we need company! "A man is known by the company he keeps", the proverb has it. And it is true. I do not know anybody who needs the company of other Christians like young Christians. How many young people have I seen fall because they did not choose the right company! Where shall we find our company? In effect these people said, "Once we were on the outside; we had no interest in the man of Nazareth; but henceforth we will stand with you and learn what God has to say to us." Because they loved the same Saviour, they had sweet fellowship together.

I know there are some awkward saints. I have known some ugly saints. I have told you of one man I had as deacon in one of my pastorates. He was a magnificent man in many ways, but uncomfortably awkward. One day I said to him, "Let me tell you this one thing. I love you from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet. I believe in you; I believe you love the Lord; I believe you are pure gold—but you are, without any exception, the ugliest nugget I ever saw in my life." He said, "Bear with me, Pastor." I said, "I have borne with you and I shall still bear with you because I know you love the Lord."

I heard my father, who was a minister, say once that he was walking home with an officer of the church one night, and he said, "Mr. So-and-So is very trying and always running across people. Sometimes I find myself wondering if he really loves the Lord." "Do not say that", said the church officer, "you have not known him as long as I have." "What has that to do with it?" "If you had known him before he was saved, there would be no doubt in your mind about his salvation. He is not very lovely now, but he was positively ugly before."

The "old man" is much uglier in some people than in others. Grace has much to do with a man who has a violent temper. Some people are naturally amiable. But when all that is said, there is no fellowship this side of heaven like the fellowship of the saints. I would rather be in a company of believers, who genuinely love the Lord, than in any place in the world. That is what a church ought to be. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

"*And in breaking of bread*." The ordinance of baptism which you witnessed this evening symbolizes the new birth, and our rising to walk in newness of life. In the

Lord's Supper we take the bread and wine in symbol of the fact that God sustains the new life thus created. We are to observe the Lord's death "till he come". That is a further reason why we ought to belong to a company of believers; for the Lord's Supper is distinctly a church ordinance, and was never designed for private observance.

"And in prayers." They did not all preach at that time, but they all prayed. The whole company of believers continued "in prayers". We have fine prayer-meetings here, three every week for the past fifteen years, never missing summer or winter. We had a glorious time last night. You forgot to come? You missed a blessing. Hungry people ought to come when the table is spread. Do you Sunday School teachers, say, "I do not go Saturday night because I have to teach in the morning." So have I! You will teach your class a great deal better if you come Saturday evening. Others pray for you: you come and pray for others.

They continued "in prayers". What a meeting that was—three thousand men and women praying! A man said to me once of a certain church, "The other night the Pastor gave the hand of fellowship to about forty new members, and I said to myself, that will mean a fine accession to the prayer meeting. The next Wednesday I looked around, and of the more than forty who had joined the church on Sunday, there was only one in the prayer-meeting." They did not "continue" in prayer.

A church ought to be a praying body. It is dangerous for one not to use all his lungs. One needs to learn to fill his lungs with God's fresh air, to breathe deeply. To neglect to do so is to lay himself open to tuberculosis and all sorts of pulmonary ailments. The church ought to breathe deeply—every member should pray, and all members should pray together. If thus the whole church should pray, what showers of blessing we should receive! God has blessed us much: He is blessing us still. Several of those baptized this evening were converted during the Pastor's absence, and there are still others to come, and in that I rejoice.

Are there some here who have not believed? Will you believe? Some of you, having believed, have not been baptized. Will you be baptized? Some have been baptized somewhere, but you have not been "added"—will you join the church? Then will you say, "I will make the Word of God my divine companion. I will learn from the inspired Book what it is to be a Christian. And I will be always present when the Lord's death is remembered. I shall not be absent when the church, as a church, comes together to pray"? When we do that we shall have a great sweeping revival—and we need it. Toronto needs it. I do not mean an organized revival: I mean a revival that is unmistakably a visitation from God, the Holy Ghost breaking men's hearts, changing them, and sending them out to witness for Christ. We shall have it as we continue "in prayers".

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS ST.—Last Sunday was a good day. There were responses to the invitation at both services; and in the evening the Pastor baptized eleven believers.

NEXT SUNDAY—The first address of His Majesty King Edward VIII. will be broadcast from London next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock Greenwich time and will be received in Toronto at 11 Sunday morning (E.S.T.). For the convenience of the Jarvis St. congregation, radios will be installed to receive the message. The service will begin ten minutes earlier than usual, i.e., 10.50, and all are requested to be in their places at that time. The regular service will follow the hearing of the King's message.

HOW A PREACHER WAS DESTROYED BY A PREACHER

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, February 20th, 1936.

Fourth in the 1935-36 Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical Theology, which Subject is Included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: I. Kings, chapter 13.

I hope many of you can remember as far back as last October? I am sorry to have been so long absent; but I now remind you that we had for our meditation the twelfth chapter of First Kings on the last evening we studied together.

You will recall that Jeroboam had just come to the throne of the newly-established kingdom of Israel. Ten tribes had broken away from Rehoboam's dominion, and Jeroboam found himself carried by a wave of popular enthusiasm to the throne of the new kingdom. Jeroboam seems to have feared that if the tribes observed the law laid down by Moses, that when God should have established them in the land, and selected for Himself a central place of national worship, and had built a house to set His name there, the tribes should go up annually to this divinely-appointed place, that the association of the tribes with the holy city would wear them away from their allegiance to him, and lead them to turn again to the house of David. By what he considered a very clever political expedient he sought to obviate that necessity. He set up calves of gold in Dan and Bethel, saying, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Thus Jeroboam devised a religion "of his own heart"—as many people have done since that day. He erected altars to these idols of his own creation. Thus began the sin which is described in subsequent history as the sin of "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin". It is a tragic story, because, without a single exception, every successor in the throne of Israel walked in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Judah was bad enough, but again and again God raised up for Himself a good king in Judah; but Israel went the way of Jeroboam. You will find in Hosea's prophecy, that the prophet, foreseeing the disaster that would come to the nation by reason of Jeroboam's idolatry, exclaimed, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off." Ultimately, the ten tribes ceased to be a nation, and the idols which they had made became their destroyers.

Now to the story of the text. It is a long chapter, so let me summarize it, that you may have the story in your mind.

Jeroboam is in Bethel, and standing at the altar dedicated to the idol-god. He had consecrated priests—not of the tribe of Levi, but of any tribe; anybody could be a priest. Jeroboam was about to exercise the office of the priest, and to offer worship at the altar which he had designed, and which he had erected. There came a man of God just as he was about to perform this act of idolatrous worship, and he cried against the altar, and predicted that the time would come when upon that very altar the bones of the idolatrous priests would be offered in sacrifice. He declared that, as a sign, the altar should be rent; and as Jeroboam stretched out his hand, crying to those about him, "Lay hold of him"—of the prophet—

the hand that would have slain the prophet, was withered, and the altar was rent.

Jeroboam entreated the prophet to pray for him, that his hand might be restored; which the prophet did, and his withered hand was restored. Then he invited the prophet to go home with him, and eat bread in his house; and promised him a reward. To this the prophet replied that he had been specially enjoined by the Lord to eat nothing in that place. He declined the invitation, got on his ass, and set out toward home, not by the way he had come, but by another way.

There was an old prophet—and, please observe, the old prophet lived in Bethel. His sons reported to him what they had heard of this man of God, how he prophesied against the altar, of Jeroboam's withered hand, and its restoration. The old man asked which way the man of God had gone, saddled an ass, and rode after him. He overtook him, and invited him to return and eat bread. Again the prophet told of his commission, that he had been commanded of the Lord not to eat bread. Then the old man said, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water." But the Word expressly says, "He lied unto him." The younger prophet, who had not yielded to the king, yielded to the senior prophet, and went back to eat with him.

And even as he ate, strangely enough the word of the Lord came to the old prophet, and through the old prophet God spake to the younger man, and told him that because he had disobeyed the voice of the Lord he should never be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers—in other words, that he would not reach home. When he left the old prophet, a lion slew him. Then someone told the old prophet that they had seen a man slain in the way, and a lion and an ass standing by, and the lion had not eaten the carcass nor torn the ass. Said the old prophet, "That is the man of God, and the word of God has been fulfilled which he spake by me." He went to see and the lion did not attack him. He put the slain prophet on his own ass (the young man's ass), brought him back to Bethel, and gave strict orders to his sons that when he should die, his bones should be laid beside the bones of the prophet whom the lion had slain.

That is a very strange story, but it is replete with spiritual instruction.

I.

Let me begin by asking you to observe HOW DIVINE MERCY AND JUSTICE COMBINE, CO-OPERATE, TO JUSTIFY THE DIVINE HOLINESS. You will recall how the Psalmist, confessing his wrong-doing, said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that, thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." The New Testament tells us that "what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Again we read, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling out hearts with food and gladness."

God never permits the red light of warning to be extinguished. He never permits a human soul to throw itself over the precipice to everlasting destruction without putting every possible obstacle of mercy in its way. So that when at last men go wrong, and do wrong, and

resist the final testimony of God, He always has His witnesses.

The heart of Jeroboam is hardened; it is lifted up with pride. He is to be a great king, and his kingdom of the ten tribes naturally will exceed in splendour and power the lesser kingdom over which the house of David reigned. So he devised a religion "of his own heart." He defied God to his face; built his altars; came as a priest to offer sacrifice—but ere he can do it, God is there to say, "Stop, Jeroboam. I have something to say to you before you commit that act of blasphemy. You see that altar? This idol-god of yours, your whole religious system, if you proceed upon it, it will be your destruction." That was God's word to him as he was in the very act of worship.

Look at that act a moment. Jeroboam insults the Divine Majesty, not by forsaking His presence, not by saying, "There is no God": but by presuming to put aside the divine order of things, and by substituting therefor a way and a method of approach devised out of his own heart. He said, "I will come to God, but I will come in my own way, not in His. I will offer sacrifice and incense, but it shall be upon my altar, not upon His. I will worship God, but in my own way, not in His."

Is it any wonder the world is in such confusion to-day? The sin of Jeroboam is the sin of Christendom in our day. It is not mere godlessness, but the substitution for a revealed religion of a religion that is sheer, unadulterated blasphemy—setting aside God's Word, God's way, God's altar, God's Sacrifice, God's Priest, and daring to strut into the divine presence unclothed—man, in all his iniquity, thrusting himself into the presence of a holy God.

You have it in hundreds of churches in Toronto every Lord's day, where the blood and the priesthood, the whole meditorial sacrifice and ministry of God's High Priest is not only set aside, but mocked at; while men say, "We do not need blood. We will worship God after our own fashion."

God always has His witnesses. I trust He may permit us, by His grace, humbly to testify against every false religion. I recall very vividly a great meeting for prayer we had in the church parlour, some years ago, the day before the Convention, that is, what we now call the Old Convention. The place was crowded, and men prayed until a late hour. I can see now a minister from the other camp who had come in—I fear not to pray with us, but to observe. He said to me, "Are you going to have victory to-morrow?" I said, "Yes, sir." "Are you going to carry the Convention." "I do not know whether that is God's way or not; but we shall have victory." "That is very interesting", he said, and went out. When the vote went against us the next day I met that man and he said, "Well, what about your prayer meeting last night? I thought you were going to have victory?" I said, "My dear sir, are you under the delusion that you were victorious to-day? The devil had his way."

The prophet is sent to deliver God's word, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. Young men, it is not your concern to be successful. Thank God, if He gives you to see some fruit of your ministry; but there are many faithful prophets of the Lord who, like Stephen, are permitted to preach, and see no results—but to feel the stones. It does not follow that a man has failed because Jeroboam does not listen to the prophet. The true prophet of the Lord is not living for here and now, but for hereafter and by and by when God shall open His books.

The same is true of those who bear personal witness. You say, "I testified to a man the other day concerning Jesus Christ, and he laughed at me; and I was not sure whether I had done right or not." Your testimony and that man's mocking laugh are both registered in heaven, and both will be given account of one of these days when God shall summon men to judgment. God never lets a soul commit suicide without warning him, and it may be He sends you to issue His warning. Do not be disturbed or discouraged if men sneer at your testimony: give your testimony notwithstanding.

This man of God predicted that the religion, *this home-made religion of Jeroboam, which was designed for their salvation, would be the instrument of national destruction.* It always is. Whenever men turn aside from God's method of salvation, they always select in its place something which inevitably leads them to destruction. Substitute something for the word of truth, and what have you? Inevitably something that is not true. The prophet said, "This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out"—and it was rent.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils." I believe that promise was given to the apostles of the apostolic era when God was completing His revelation; for the church was built upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone". Just as our Lord Jesus wrought miracles, and manifested forth His glory, and appealed to those signs as a certification of the divine authority of His ministry, so did signs accompany the apostolic ministry. Thus did God testify that His word, through His appointed apostles, was indeed the word of God. It is embodied in the Book, and is certified to be the word of God.

God has His own way in different dispensations, at different times, of establishing the truth of His word. In this particular instance the altar was rent, as the prophet predicted. Jeroboam put forth his hand to stay the prophet, and it was withered. Then *he entreated the prophet to pray for him.* The faithful preacher need not be surprised when he discovers people who would not listen to his preaching, nevertheless come begging for his prayers. You remember that word of Whittier?—

"Eyes that the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raised.
And lips cry, 'God be pitiful',
That ne'er said, 'God be praised'."

It is often so. But, as is His wont, in the midst of wrath, God remembered mercy; hence Jeroboam's hand was healed.

Then he offered the prophet reward, which the prophet refused. He obeyed his commission to the letter, and mounted his ass, and rode away.

II.

There is A PARTICULAR LESSON HERE TOO FOR THE PREACHER, and FOR ALL WHO WOULD WITNESS FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Go over that section of the story again. The prophet is commissioned to go directly to the king, and he comes upon the king in the act of sacrilege. He is instructed to deliver his message directly to the king, a word of rebuke. That is rather hard to do. We should all prefer to please those to whom we prophesy.

I used to have a man in this church with whom I had much in common. We walked to the house of the Lord in company, we held sweet counsel together. There was

very much about him that was loveable; and I believe he was a genuine believer, but he entertained some ideas which I think were dangerous. I used to find myself looking constantly in this man's direction. He was always present rain or shine, morning and evening. I could count on him as I could on the steeple. He never failed, church services or prayer meeting—and he never went to sleep! He always listened with the closest interest. This friend had a very engaging smile. When anything pleased him, it registered in his countenance with that winsome smile.

I had not been here very long before I found my gaze gravitating toward him like the needle of a compass toward the north. As I preached, I found it became natural for me to look his way. I found that his occasional smile of approval was most agreeable. For years thereafter, when the Lord showed me that danger, I used to pause back on the steps approaching the platform in the dark to pray, "Lord, keep my eyes off that man to-day. Help me not to see him, but to be conscious only of Thy presence."

It is easy to desire the approval of those to whom we are sent. It is very difficult for any one of us to say things to people that we know they will resent. But the prophet of the Lord must be true to his commission. If the Lord gives you a most uncomfortable message to deliver, ask Him to enable you to deliver it with tears; not savagely, as though you delighted in it, but with deep sympathy, and something of your Master's compassion. But do not be afraid to lift up your voice and cry, "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord." Whether men hear, or whether they forbear, endeavour to be faithful to your trust.

If you do, *you are certain to incur the displeasure of someone.* I have known people to argue that the preacher should understand the constitution of the human mind, and should know how to present an unpalatable truth in such a way that people will like it. You cannot cut people to the heart with the two-edged sword of the Spirit in a way that they will like it. When you preach the Word of God, one of two things must happen: when people are cut to the heart, they will either repent as they did on the day of Pentecost, or they will become angry with the preacher, as they did with Stephen, and throw stones at you. But we are admonished not to be afraid of men's faces.

Jeroboam stretched out his hand against the prophet—was it against the prophet? No! The prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord . . . this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent." Jeroboam put forth his hand as though he would say to Omnipotence, "No! No!"—but instantly his hand was withered; the Word says, "His hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." There is a warning in Scripture, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." This prophet suffered no injury so long as he was faithful to his trust. You need not be afraid of kings or of princes—of the most important and influential man in the world—so long as you are in harmony with the will of God, and exercising your ministry according to the commission given to you.

The prophet was asked to pray, *and he prayed—what for?* Jeroboam did not say, "Pray that my sin may be forgiven." Jeroboam did not propose to destroy his altar or the golden calves. He said in effect, "Look at this poor withered hand; pray to the Lord for me,

that my hand may be restored me again." Hosts of people would like you to pray for that sort of thing; for physical, for material good. I could pack this church seven days a week if I were to come with a bottle of oil, and claim to heal all manner of disease. It would not matter whether they were healed or not, so long as that were the programme. Many people with imaginary ailments would go away and say they were healed.

If you minister to the physical you will be esteemed a great man. Martha made a supper, and even Judas approved of it. Mary invested her all in a box of ointment and poured it on the head of the Master—and they all complained. When our Lord fed the multitude with bread, they wanted to make Him a king; but when He said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life", they all forsook Him.

The prophet perhaps recognized the quality of Jeroboam's request: "He only asks that his hand be restored." Was that a mercy or a judgment? Do not misunderstand me. I think it was the beginning of judgment for Jeroboam. If he had had a withered, palsied hand, it might have kept him in perpetual remembrance of his rebellion. Thank God when He does not answer some of your prayers, when you get into difficulty, and God does not lead you out immediately. The worst judgment that could fall upon any of us would be to escape the folly of our own doing. God lets us taste the fruits of our own thoughts, that He may lead us to repentance. He is a mature Christian who is able always to distinguish between judgment and mercy. What we call mercy sometimes is judgment, and what we call judgment is mercy. It is always mercy when God intervenes at the top of the precipice to prevent our going farther.

This prophet was tempted by the king when he invited him to dinner, and promised him reward. I want to make that very literal. Young men, beware of invitations to dinner. You say, "What do you mean?" I mean exactly what I say. I have seen in times of crisis many a minister bought, bribed, ruined, by an invitation to dinner. At Convention time an arm was put around his shoulder, and a suave voice said, "Come with me to lunch." You have eaten of his bread, you have been his guest, you allow yourself to be put under obligation; and your lips are closed. Do not do it. Paul said, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment . . . judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." There is no king on earth that can reward a faithful prophet for his testimony. General Bramwell Booth once said, "All my officers are men and women of large salary—payment deferred." The Lord will reward His faithful servants, but nobody can reward them here. A doctor who had himself been very ill, and had suffered terribly, said to me, "In my suffering I said to myself, There is no money in the world that can really pay a doctor who relieves anybody of pain. You cannot pay for that in money."

Nor can a faithful minister be paid. There is not money enough in the world to pay him. When Elijah was going home to heaven, and Elisha had asked that he might see him go, as he beheld he said, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof—thou hast been worth more to this nation than all the chariots of Israel, and all their horsemen."

When Elisha came back from Jordan, where he smote the river with Elijah's mantle, and the waters parted, the people said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha"; and when at last Elisha was an old man, and lay dying, and the king to whom he had spoken so many times came to him, the king cried out as the prophet was about to leave him, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." It is given to the man of God to be of great worth to people if he is true. You can pay for a telegram but you cannot pay for a message from heaven: There is no tariff that will tell you how much it is worth. Therefore hold yourself above all earthly rewards.

I remember crossing the sea some years ago, and on the ship was a minister who had never crossed the ocean before. He did not know what an important man the captain of an ocean liner is. This particular captain was a commander in His Majesty's navy. We had a comfortable passage, nothing extraordinary about it. But this minister thought it would be lovely to show our appreciation of the captain, and he went around the ship's passengers and got together an offering. When it was ready he invited me, with others, to go with him to the captain for the presentation. I said, "No thank you; you can do without me." I knew what reception awaited him! When he went in, I later learned, that dignified captain who, on the bridge, was a king every inch of him, smiled when the purse was given him, and said, "Of course I must thank you, but I am in no need of recognition on the part of the passengers. I receive my remuneration from my company. I shall be glad to donate this to the Sailors', Widows', and Orphans' Fund." I can see that minister now—how he wilted as he came out.

When anyone says, "I will give you a reward", give him to understand that you do not receive rewards from men. Maintain your independence as a prophet of the Lord. Let no one bribe you directly or indirectly. Be grateful for everyone's appreciation, but remember how Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." You can afford to be independent even of Jeroboam, in view of that crown of righteousness, awaiting every faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.

That closes one part of the story. I shall not finish the chapter, but I think I will trespass upon your time to deal with another paragraph.

III.

THERE WAS AN OLD PROPHET IN BETHEL. *It is well to know where people live.* You will be able to appraise them more accurately very often if you know where they live. This old prophet lived in Bethel. He had heard all about "the man of God". I think I have told you of a friend of mine in glory now, a fellow-pastor when I was in London, Rev. Wm. Walker. He was one of the saintliest men I ever knew, a marvellous man. We used to spend Saturday afternoons together whenever we could, walking out into the country in the summertime. We always spent our time talking, not professionally, but as sinners saved by grace, about the goodness of God to us, about our responsibilities as ministers. I remember his saying to me once as he put his arm through mine, "Have you reflected on that Old

Testament title that was so generally given the prophet?" "To what do you refer?" I asked. "The title, the man of God," he replied.

The Shunammite perceived that Elisha was "an holy man of God". Even this old prophet in Bethel spoke of the man who had come as "the man of God". Even as he approached him at last he said, "Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah?" What is a minister? A member of the Rotary Club, a Kiwanian, a Lion, a Tiger, a Mason? A year or so ago I was in a certain American city and a minister came to a meeting at which I spoke. The minister under whose auspices I was serving asked the visitor and myself to have supper with him. We sat down in the restaurant, and the visiting minister put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a bunch of cards, saying, "You wonder what these are? They are my membership cards in the various clubs to which I belong." He belonged to every fraternal organization and every so-called "service" club in the city. "I am a great joiner", he said. A faithful minister will be a great separator!

What do you call yourself? What are you going to be? Do not aspire to foolish titles, but so exercise your ministry that no matter what else people may say of you, they may always think of you as "a man of God", and will know that whether you come or go, you are always about the Master's business.

There was a man years ago, in the days of the great Vassar, the evangelist whom the people affectionately called, "Uncle Vassar"—there was a man in a village where Vassar went to hold services, who was a secularist, an infidel. His wife was not a Christian, but was interested in her soul's salvation, and occasionally went to church. Her husband put every obstacle possible in her way, and when the great evangelist came to town, he laid his commands upon her, and forbade her, on pain of I know not what, to go to any of Mr. Vassar's meetings. One day when this man came home he found his wife in tears, and terribly concerned about her soul's salvation. Instantly he asked, "Have you been to Vassar's meetings?" "No." "Has he been here?" "Yes; he called at the door." "Why did you not send him about his business?" "He was about his business, and this is the result," she replied.

Let us be about our business—and the minister's business is the Master's business; and people will not fail to observe it.

Here was an old prophet. *Beware of old prophets.* It is sometimes said in our day that young men are responsible for the present apostasy. I do not believe it. My observation has been, in the last twenty-five years, that almost invariably the leaders of this movement have been older prophets; not young men; but older men that have evidently got out of fellowship with God. We must not assume that because a minister has some years behind him, he is necessarily to be emulated. When you get settled in a little country town, and find a minister there of another denomination, with gray hairs, and who in his little circle is very important, he may perhaps look down upon you. I know: I have been there. If you happen to get into conversation with him on these great matters, he may say, "Oh yes; I used to think like that myself." He is very superior, as much as to say, "Evangelicalism is much like the measles, an infantile disorder. You will get over it when you get to be my age. What did you preach about yesterday?" You will answer perhaps, "He that be-

lieveth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And then perhaps the old prophet from Bethel will say, as he has said to me, "I used to preach from such texts but I have outgrown all that." Beware of such prophets. Many of them have I known. "Let no man despise thy youth."

Ascertain whether the old prophet lives in Bethel; Bethel was the place where Jeroboam had set up one of his golden calves, and had erected an altar thereto. But no prophet had rebuked him. No voice had been heard in protest. This old prophet had borne no witness against Jeroboam's idolatry. Had the man of God reflected upon that fact, he might have known that a prophet who could be silent in the presence of such iniquity could not be a faithful messenger of Jehovah, nor a safe companion for one of His servants. Beware of the influence upon your own life of ministers who see no inconsistency in remaining silent when the gospel is denied, and continuing in the fellowship of a denomination which officially countenances in its colleges and its pulpits the repudiation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God. To know that a prophet has been silent before the altar of the golden calf is to know that he is a dangerous counsellor or companion of any one who would be true to Christ and His gospel.

The old prophet went after the man of God, and professed to quote to him the word of the Lord: "An angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water"—and the Scripture says, "But he lied unto him." Do not forget that a lying spirit may sometimes get into a man who has a reputation for being a prophet of the Lord. The day is coming when we must speak more plainly about the present-day apostasy. The day is upon us when we must recognize that many of the old prophets are doing the devil's business. If they have no message for Jeroboam in Bethel, they have no message of value for anybody.

God has His own way of giving His testimony. This young man who was immune to the blandishments of the king, and stood like a rock when he invited him to the palace for reward, was induced by one who professed to be a fellow-prophet, to go home with him. When you get to a small town to begin your ministry, you may be invited by other churches, and perhaps by their ministers, to attend garden-parties, strawberry festivals, bazaars, rummage sales, and all the other devices of the devil for raising money. Be careful. From all such God-dishonouring affairs you will do well to stay away. Find out whether the minister who seeks your company is really a man of God. When you have been in his company once, examine yourself to find out whether it has been good for your spiritual health. You will be called "singular", narrow and everything that is uncomplimentary—but you may still be "a man of God". That will ever be your worthiest and most honourable title. The man who is "a man of God", and keeps company with Him, can afford to brook the sneers of men, old prophets included.

Scarcely had this prophet finished his meal when his host, the lying prophet, spoke the truth; for so did the word of God come upon him that through that enemy the Lord spoke, and told him that because he had not been obedient to the voice of the Lord he should never be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. But that part of the story we must leave for another evening.

LABOURERS—FEW OR MANY?

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." That was said long ago, but in a tragic way it is still true. To be an instrument in the hand of God for thrusting forth labourers into His harvest, Toronto Baptist Seminary has been raised up.

We shall soon complete three-quarters of the school year, and, of course, we are looking ahead a few weeks to the summer vacation. One of the acute problems we constantly face in these days when Home Mission boards are finding it difficult to maintain their regular fields, is that of placing "summer students", by which we mean men who are student-pastors for the summer only. For many years such men have done much good work; for the spread of the Gospel, not to mention the practical experience for the men themselves, such good work must go on. But it requires money—not much, to be sure, in proportion to the amount of work done, but yet a considerable sum. Where there is a small church which employs a summer-pastor only, it is usually possible to meet some required amount, but what is to be done about places which should be, and may be, "opened up", where there is no such organization? Such places are not few, and the Seminary has men ready to go into them.

This year the School has enrolled six student-pastors. They have charge of churches the year around, and so do not fall under present consideration. But in addition we have in the School another eight who have had, besides experience in Christian work gained during the months here, one or more summers on a field. Then, too, we have, say, an equal number whom we think ready to take summer pastorates. On the other hand, we now know of some eight definite "openings", in only two or three of which there would be a fair guarantee of support. A man who has home support during his days in the Seminary, we may send to a field where he will receive only his board, simply and solely for the good he can do and the experience he will receive; but, unfortunately, most of our men do not fall in this class, and to keep them even in this School, where Dame Economy rules with such a stern hand, they must have help.

Some pastors and other Christian workers who read these pages, will know of places where Baptist work ought to be begun. Such would do us a great service by writing us at once, offering any useful suggestions. Other pastors could take a student assistant for the summer. We are sure of this because, even in a small church, we did it ourselves more than once. During our holidays the man supplied the pulpit. For the rest of the time the assistant did visitation, preached in an out-lying place, and made himself generally useful to the work, not to mention the valued fellowship which we personally enjoyed. A friend or two who could do so, helped us with money also. Where people become interested in the project, there may be little difficulty in obtaining board for the seventeen weeks of the summer vacation. Monies which would be given some other supply preacher, may be turned into the "Student Fund", and a thank-offering at the end of the season supplement this to, say, One Hundred dollars or more. (We tell prospective students who enquire the cost of attending the Seminary, that they can live on a Hundred Dollars for the school year with the utmost—emphasize that word—the utmost economy.) In such a plan is a blessing of giving, and also of receiving. Church members who have become interested in a young man during a summer will follow his future days with their prayers, feeling that he is one of their own. Thus may we lengthen the cords, as we strengthen the stakes, of our Union tent. —W. G. B.

BOOK REVIEWS

"THE RISEN LORD AND HIS DISCIPLES" by C. C. Dobson, M.A., published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Shilling Series, 110 pages.

After reading every word of this remarkable fresh little book I am convinced that the English curate who wrote it believes in verbal inspiration, not as a dry theory, but as the foundation for exact study of the words of Holy Writ. The purpose of the work is, "as far as the records allow, to reconstruct the history of these post-resurrection days, which ended with the Ascension, and, in so doing, to seek to draw out what we believe to have been the underlying purpose of

each appearance, and to give some explanation of some of the problems presented" (pp. 7f.), and that is what he does. The "studied purpose" of the Epiphanies would make fine preaching for Easter, now six weeks ahead; indeed, it is refreshing for any Lord's Day, for to the early Christians every Sunday was Resurrection Day. May we suggest that pastors buy the book—it is only 35c in this country—and with its help re-read the thrilling story of Him "that liveth and was dead". As an example of the author's dramatic gift we copy his beautiful suggestion of what must have happened at the Ascension:

The Master "raises His hands, and utters words of blessing. Instinctively they bow their heads in silent worship. They do not fall on their knees, for they are still standing when the two angels address them. Perhaps it is as much the sight of the wound-prints in His hands as His words, which makes them bow their heads. As He speaks they become conscious that His voice seems to be receding from them. They look up and are amazed to see Him rising from their midst, still speaking words of love and blessing, with hands stretched out over them. Just above their heads is one of the morning clouds, which hang about the mountain tops before the sun has strength to dissipate them. It is drifting past over them, and He rises into it. His form becomes enshrouded. The last they see of Him, as the cloud swallows Him up, is His feet with the nail prints. His voice is still heard even after His form is lost to view. The cloud drifts on, and His voice grows fainter until they can hear it no more. But the scene has cast a spell upon them, and they still watch the receding cloud as if they would still faintly penetrate its depth to catch a last glimpse of the beloved form" (p. 103).

"THE CALL OF THE SKY" by Hugh C. C. McCullough, published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1s., 128 pages.

"I firmly believe that God enables the ordinary man to do the extraordinary thing when the need arises," says this pioneering English Baptist pastor, and he speaks from intense experience. An orphan boy in the home of a "stern little Puritan", he compelled his minister to baptize him at the age of eleven. At seventeen he was in the army, and felt more intensely about his first reading of his Bible in the common tent than he did in facing his "first baptism of fire in France". After more than two hundred days and nights in the front line it is a lively picture that he draws of "this beastly business" one day's journey from London. He was an aviator when Armistice came, but there was for him another "Call of the Sky". "As I lay out in 'no man's land' on a covering patrol, a shell explosion had hurled me into the air and then buried me alive, rendering me unconscious. When I recovered memory in hospital, I made a vow to God that if I got better and finally came through the War, I would surrender my whole life to Him and serve Him on the foreign field" (p. 46). Training in Spurgeon's College to China he looked, but health said no. "And now, facing up to the call of the Homeland, I determined that I would not accept a prepared pastorate, but that I would take on pioneer work" (p. 67). In his first village pastorate God so blessed that seventy to eighty people would meet for prayer on a Saturday night. Then the need of "one of the largest working-class housing areas in the world" called loudly. Here the average age was twenty-three, and there were three children of school age to a house, with fifty thousand children receiving no Sunday school instruction at all. Against great odds prayer pains prevailed. Revival—"By revival I mean a sudden spontaneous visitation of the Spirit of God upon a company of worshipping people" (p. 109)—that kind of revival came. Other young pastors joining in team evangelism, much was done particularly in neighbouring villages. And so this young man gives his testimony to the world. Here is an example of the hand of God, here is advice to the Christian worker (there is a good chapter on open-air evangelism), here is encouragement to faith and effort. May we join in the closing words of the Epilogue: "My one great desire is to live my life for God on the inspirational maximum line, instead of at the irreducible minimum basis" (p. 128).

—W. G. B.

"To Testify . . . The Grace of God"

A number of copies of the little volume prepared in memoriam of Rev. W. J. H. Brown by his son, W. Gordon Brown, are still available, and may be had from this office at twenty-five cents per copy.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 11

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 11

First Quarter

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CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Lesson Text: Isaiah 24 to 27.

Golden Text: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."—Isaiah 26:4.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 26:1-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Hos. 13:9-16; Tuesday—Ps. 130:1-8; Wednesday—Prov. 3:1-10; Thursday—Luke 14:15-24; Friday—John 5:21-29; Saturday—I Cor. 15:50-58.

DIVINE PUNISHMENT (Chapter 24:1-23)

The desolate land (vs. 1-12)—The four chapters of this lesson form one continuous prophecy relating to the calamities affecting Judah, and the confidence in God expressed by those who trust in Him. In this section the desolation of the land is described. We are informed that it was due to the hand of God, that the inhabitants would be scattered abroad, that all sections of society would be affected, that the sin of the inhabitants was the reason for the judgment, and that, as a result, all mirth had ceased in the land. We note therefore, an exiled population, a neglected land, and a suffering people. Sin eventually brings evil consequences, always deprives of real joy, and creates unhappiness. The wrath of God abides upon it (Rom. 1:8); and we may observe the impossibility of escaping His judgment except by His mercy (Titus 3:5).

The remnant (vs. 13-16)—At the time of the national exile, a remnant would be left in the land, the members of which would lift up their voices in praise to God for His mercy toward them. And the exiles in other lands would unite with them in their praise. In the Babylonian exile, to which this probably refers, we know that the attention of the Jews was directed toward the Lord, and being weaned from idolatry by their sad experience, they turned again to the God of their fathers. Note the blessing of chastisement in impressing upon men the need of divine aid, and the duty of acknowledging the will of God as supreme. Affliction thus may become a blessing (Heb. 12:11; Ps. 119:67, 71).

Oppressors punished (vs. 16-23)—After referring to the sad condition of the people, with no escape from their plight (vs. 16-20), intimation is given of the punishment of those who oppressed them. Babylon and other nations were thus judged. There is a likeness, if not a distinct indication of the judgment to come upon the whole ungodly world on some future occasion, when nature as well as man will be affected thereby (2 Pet. 3:10). Warning respecting this event may well be given.

PRAISE FOR DIVINE POWER (chapter 25:1-12)

Enemies overcome (vs. 1-5)—As indicated in the previous chapter, God visits with judgment the enemies of His people. Here praise is given to Him for the manifestation of His power in this connection. The city was made an heap, the defenced city a ruin. Babylon became thus, and is now simply an heap. Note historically and devotionally the things mentioned respecting the actions of God. His "counsels of old are faithfulness and truth". He has been a "strength to the poor", a "strength to the needy in his distress", a "refuge from the storm", and a "shadow from the heat"; as well as a terrible adversary of His foes. He is a real Helper of all who trust Him—and they need fear no one (Heb. 13:6).

A feast of fat things (vs. 6-12)—In contrast with the destruction wrought upon foes, is the blessing bestowed by God upon those who submit to Him. On Mount Zion a feast of fat things is promised for all people. There is probably a twofold sense in which this has been fulfilled: first, nationally, on the return of the exiles to their own land; and, second, on the day of Pentecost when the gospel sounded forth from Jerusalem. There is possibly a third application,

respecting the return of the Lord. Several things are stated concerning the work of God at such a time. He would provide a feast of delicacies. Note the spiritual feast, present and future (John 6:35, 51; Rev. 19:9). He would destroy "the veil that is spread over all nations"; and thus clear away their ignorance of eternal matters. He would "swallow up death in victory" (I Cor. 15:54). He could "wipe away all tears" (Rev. 7:17; 21:4). And the proud He would bring down by His power. For all this His people would give Him praise, and "rejoice in his salvation". Note the blessing of salvation, with its present power over sin (Matt. 1:21), and its future glorious inheritance (I Pet. 1:4). For the child of God there will be no sorrow, no tears, no death, no parting, and no sin. He is privileged to live the resurrection life now (Col. 3:1), and later he will have the resurrection body (I Cor. 15:42-44). Death being swallowed up in victory.

A SONG OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD (26:1-21)

Peace (vs. 1-4)—The blessing of God puts joy in the heart, and a song on the lips. That contained in this chapter has a national significance, but it also has an individual application. The Israelites praised God for the strength of his city, and for the peace of its inhabitants because of their trust in the Lord. The child of God is at peace with God through Christ (Rom. 5:1). It is also his privilege to live a life of peace due to contact with the Lord (Phil. 4:7). The condition for continuous peace is the staying of the mind of Him. Too often the mind wanders, and the things of the world disturb the relationship, and unrest takes the place of peace. Note the possibility, purpose, conditions, power, and blessedness of peace.

Desire (vs. 5-11)—In this section, after intimating the overthrow of the wicked—fulfilled possibly in the fall of Babylon—the earnest desire of the trusting soul for God is intimated. Such a soul had waited for Him, had sought Him in the night, and had determined to seek Him early. Such a desire was sincere, righteous, wise, earnest, purposeful, and fruitful. It indicates the desire of the heart right with God, and longing for His intervention in the affairs of men. We need His presence these days, and pray and look for its manifestation. The wicked will not learn righteousness, therefore must be dealt with in judgment.

Restoration (vs. 12-21)—A contrast is instituted in these verses between the Israelites and their enemies—judgment being meted out to the latter, while the former enjoyed restoration after chastisement. For Israel, peace was ordained. Other lords had had dominion over the nation, but they were dead. God was the One Whom they recognized as Lord. Note, therefore, recognition of the lordship of God, of the fact He hears and answers prayer, and that He restores and protects His people. The resurrection of both the just and the unjust is clearly taught in Scripture (John 5:28, 29); also the eternal safety of the children of God. While the judgment rages they will be safely enclosed, as was Noah in the ark (Gen. 7:16).

GOD'S VINEYARD (27:1-13)

The vineyard (vs. 1-5)—In this brief song Israel is depicted as the vineyard of the Lord. He kept it, watered it, and protected it; and thus manifested His care over it. God chastised His people, but he failed not to punish their enemies, here referred to as leviathan; reminding us of the chief enemy of the Lord's people of all ages, "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). As a serpent he tempted Eve (Gen. 3:1), at which time he was informed by God of the bruising of his head by the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), later emphasized by New Testament writers (Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14; I John 3:8). Victory therefore is assured to the child of God. Satan, to him, is a defeated adversary, doomed to a fearful eternity.

Faithfulness (vs. 6-13)—Continuing the thought of the vineyard, intimation is given of the further fruitfulness of Israel, with the help of God. The vine will take root, and protected by the Lord, it will bear fruit. In this the return of the exiles is indicated, and in the following verses distinctly stated. As individuals, they would be gathered "one by one". Note God's interest, kindness, and care, respecting His people. He chastised them, but He continued to love them. And He is the same, "yesterday, and to-day, and for ever".

ONLY THIRTY-THREE MORE DAYS!

By that, we mean to the 31st of March, on which date the fiscal year ends for Jarvis Street Church, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and Toronto Baptist Seminary.

The Gospel Witness a Missionary

THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a missionary in the sense that it preaches the gospel to the unsaved; and carries instruction, comfort, and inspiration, to the Lord's saints in many lands.

What would you think of a home missionary who received a salary of less than 4c a week—or only \$2.00 a year? And what would you think of a missionary who managed to pay his own transportation out of that munificent sum? But that is what THE GOSPEL WITNESS does. And it has been used of God to bring large numbers of people to Christ in the home land.

And what would you say of a foreign missionary whose allowance was no more than \$2.00 a year? And what if that amount had to cover the cost of clothing, and food, and transportation to the most remote field, such as India, China, or Africa? THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a foreign missionary, and travels to the uttermost parts of the earth—and all its allowance amounts to for maintenance, travelling, and everything else, is \$2.00 a year.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a hospital visitor. It visits the sick; it comforts the bereaved; it goes into countless homes of sorrow, with a message of comfort. And the salary of this hospital visitor is less than 4c a week. It would not pay for one car fare in Toronto.

But more than that, THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a *Theological Professor*. It instructs young ministers. It steadies those who are tempted to turn aside. And in addition to that, it helps Sunday School teachers, and assists missionaries and Christian workers in more than fifty different countries, in many languages, and many climes.

Truth to tell, this versatile minister does not get enough to pay for the paper dress it wears, and is rather dependent upon its many friends to keep going. Help this worthy messenger to continue its work, by sending a substantial contribution to The Witness Fund between now and March 31st.

The School of the Prophets

Toronto Baptist Seminary is a real school of the prophets. It turns out ministers, missionaries, and trained workers for many forms of Christian service. Its graduates are scat-

tered all over the Province of Ontario, and indeed the Dominion of Canada. Some are in the United States; some are on foreign mission fields.

The Seminary has no Endowment Fund, and is dependent wholly upon the gifts of God's people. Every member of the Faculty believes the Bible to be the inspired and infallible word of God; and declares the whole counsel of God as understood by historic, evangelical, Christians called Baptists. It is free from fads and vagaries, and exists to produce symmetrically-developed, whole-hearted, old-fashioned, Baptists.

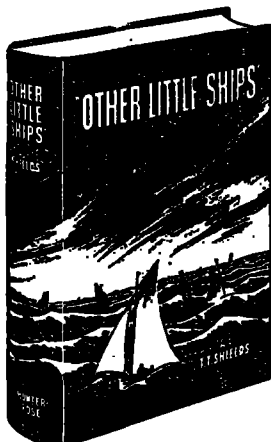
No gift would be too great for Toronto Baptist Seminary, even to the extent of half a million dollars. Nor could any sum be so small that it would not be appreciated. Help us to balance our books by the 31st of March.

Jarvis Street Church Members

For the funds to Jarvis Street Church we make our appeal to Jarvis Street members—to weekly offering contributors, to urge them to endeavour to make sure that all arrears shall be paid up; to some who do not use our weekly offering system, to remember that the sum of \$20.00 or \$25.00 at the end of the year does not total anything like the amount of people who regularly give \$1.00, \$2.00, or \$3.00 a week all the year round. We suggest to those who do not give systematically that they bear in mind that those who do have borne the greater part of the burden. Therefore try to make your offering by March 31st a very substantial one.

There is a sense in which Jarvis Street Church might be justified in appealing to those beyond its membership. If Jarvis Street Church were like the average church, and concerned itself mainly with its own work, and its contributions to missions, it would have little difficulty. But the greater part of the support both of THE GOSPEL WITNESS and of Toronto Baptist Seminary comes from the members of Jarvis Street Church; and for that reason we feel we should be justified in appealing to the Lord's stewards to remember also our ordinary church funds. Our appeal in this respect is especially to the members of the church, although we are not averse to others "listening in" to that appeal, and responding as the Lord may direct.

Please do not wait until the 31st of March. Send what you can at once; if you can send a little more later, do it. But it will greatly help us to have a steady stream of support coming in from now until March 31st. Please send your contribution at once.



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