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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 180 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A NEW SONG

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, March 1st, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."—Revelation 5:9, 10.

In the summertime it is my daily delight to spend a little time in my garden, to re-examine and admire the trees, to inspect the shrubs, to get down and have a little talk with the rock-plants, to look at the flowers, and to observe frequently that some of the perennials grow stronger and richer with every passing year. There is nothing particularly new about them, but they are always fresh. I may have examined them but the day before, yet I like to look at them again; and always I find it leads me to a deeper appreciation of God's handiwork in nature.

And if one had a great estate instead of a very modest city garden, I can fancy he would find a great deal of pleasure in surveying regularly his inheritance. Some years ago I was entertained at an ancient baronial castle in Ireland. My hostess, the wife of an Irish peer, with her husband, said, "Come, and let us walk up the stream as far as the salmon pool." Think of having a salmon pool on your own estate! We went and inspected it. If one owned such an estate, with some mighty castle, having within it perhaps a great fortune in plate, and jewels, and pictures of renown; if there were there some ancient armour, as there was in the castle to which I have referred, and other relics of antiquity, I can well imagine the owner of such an estate, frequently finding pleasure in walking about, examining all these things; and, as he did so, feeling a growing sense of ownership, saying, "All this is mine."

So ought the believer frequently to survey his inheritance in Christ, often to ask himself, "What does it mean to be a Christian? What is it to be a child of God—an heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus Christ?" To what raptures our souls would often be led, to what psalms of thanksgiving and praise our tongues would

frequently be inspired, were we more consistently and constantly to meditate upon the things of God, and literally to revel in the luxuries of divine grace!

This evening I shall attempt nothing new. I invite you to come with me as we walk about our estate, and see what it is to have a portion in the Lord Himself. We are admonished to "walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." Then shall we be better fitted to "tell it to the generation following".

In our day there are some who would persuade us that we have no inheritance of lasting value. There are those who seem to think that Christianity, and the inheritance of the believer in Christ, are about as useful as Casa Loma—not useful to live in, and of little value as a museum. We are told in some quarters that the Bible is largely outworn, and must be viewed differently from the way in which our fathers viewed it. We must free our minds of some of the Christian conceptions in which we were trained in childhood. As for the old hymns, there are those who would remove them altogether from our hymnals, or so modify them that they would bear little resemblance to the originals.

But that is nothing new. Human nature has always suffered from a superiority complex, even in the religious realm; and the more carnal men's religious conceptions are, the prouder are they likely to be. Yet it passes my comprehension how anybody can be proud of human nature as it is displaying its qualities in the world today. For some years after I became Pastor of this church, opinion in some quarters esteemed the man uneducated who had not received a final polish in the universities of Germany, thereby imbibing some of their infidelity. I do not know of any British subject of sense

who especially desires to go to Germany to complete his education in our day. Italy, the home of art and of an ancient empire noted for its jurisprudence, and the seat of a great organization which presumes still to call itself by a Christian name, has so behaved herself before the world as to alienate the respect of all other nations. Indeed, whoever looks abroad upon the world to-day, must surely conclude that human nature everywhere, even of the most refined order, even when it has been tutored and disciplined to the highest possible degree, is an unreliable quantity. If we have made the world what it is, surely we have nothing of which to be especially proud.

Look at almost any department of life to-day and you will find the world strangling itself to death by its own cleverness. If you had uncounted millions, and set yourself really to enjoy the rest of life, where could you go? The governments would take most of it from you, and with the rest of it, where could you go to find peace? I am a British subject, and I would rather live under the British flag than anywhere else on earth, yet it does seem that British statesmanship is utterly bankrupt. I can think of no one active in international affairs who displays real statesmanship. The conferences of the League of Nations, and the much discussed and apparently futile sanctions which were to stop Mussolini, remind me of committees in a Baptist Convention. I have been through it all; I know all about the League of Nations. The application of sanctions—what for? To stop Mussolini! But he is not stopped! If British civilization had not all but discarded the Bible, if the salt had not lost its savor, if biblical Christianity still coloured and directed the thought, and regulated the actions of men, so that we had here or elsewhere, statesmen who considered first of all what is right, the British Government would long ago have said to Mussolini, "Thou shalt not." Instead, the counsels of expediency and compromise have prevailed, and Ethiopia is being slowly bled to death. And this paralysing pacificism, from which Britain is now making a desperate effort to recover herself, has been induced by the so-called Christian churches and Christian pulpits and Christian colleges which have been a blight upon our civilization. They have undermined public confidence in the Word of God to such an extent that in our day there is no fear of God before men's eyes:

That is regrettable, but we shall look this evening at a picture that has to do with the end of things. It belongs to a time when the last college will have graduated its last class, when it will have issued its final diploma; when the last government will have registered its last failure; when human philosophies shall have been put to the test of human experience, and their fallacies shall have been demonstrated;—yes, when the last sermon shall have been preached, and the last cult shall have been invented, and shall have gone the way of all false religions.

A veil is drawn, and there is revealed a great multitude of people who are saved, and by some means are going to do what all our economists and political experimenters are endeavouring to find means to effect. They are going to reign on the earth. They will at last have attained to a condition of life, where men made in God's image will realize the end of their creation, and living fully, luxuriously, abundantly, all malignant, and even impoverishing powers subdued, they will reign on the earth. They will have succeeded. And when that day comes, there will be a new song, sung in the presence of Him Who shall have taken the book, and cancelled the mort-

gage on a bankrupt world. As He does so, and triumphantly takes possession of His purchased inheritance, the great multitude break forth into singing, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings"? Yes, or, a kingdom of priests—all of us kings; no poverty, no slavery, no underprivileged class. He has "made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

Come then with me and walk about Zion that we may learn how earth's trifles are displaced by towers, how her bitternesses are excluded by bulwarks, and her prisons and poverty and pain give way to palaces of exquisite delight and eternal splendour.

Our text speaks of the final appraisal of things. The opinion of this or that professor will have no value when this scene is set. This belongs to a time when all so-called Modernism shall have been swept away, when in God's light we shall see light. Then shall we see no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face; then shall we know even as also we are known.

I.

Then WE SHALL LEARN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, THAT IT WAS REDEMPTIVE IN ITS PURPOSE, notwithstanding all that the professors have said. He died to redeem us to God.

It is an indisputable fact that He died. How men have exercised their minds rightly to interpret the significance of His death! We have been told that He was a martyr to His principles, that He was a farsighted and foresighted man, Who lived in advance of His time, and suffered from the shortsightedness of His contemporaries who did not understand Him. We have been told that He came, indeed, to show us how to live—which is a half truth; and to show us how to die—which is another partial truth; that He came to set us "an example that we should follow his steps"—which also is true, but not the whole truth.

What is the real significance of His death? Why did Jesus Christ die? I give you the reason on the authority of a countless multitude, made perfect, without fault before the throne of God: they tell us that He died to "redeem us to God". That was the purpose of His death, really to purchase us. It is old-fashioned to sing, "Jesus paid it all." But nothing less than that is meant. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He was made a curse for us. He redeemed us to God by His blood.

I know of no surer test of a man's loyalty to the gospel than that which is involved in His reply to such a question as this, Where is the blood of Jesus Christ in your philosophy of things? What is it for? He died, but why did He die? What is the significance of His death? There are many bloodless religions; and, directly or indirectly, it is the influence of bloodless religions that will plunge this world in blood. It is forever true that if men will not have the blood of Christ, then their own must be shed. He only is the Prince of Peace. His principles alone can save us from catastrophe. But He died to redeem us to God.

Let me ask you who are Christians if you have learned properly to appraise the value of the blood of the Lord Jesus. You cannot say too much about His teaching;

you cannot too assiduously endeavour to follow His example. You cannot exaggerate the qualities of His person—His mercy, His longsuffering, His lovingkindness, His infinite tenderness, His grace. Human language cannot describe, the human imagination cannot, by its utmost reach, imagine the content of grace. But the heart of the whole matter is His blood. All that He was from all eternity, all that He is before the Father's throne, all that He is yet to demonstrate Himself to be when He shall come in glory and power with all the holy angels with Him—it is all involved in the crimson tide which flowed from His own heart. Blessed be God, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin". There is no other hope for the individual or the world.

But here is a great multitude "of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"; and they all sing the same song. They all declare, "Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." What a price has been paid for our redemption! Ill as the day is, multiplied and grievous as are present-day evils, things are not as bad as they might be. We still enjoy many liberties. We still have many privileges. We are still a highly-favoured folk. And some of these special privileges of ours have been procured for us, and preserved to us, at a tremendous price. I am very impatient with the thinking of men who tell us that the Great War accomplished nothing. I hate war, and daily pray, "Scatter thou the people that delight in war." Every man and woman of moral sense must hate war. While recognizing that, we must also recognize that sometimes it is inevitable. We are here this evening, within the walls of this place of worship, unfettered, and I am permitted to proclaim what I believe to be the gospel of the grace of God, because blood was shed. I am glad I am not a pastor in Germany. I am glad we are not under the heel of a German oppressor—as we should have been but for the war. And I never cease to entertain sentiments of profound gratitude toward those who, in our behalf, turned to flight the armies of the alien, and stood between us and an alien civilization. It was a terrible price, dear friends, which our noble men of all armies paid for the preservation of our liberties.

But oh, what was the price which purchased a liberty which can never be jeopardized, which obtained for redeemed souls a freedom like unto that of the angels? Who was it who redeemed us to God? None other than the Son of God. But there is no parallel, no analogy between His death and any other death from the beginning of time until now. Do not forget—I say it often; I said it to the children this morning—that the Creator is our Redeemer, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Maker of all worlds: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." If you take the crown of Deity from His brow, if you deny to Him the very essence of Deity, and reduce Him to the measure and level of a mere man, you rob Him of capacity to pay the price by which alone even one individual soul can be set eternally free. I have a protest—and while God gives me breath I shall not cease to utter it—against every man, every teacher, no matter what his name, who refuses to recognize and to proclaim Jesus as the eternal Son of God, as the One Who, from everlasting to everlasting, is God. Is Jesus Christ God to you? Unless it be true that He is God, His sacrifice can have no value. But He is God! Yes, He is God. We bow before Him, and exclaim, as did Thomas when he saw the risen Christ, "My Lord, and my God."

And when a man recognizes his sin, really understands its heinous quality, he is forced, at the same time, to recognize that none but a divine Redeemer can possibly break the shackles, and set him free. Unitarianism has no hope for the world, by whatever name it disguises itself.

But here is, not one man, but a multitude that no man can number, singing, "Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"—all of them redeemed by the payment of the same price.

And someone says Cowper's hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood", is rather offensive to our modern sense, that it is not in agreement with our improved conceptions of Christianity. I know a man who, when God's light shone into his heart, and when he saw what a sinner he was, and how much of hell he had in his own soul, felt that if all the oceans were blood, they could scarcely wash his sins away. Nor could they were it of a lesser quality than the blood that flowed from the wounds of the Man Who died at the place called Calvary. Some of us feel that we need a Fountain. Have you read of the man in the desert, with sand in his ears, in his hair, in his feet—everywhere—and just a drop of water to drink. The man says, "Oh, for a fountain of it, not only to drink, but that I might plunge in it, and be clean."

I am not surprised that some people do not like the idea of a fountain. When I was pastor of a little church, I went early one morning to make some pastoral calls. I called at a little log house at about eleven o'clock, thinking I should be in plenty of time to escape the mid-day meal. I found the family had been astir at four or five o'clock in the morning, and had done half a day's work by eleven. They were hungry, and it was time for the mid-day meal. They were very hospitable, and insisted that I remain. I did not want to offend them, and I accepted their invitation. I shall never forget that meal. It was served in the kitchen, with no cloth on the table. The men came in from their work and took no pains to change their clothes, or to remove the evidence of their morning's toil. The woman of the house—I shall not attempt to describe her, for her condition was worse than that of the men.

The meal was put on the table. The meat was pork—half an inch thick, burned black on both sides, and raw in the middle; and everything else was in keeping. But when the meal was spread, the father at one end of the table, said, "Turn in and help yourself; see that you make out your dinner." Did you ever have anyone say that to you? It is easier to "make it out" than make it in sometimes! I took some bread and butter, and made a feint at the conglomeration of impossibilities. But there was no apology on the part of my hostess. She did not say, "I am sorry you caught us unprepared." She was blissfully unconscious that any apology was due. She had not the remotest idea that other people did not live where she lived, and as she lived.

She reminded me of some doctors of philosophy, some preachers, too, who say they do not need the blood, nor a fountain of any sort. If only they could see themselves as God sees them, they would know that to invite the Holy One into that heart of corruption would be to offer an insult to the Majesty of heaven, unless something were done to cleanse the sin away. My dear friends, we need a Fountain, a Fountain filled with blood—and it must be

drawn from Immanuel's side, "God with us". It must have in it the wealth of the universe in solution in order that it may cleanse away our sin of deepest dye. But blessed be God,

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

I think we will continue to sing that hymn in this place.

But here they come, multitudes from India, China, Japan, Africa, Europe, America—from the whole world, "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation", with all their orientalism and occidentalism. "East and west, and never the twain shall meet"? Yes, they will; they will meet in the Fountain filled with blood. Every sort of people will be cleansed there, all of them redeemed in the same way. Nothing but a fountain, nay, *the* Fountain, could effect the redemption and regeneration of a world!

"And hast made us unto our God kings." I am going to be a king some day. If you are redeemed by blood, you will come into your own, and will regain, by God's grace, the power of which sin has robbed you. We shall be a kingdom of priests, with free access to the presence of God. He will multiply His Levites. The one great High Priest, having entered into the holiest of all with His own blood, and by one sacrifice for sin forever having consecrated forevermore everyone who believes in Him, we shall be spiritual Levites, to minister at that one altar, and to offer to Him the sacrifice of praise which is the fruit of lips giving thanks to His name. At last a day of peace and joy, a day without shadow, a day of growing splendour, of never-ending glory, shall dawn for all redeemed by blood.

Do not say that I am against new things. Let nobody say that we are so conservative in Jarvis Street Church that we want nothing new. There are many old things we would fain be rid of—the "old man" is one, and all that belongs to him. And there are some new things we greatly covet. We desire to see men made new creatures in Christ Jesus. We believe in a new birth. We believe it is possible for people to rise from the grave of Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life. We believe in new things. We believe in having new clothes, a robe of righteousness which we can wear even on the judgment day. We believe in Him Who says, "Behold I make all things new", therefore some day we shall have a new heaven, and a new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness." There will be a regenerated earth, and we shall reign on the earth. We shall have new possessions, new standing before God, in a new city. And when the old order has passed away, we shall have a new song. You say, "I thought you believed in the old songs?" Yes; but we are going to have a new song, which we shall sing in that new land, amid new conditions.

And I will tell you what the theme of that song will be: it will be about the Lord Jesus. He will be the theme of our praises for ever. We shall never have done glorifying Him: He will be the theme of Heaven's new song.

But though we sing of Him what excellency, what glory, shall our song ascribe to Him? The glory of creation, of providence, of government? No! No! The wonders of creation will have become commonplaces in our thought. The man with the microscope and the man with his telescope will say, "I pushed back the boundaries

of sense and peered into the realms of the unseen, and brought within range of human vision wonders hid from ordinary sight. I thought I was very clever; but that seems as nothing now. I do not need the telescope now: I have a grander Subject to engage my thought; I have an infinitely greater Wonder than the human mind could even imagine." What can it be? Hear them singing, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." What! Ah yes, the blood may not have a very large place in the new hymns, but it will have an exclusive place in the song we shall sing before the Throne by and by. We shall sing about nothing but the blood.

Yes, and even here,

"I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest,"—

and sometimes when I am preaching, I think I can tell who are Christians. When I make the most trite remarks, when I say the thing that has been said ten thousand times before, when I speak of the blood, I can feel the response of renewed souls. More than that, I know the Spirit of God approves, as though He would say, "I am with you to help you when you magnify the blood; for that is my way of saving men." "A new song"? Yes; but—

"... when in scenes of glory
We sing the new, new song;
'Twill be the old, old story
Which we have loved so long."

There is nothing else worth hearing, nothing else worth telling. God prepare us by His grace that we may have membership in that great choir, and, having been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, at last be brought into harmony with the whole universe, for John said, "I listened, and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

If you would be in harmony with God, and with everything that proceeds from God, you must be reconciled to God by the death of His Son; the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son must cleanse you from all sin.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that we must beg this mercy of Thee, that Thou wouldst in grace look into our hearts, for our lips fail us.

What language shall we borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?

We have no language. We beg Thee, O Lord, to accept the adoration of our hearts because our lips cannot utter the praise we feel. We are sinners. Thou only knowest how great our sin is. We thank Thee that Thou didst show many of us our lost condition, so that we plunged into that Fountain, and, though vile even as the dying thief, we washed our sins away. O Lord, we covet every man and woman in this house for Thee. We fain would bring them, had we the power, to plunge beneath this crimson tide. O Spirit of God, Eternal Spirit by Whose grace and power our glorious Lord offered Himself as a Lamb without blemish and without spot, come, we pray Thee, in mighty power to the hearts of men and women this evening, and make us to know that none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. May this be a night of salvation, a night of happy home-coming to many a prodigal, a night wherein the angels, in anticipation of the song of which we have been speaking, shall even now rejoice in the presence of God. God, hear us, and glorify Thyself for Thy name's sake, Amen.

THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, February 27th, 1936.

Fifth 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)

Lecture Text: I. Kings, chapter 13 (continued)

Our lecture text once again is in the thirteenth chapter of the first book of Kings. We shall begin with the twenty-third verse. I propose to confine myself this evening to a study of these verses, although they may seem to record an incident of but secondary importance. They suggest a problem which faces all believers—the problem of divine guidance, how one may know the will of God, and how one may distinguish between the many voices which call to him.

I.

We observe that **THIS MAN, WHO WAS A TRUE PROPHET OF JEHOVAH, WAS GRIEVOUSLY DECEIVED.** By an examination of this incident we may learn how even believers who sincerely desire to know and do the will of God, may be led into grave error.

You will observe that *this prophet had had direct communication with God.* He had received a divine commission about which he himself entertained no doubt whatever. It had been his privilege to hear the word of God for himself. When the brethren of Joseph came to Egypt the second time, and after Joseph had identified himself, and had commissioned them to give to their father his message, he said, "Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you—when you return home, and our father Jacob finds it difficult to believe the extraordinary message which you will convey to him, and when he asks you for your authority, tell him that you received the message directly from Joseph himself, and not through any intermediary." It was as though he had said, "Look at me again. Your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you."

So also this prophet, described as "a man of God out of Judah", had received a commission from God; he had been told what to do at Bethel; and he had obeyed that commission to the very letter, because he believed the word he had received was really the word of God. Men do not hold communication with God since the completion of the canon of Scripture, through visions and dreams. We all may wisely be skeptical about our dreams—and about other people's dreams too. You can afford to disregard the word of anyone who claims to have had a particular, personal revelation from God, aside from the Word itself. But we may know through the Word of God, as unmistakably as did the prophets of ancient time, what God would have us do. The Word of God is given to every one of us, and we may be sure of the will of God in respect to any matter if we address ourselves to the task of understanding what the will of the Lord is.

There is a sense in which every true Christian is a prophet. That is to say, we are commissioned, every one of us, to bear witness to Him Who is the Sum and Substance of all prophecy. "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem; and in all Judæa, and in Samaria,

and unto the uttermost part of the earth." But we cannot bear witness of anything of which we are not absolutely certain. A doubtful witness is of no value in any court. A witness is not called to express his opinion, or to argue a case: but merely to tell what he unquestionably knows of the case in hand. That is our duty, to prophesy in the name of the Lord. In the sense in which this prophet carried the Lord's message to Jeroboam, we also must bear witness to the gospel which is the sum of the law, made perfect, completely fulfilled, in Christ. It is our privilege, therefore, to know for ourselves from His Word what the will of the Lord is.

The Bible contains explicit precepts which give unmistakable direction respecting moral questions. But in the Bible too, are wrapped up, principles of righteousness, of truth, of equity, of charity, of forbearance. There are many problems in life concerning which we cannot find an explicit precept of Scripture. Someone once asked me why the Lord did not put in the Bible express prohibitions, as for example, to the effect, "Thou shalt not smoke", or "Thou shalt not go to the theatre", and so on. I replied that we are not under the law, but under grace. The principles which should govern the conduct of a Christian man or woman are in the Book, and if the word of Christ dwells in us richly with all wisdom, we need be in no doubt as to what we ought to do in given circumstances. It is our privilege, then, to hear directly from the Lord, to go to the Bible for ourselves.

Observe, however, that *this man listened to what was said to be the word of the Lord;* but it reached him through an intermediary. His first message he had received directly from the Lord Himself: the second message claimed to be from the Lord, but it came to him indirectly.

In my early ministry I had been preaching for about a year when there fell into my hands a little book entitled, "Jesus is Coming", by W. E. Blackstone. I was a young Christian, and had been so exercised with the great truth that the Lord had come once, and, coming, had made provision for my salvation, that my attention had not especially been directed to the second coming of Christ. I read Dr. Blackstone's little book, and it made a strong appeal to me. I read it eagerly until I thought I knew something about the subject of which it treated, so I announced that I would preach a series of sermons on the second coming of Christ. I arranged them in order, designing to elaborate the teaching of that little book. I got on fairly well with the first two or three sermons, but when I came to a certain section of the book—which I had so readily accepted in a cursory reading—and compared it with Scripture, I soon found I was unable to discover scriptural support for certain aspects of Dr. Blackstone's teaching.

Years later—I will not tell you how many—I was in Los Angeles, and got to know Dr. Blackstone. He was then a very old man, and rather deaf. He came to a meeting which I was to address, and he told me that he had not heard an address for many years. I said to him, "If you will do what I tell you, and sit where I arrange, you shall hear me this afternoon." It was an afternoon meeting in "Bob" Shuler's church, Trinity Methodist Church. When the address was over Dr. Blackstone asked if he might say a few words. He was a most charming old gentleman who won everyone's affection. He asked the congregation to pray that his little book, "Jesus is Coming", might be admitted to Russia. He

said he was very glad that people in Russia now had the privilege of reading the Bible, but added, "But people might read the Bible fifty years without seeing some of the things that are in my little book." Had he been a younger man I should have been disposed to answer him by saying, "If they were to read it for a hundred years, they would not find them, for the reason that some of the things in your book are not in the Bible at all."

My experience with that little book before I had reached my majority, in attempting a series of sermons on the Second Advent, once and for all converted me from the error of Darbyism. Nobody can hold that view who will without prejudice consult the Word of God.

The difficulty with many of us is that we are disposed to exalt persons, as perhaps this young man did the old prophet, to a place of authority to which they are not entitled. For example, I have read of some of our friends called Brethren who, when faced by the testimony of Scripture against the theory of the rapture of the church before the tribulation, and the whole futuristic programme, and when asked, "Where is the scripture for it", would reply, "But a godly man like Mr. Darby could not have been mistaken." Such an assumption is akin to the assumption of Papal infallibility. That which is true can always be verified by God's Word. Let us highly resolve never to exalt the word of anybody to a position of equality with the Word of God. No matter how experienced one may be, nor what his scholarship may be, nor what his spiritual stature, there is no human being who may not be mistaken, even in the evening time of life. Do not follow men, but keep to the Word of God itself.

This man was deceived because he received second hand what was said to be the word of God. I recommend you students not to get your sermons second hand—not even from Spurgeon, or Parker, or McLaren. Read the sermons of these and other Biblical preachers. But do not preach other men's sermons: preach your own; which shall grow out of your personal study of the Word of God.

II.

Let us now enquire HOW THIS YOUNGER PROPHET MIGHT HAVE AVOIDED THE ERROR INTO WHICH HE WAS UNWITTINGLY BETRAYED. When Jeroboam, following the restoration of his hand, invited the prophet to go to his house and eat bread, and receive at his hand a reward, the prophet said, "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord." But when he had left Bethel he was overtaken by the old prophet who said to him, "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." While the younger prophet had said, No, to the king, he accepted the invitation of the older man, who claimed to be in the prophetic ministry.

How might he have avoided it? He had, with some show of respect, declined the invitation of the king, on the ground that his divine commission forbade his acceptance; but when the older man calling himself a prophet, professed to speak to him on the authority of a divine revelation he was confronted with a greater temptation. How could it have been possible for a young man to withstand such a temptation, and steadfastly to

go on in his course in spite of what the older prophet said to him?

First of all, *he ought to have taken time to consider.* Do not be tricked into too hasty a decision on any matter about which there may possibly be more than one reasonable opinion. Time is never lost employed in such consideration. While there is any element of uncertainty as to the propriety of a proposed course, do not take it. If you come to a place where there is more than one road, and you are not sure which you should take, the best thing to do is to stop until you are sure. Such wisdom is implicitly enjoined in the scripture which says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Whoever faces two possible courses with uncertainty, and takes either of them without first making sure it is God's way, incurs the risk of going contrary to the will of God. Not knowing it to be the way of the Lord, he sins in presuming to use his own judgment instead of waiting until he is sure of the direction of the will of God.

The question then arises, *How may we be sure that we are right?* How may we "try the spirits whether they are of God"? Let us look at the case before us. *This man had no doubt whatever of the genuineness of his own commission.* God had spoken to him unmissably. And furthermore, *his commission had been verified in his experience.* The Lord had said that if he cried against Jeroboam's sin, "the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out"; and as he cried against Jeroboam's idolatry, "the altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord". He did as he was told, and even as he prophesied the Lord fulfilled His word, and verified it in the man's own experience. Therefore he did not need to seek confirmation of anybody else; so far as his commission was concerned, he knew beyond all possibility of doubt that thus far he was in the way of the Lord.

Now let me ask, Can anyone in our day be as sure of the word of the Lord as that? Have you not put God's word to the proof again and again in such a way that it would be impossible for anyone to persuade you that your experience of God's grace was not real and genuine? What do you know about the word of the Lord in your own experience? How can we be sure we have really heard the word of the Lord? There are some things I cannot explain to you; there are some things you cannot explain to me. But I am sure that every true believer here has had experiences with God that millions of contrary voices could not disprove. Again and again I have known it to be so. If we take time to refresh our memories even in our own experience we shall recall many a confirmation of the word of the Lord coming out of His dealings with us in grace.

This young man *ought to have taken time too to compare what the old prophet said with what he knew God had said to him.* There is no necessity for any genuine believer being tricked by the teachings of Modernism. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Which does not mean that you are as wise as Solomon, or as infallible as the Pope claims to be, but that, with respect to the great verities of the Christian revelation, you know from your own ex-

perience and from the witness of the Holy Spirit in your own heart, that these things are true—and all the books that have been written, or could be written, could not possibly disprove the truth of that which is written “not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”

I need no argument to prove the Deity of Christ. Some years ago I was called by one of the city newspapers which said that a certain Unitarian minister of New York—at least he was a Unitarian, and who had once been a Baptist minister (since then he has abandoned Unitarianism for Humanism), was coming to Toronto to deliver a series of lectures, and that he had expressed surprise that, in view of this announcement, he had not received a challenge from Dr. Shields to debate with him. The newspaper enquired whether I had any answer to make. I replied, “Only this: Give the gentleman my compliments, and tell him the subject he is discussing, so far as I am concerned, has long since reached the realm of absolute certainty, and is therefore not debatable.”

It is possible to reach certitude in respect to religious truth. You can be sure, for example, that Jesus Christ is God. Of that I am absolutely sure. Can you be sure that, when He died on the cross, He died instead of you, and that His blood does wash away your sins? Yes! I know I am sure of it. Can we be sure that we have been born again? I cannot tell you how the miracle is wrought, but I know it has been wrought.

Very well, if there are certain fixed principles of truth wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God when we are made new creatures in Christ, in such a way that we are established in that truth, and cannot be shaken, how may we know when a certain prophet prophesies that which is contrary thereto? We must take time to compare spiritual things with spiritual. That is what this man ought to have done. “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.” The younger man ought to have said, “That cannot be true, because God Himself told me the opposite; and God never contradicts Himself.”

A friend of mine, a very wise man, and a man well taught in the Scriptures, and with a great deal of practical common sense, told me of a certain ultra-pious woman, who was so spiritual that she could scarcely find anybody worthy to associate with her, who was a member of his congregation. He visited her when she had been absent from the services for some time, and said to her, “I have not seen you at church lately, Mrs. So-and-So.” “No, Pastor. I do not go very often now.” “And why not? Have we offended you?” “Oh, no.” “Why, then, do you not come?” “Because the Lord has told me to stay at home with Him, and study the Bible.” “No, He did not tell you that.” “But, Pastor, you must not say that. The Holy Spirit told me that I must stay at home and study the Bible.” “I am absolutely positive that the Holy Spirit never told you any such thing.” “But how can you know?” “Because”, said the minister, taking up his Bible, “this is the voice of the Holy Spirit; and He says the very opposite in the word of God. He says we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. Therefore whatever spirit spoke to you, my dear sister, I am sure it was not the Holy Spirit.”

There is much of that error nowadays. Some people

imagine they are too wise to need the direction of the Word of God. They think they have outgrown the Bible. They believe they receive special revelations from God. That which is contrary to the word of God cannot be of God.

I would warn you students of another error. Do not talk about being “led”. Speaking of a certain course, do not say, “I was led.” If you are led, you will be on the right road, and will not need to advertise the fact. If you start from Toronto for Montreal, the proof that you are on the right road will be your arrival in Montreal. If you are “led” of the Spirit of God, you will walk in wisdom’s ways.

Furthermore, *do not assume that you are right because you have spent much time praying.* That, too, is a common error of the day. A person may contemplate a certain course and pray for guidance. But it may be doubted whether there is any advantage in telling others he has prayed. It is quite possible for one to think he is praying to God when he is like the Pharisee who “prayed thus with himself.” What he calls prayer may consist in turning his proposed course over in his mind again and again, until by much repetition he convinces himself that he has divine sanction for what he wants to do. I have known people to pursue the practice of repeating their own desires in the form of prayer so often as to render themselves ultimately incapable of distinguishing between their own self-will and the will of God. They assume that whatever they want to do, God has commanded them to do. Instead we should take a contemplated course into the light of God’s Word, and use our intelligence, thus enlightened and informed, to determine our course. In such case, we must, of course, pray, but pray for an understanding of God’s word and way, rather than by much speaking in the form of prayer confirm our own desire and will.

There is no ultra-spiritual heresy which, by the frequent repetition of prayer may not compel the mind to imagine it has obtained Divine sanction, when all that has really occurred has been the substitution of a psychological reaction for the definite and unmistakable teaching of the word of God. Let us ever aim to keep on solid scriptural ground.

When thus you have tried the spirits, and find that you are counselled to take a course that is opposite to the plain teaching of the Word of God, be assured that whether such counsel be of your own or another’s mind, it cannot be of God. To me, it is amazing that students of the Word of God should ever presume to set, or even to ascertain approximately, the time of the Lord’s return. Why? Because the Word of God says, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” That is enough. No matter who comes to you with a word that is contrary to that, say, “I cannot listen to you, brother; the Bible will not allow me. It is not for us to know.” The young prophet might, in that way, have avoided the trouble into which he brought himself.

However, having allowed himself to be deceived, *he had to pay the price of his sin.* Some of us, when we get into a complicated situation of our own making, and do not know which way to go, say it is one of the “all things.” I know God sovereignly overrules our blunders, but we all make unnecessary trouble for ourselves when we take matters into our own hands and fail to consult the divine Oracle.

III.

Look now at THE MEANS WHEREBY THE PROPHET WAS PUNISHED FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE, AND THE TEACHING INVOLVED THEREIN. The prophet went away, riding on the ass which the older prophet had provided for him; and he was slain in the way by a lion. Whether the Lord promises mercy or judgment, we need not be at pains to enquire how the Lord will fulfil His word. God always has an instrument waiting to do his pleasure. No matter how difficult it may seem, you may be sure that when God has spoken, He will find His own way of fulfilling His word. In the old days, before means of transportation had been multiplied as they are to-day, when anyone wrote you, saying, "I shall arrive in Toronto on a given day", you could call up the railway office and ask the time of the arrival in Toronto of the last train by which a man could come from New York, or from whatever city you were expecting your friend. Having learned that the last train from that point was in for the day, and your guest had not arrived, you could say, "Well; we may as well go to bed; he will not come to-night." How did you know? There was no way he could come after a certain hour. The last train was in. But now, when anyone says he is coming, he may come by train, by motor-car—or he may drop down from the skies, having come by aeroplane. Our means of travel are multiplied. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky." We never know how God will come to us, by what train He will arrive, what instrumentality He will employ—nor need we enquire. If He has promised, be it mercy or wrath, He will be at no loss for means to fulfil His word.

Incidentally, look at *the light this throws on the sovereignty of God over nature*. How did it happen? There is a lion, a lion has somehow come out of the forest; and he slays the prophet. There the prophet's body lies: he is dead. The lion is standing by. He has not torn the body; has not attempted to eat it. There is the ass standing by: the lion had not killed him. The lion did just as much as God wanted him to do—and no more. He visited the prophet—and stopped. Passersby marvelled as they saw the living lion and ass, and the dead prophet.

There is a beautiful story in the Book of a prophet who needed something to eat, and it is written; "The word of the Lord came unto him, saying; Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." Later the Lord said, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon; and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."

All realms are subject to the sovereign power of God, and He has His own way of keeping His word. I heard a man say once, respecting the record of the longevity of the patriarchs (he was a great Hebrew scholar), "Brethren, I cannot find in all human history any corroboration for those chapters. Outside of the Bible, there is no record of a man's having lived to the age of Methesulah, or to that of many of those who lived fewer years than he. On the face of it, it seems improbable—nay, impossible. I will go farther and say, if you were to bring me that record in any other book than the Bible, I would tell you instantly, It is not

true; I do not believe it. I could not believe such a record outside the Bible. But it is there, and the Bible, to me, is the word of God."

That great scholar took a sound position when he thus spoke. If you were to tell me this story of a lion that killed a man, and did not eat nor tear his flesh, but stood meekly by with the ass without injuring it, I should say, "That is a fairy tale." I would not believe that outside the Bible. It would be contrary to nature. It would be supernatural. But that is exactly what I expect in the Bible, because it is a supernatural Book. Do not be tripped up by people who try to reconcile science with religion. Where science agrees with religion, well and good. Where it does not, so much the worse for science. We may well wait until science arrives at finality. Meanwhile, we have a God Who is sovereign over all nature. If thus He could use a lion, let us thank God that we have such a sovereign God as He. I would not believe the story of Daniel in the lions' den if it were outside the Bible. But I can understand Daniel's explanation of it: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." Blessed be His name, we have a God Who can shut a lion's mouth; and if He shut a lion's mouth, He can shut other mouths—and for that, let us be thankful!

IV.

Let me remind you of THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF THE WHOLE STORY. You say, "A lion and an ass both living, and a dead prophet?" That is extraordinary. But here is a problem more difficult of solution than that, and that is, *the old prophet*. The most puzzling thing in the universe is human nature. What a strange man this old prophet was! What did he do? He was responsible for the young prophet's death. He betrayed him. It was his false message that had led him into all the trouble. And yet, as soon as he heard the young man was dead, he said, "It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him." The older man had a subconscious conviction of the truth of God's word, even when he did not believe it himself.

When people say they do not believe the Bible is the word of God, do not believe them—even when a preacher says it. Yes, I mean just that. This old prophet knew that the young prophet had spoken the word of God. Go you and speak the word of God. People may not accept it, or obey it; but the word of God is never without its own witnesses.

This old prophet *acknowledged the untruthfulness of his own testimony*, for he said, "It is the man of God, who was disobedient" to the word of God. How did he disobey it? Did the old prophet believe he preached the word of the Lord that day? Not at all. Talk about these Modernists being "sincere", and "sincerely mistaken". I believe that half of them, like the old prophet, have a subconscious conviction that the gospel is true. If they believe what they say is true, they ought to be in an insane asylum, for Modernism is the philosophy of fools. This man had an underlying respect for the true prophet of the Lord. Be true to the Lord: Men may not laud you to the skies, or especially praise you, but notwithstanding they will have a wholesome respect for you.

The old prophet came and took the body of the prophet,

and put it on the ass, and brought it back, and buried it in his own grave. The Baptist Union of Great Britain, officially, is shot through with Modernism of the worst sort—with practical Unitarianism. But in the Church House in Southampton Row there is a heroic figure, more than the size of a man, of C. H. Spurgeon, and a couple of years ago they vied with each other in celebrating the greatness of C. H. Spurgeon—and yet they spend all their energies in denying everything he taught. "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them." You will come into your own after a while. They will say some kind things of us when we die. I expect a few people will say one or two nice things about me when I am out of their way—they may perhaps come to the funeral, and perhaps help to bury me, who knows?

But in spite of it all, Jeroboam went on in his sin; deceived by its deceitfulness, his heart was hardened, and he rapidly ripened for judgment. Verses thirty-three and thirty-four supply material for a volume in themselves. But my word to you especially this evening is, Make sure that you get your direction first hand. I heard Dr. A. C. Dixon say rather an amusing thing once. His father was a pastor in a little country church for more than fifty years. When Dr. Dixon was called to a city pastorate, he got a long letter from his father, urging him not to accept. His father said, "Do not accept a call to the city. You have a family, and you do not know what sort of food they will get in the city. My advice to you, Clarence, is, Never go anywhere to live where you cannot keep your own cow." Dr. Dixon's father was suspicious of city milk! He believed in going to headquarters! He wanted to be sure that he got real milk. Having told that story, I can see Dr. Dixon now as, holding his Bible aloft, he said, "My brethren, keep your own cow. Do not take canned stuff. Get the sincere milk of the Word." Go to the Lord yourselves, and learn to live your life before Him. Then the path of the just shall be as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER

As a rule, we do not like anonymous letters, but anonymity is sometimes justified. Last week we received the following letter:

Toronto, Ontario,
February 26th, 1936.

Dr. T. T. Shields,
Jarvis Street Baptist Church,
Toronto, Canada.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I am enclosing a little gift, in His name, which I would ask you to use in whatever way you may think best for the spreading of His gospel and the teaching of His Word.

(Signed) A Helper.

The "little gift, in His name", enclosed in the above letter consisted of two fifty-dollar bills. The bills were not anonymous! They were duly signed, and good for \$100.00 at the bank.

We take this opportunity of thanking our anonymous helper. His letter was a great encouragement to us, and we hope its publication may inspire others to follow his example; not necessarily by withholding their names, for we always feel a little better satisfied when we are able to thank people personally. But in any event, send us your support.

Some Other Letters

It has been a long time since we published letters from our GOSPEL WITNESS mail. But that has not been because they have not been received: we have been restricted in their use by the limitation of space. The letters below are samples of many received. We are most grateful to these friends, and to all others from whom we have heard. Following are the letters:

Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., Feb. 18, 1936.

Dear Miss Stoakley:

We have your letter of the 6th asking help for THE GOSPEL WITNESS fund; and as we just received some unexpected funds, more than we had asked for, we are persuaded it is God's purpose that we send a portion to meet the need of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, also the Seminary; so we are enclosing our cheque for \$100; to apply \$50 for the WITNESS and \$50 for the Seminary, that we may be workers together with God and your work for Him, and pray His richest blessing upon this work. We trust Dr. Shields will return to his work fully recovered.

Yours in Christ's service,
(Signed)

Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., Feb. 18, 1936.

Gentlemen:

I cancelled my subscription to the GOSPEL WITNESS about the middle of last month, however my wife and I have missed it so much that I herewith send you \$2.00 for another year's subscription beginning Jan. 19th last if possible. What with the Modernists throwing the Bible out the window three chapters at a time we hardly know where to turn for a really good sermon except to your publication. Please send the paper to

(Signed)

Attorneys at Law, Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 26, 1936.

Dear Miss Stoakley:

Your letter of February 6 came very promptly, but not until to-day was I able to comply with your request—even in a small way. I hasten to put in the usual five and you use it for any purpose that needs it most.

I could not get along without THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I devour that just as soon as it comes to the office. I am pleased to note that Dr. T. T. has returned and is his former self again, but let me say it quietly and don't tell the Doctor about it,—your congregation was well cared for during his absence by his brother, E. E. Both are mighty preachers of the gospel and I am enjoying every whit of it.

With best wishes,
(Signed)

Piedmont, Calif., Feb. 18, 1936.

Dear Miss Stoakley:

I am sorry that Dr. Shields has had to be so laid aside, though he surely needed the rest. I hope he will return "as good as new." I have been hoping to write him personally—and still am. He said some things lately of which I greatly approve, and I want him to know it.

I have greatly enjoyed Rev. E. E. Shields' sermons. Am enclosing \$5.00 toward the publication of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. God bless you all.

Yours and His,
(Signed)

To All Gospel Witness Subscribers

To all our subscribers who have not yet written us, we enter this further plea. Hundreds who read this intend, between now and March 31st, to send us a contribution. It would greatly help us, and relieve our anxiety, if you would send your contribution now instead of waiting until the end of the month.

The Week-End in Jarvis Street

The week-end was a period of special joy to the Jarvis Street congregation. In the first place, there was a great prayer meeting Saturday night. We should think not more than half a dozen seats were vacant; and the two-hour period was spent in earnest intercession.

Sunday morning the School attendance was 1,131. Practically the entire School came to the church service. (We seldom have less than 1,000 from the School in the morning service). There was a great congregation. The church may be said to have been filled, with parts of it crowded. Radio facilities had been installed, and the service began at 10.50. Promptly at eleven o'clock we heard the announcement, "London calling the Empire", and a few seconds later we heard the speech of His Majesty, King Edward VIII. The congregation rose as the sound of the National Anthem reached us by radio, and remained standing throughout the King's speech. This was followed by the National Anthem, coming from London again by radio. We are blessed with an unusual organist, who was able in but a second or two to detect the key, whereupon the organ picked up the strain from London, and the whole congregation sang the National Anthem. This concluded, the morning service proceeded in the regular way.

Not less than one hundred churches of all denominations in Toronto broadcast the King's speech, which was heard, in Jarvis Street at least, and we presume in other churches, quite as distinctly as if the King had been speaking from the platform. Most of the churches in the city were well filled for the morning service, so that His Majesty's first broadcast since his accession must have been heard by many thousands in Toronto.

At the conclusion of the morning service, a number responded to the invitation to confess Christ. Again in the evening there was a great congregation; baptism was administered; and the sermon appearing in this issue was preached. The regular service was followed by a very largely attended Communion Service. Twenty-two members received the hand of fellowship. Altogether it was a day of very definite blessing.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Pastors' and People's Conference

The Pastors' and People's Conference of the Brantford-Hamilton District will hold its next meeting in Orangeville, on Tuesday, March 10th. This Conference was scheduled for last month, but in view of the bad condition of the roads it was necessary to postpone it. The pastors of the district are urged to boost this Conference, and plan to attend themselves. The afternoon session begins at 2.30 and the evening session at 7.30.

The Homecoming of Rev. H. L. Davey

We are sorry that owing to sickness announced in cablegram from Mr. Davey as follows: "Am seriously ill. Heart Chronic Malaria. Doctor orders return first steamer", Mr. and Mrs. Davey have been compelled to return to Canada. Possibly they are by this time on their homeward journey. The prayers of our readers are requested for them as they relinquish their work in Africa. Also remember those who are left on the field, namely, Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Mellish, Miss Minnie Lane, and Mr. Percy Clubine.

OTHER BOOKS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT".

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

"THE MOST FAMOUS TRIAL OF HISTORY".

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

THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT ANALYZED.

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

"TIMES OF REFRESHING"

By Walter C. Tompkins, Secretary of the Student Body of Toronto Baptist Seminary

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isaiah 40:30, 31.

In the course of conversation some time ago with a young man who was contemplating entering the Seminary, we were much surprised when he expressed the thought that Seminary students must find it exceedingly easy to live a consistent Christian life, surrounded with studies which from every angle contribute to "knowing Him better". It would be expecting too much of the arch-enemy of souls to expect entire freedom from his devices, and especially in a place where men and women are confidently looking forward to the day when they will proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ". We are repeatedly urged to cultivate our own daily walk with the Lord, but as a wise man long ago said, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh," and it is a real delight to steal away from studies for a quiet time with the Lord; a time in which we gird ourselves for the daily warfare.

From Tuesday to Friday, each morning from 10.30 to 10.50 you will find us in the church-parlour. Sometimes we devote the whole time to prayer or praise, but more often we listen to an exhortation from the Book. Frequently we have visitors: pastors from other churches, missionaries, noted scholars, or those engaged in other active work for the Lord. A short time ago we had the privilege of hearing Rev. E. and Mrs. Hancox speak on Liberia, and the need in that country. Miss Stacey, a graduate of the Seminary, painted a vivid word-picture of Liberian life, and expressed her gratitude for the training received here.

Recently we heard from the Secretary of the Evangelical Union of South America, whose son is a student here, and he focussed our attention on a continent that has well been called "neglected".

The Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society is always welcome, for he keeps the importance of the Scriptures in missionary work before us.

Last Tuesday, for the hour following the usual chapel time, we listened to an interesting address from Miss Marie Barham concerning the Forward Movement of the China Inland Mission. She was introduced by her father, our own Rev. A. H. Barham, who afterwards gave us the privilege of asking questions.

We enjoy many such visits from those who impress upon our hearts the need of their respective fields of labour, in many of which we are already represented, and of others which many in our midst are being raised up to fill. Truly, "the labourers are few", and having studied to show ourselves approved, may God find us ready to say when He needs us, "Lord, here am I, send me."

It is a peculiar joy to welcome back to the Seminary those who once were enrolled as students but now are pastors of churches, for we have a special interest in them. Some recent visitors have been, Pastor R. J. E. Brackstone, of Cannington; Rev. Frank Wellington, of Fort William; and Rev. H. C. Slade, of Timmins. All such visitors usually fall into the hands of a professor who conducts them to the chapel service, and abandons them when once they have been introduced to the student-body! Thus do we maintain a very vital contact with our graduates.

Many are the helpful talks we receive from our professors, who, by their experience and knowledge, are eminently qualified to help us avoid pitfalls in student-life.

Friday morning is students' morning, and though the "victim" selected by the professors sometimes feels like "Daniel in the critics' den", we usually have a good time and a helpful message. Each student has his own personality, and puts it into his preaching.

We are proud of our School, and recognize that under God its ministry has been blessed, and we look for still greater blessing in years to come.

May we extend a very hearty invitation to you to come and see us at work, and join in our chapel-service.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 11

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 12

First Quarter

March 22nd, 1936

THE DRUNKARDS OF EPHRAIM

Lesson Text: Isaiah, chapters 28 and 29.

Golden Text: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."—Isaiah 28:7.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 28:1-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Job 33:1-12; Tuesday—Ps. 118:21-29; Wednesday—Jer. 6:9-17; Thursday—Hos. 4:6-14; Friday—Acts 4:1-12; Saturday—I. Cor. 3:9-15.

THE DESTRUCTION OF EPHRAIM (28:1-29)

Destruction (vs. 1-6)—In this prophecy Samaria, the crown of pride of Ephraim, is threatened with divine judgment, and her overthrow is predicted. The location of the city on a hill, surrounded by rich valleys, is herein intimated, together with the sin of her people, the fading glory, and the destruction wrought by the Assyrian on account of that sin. The blessing of God upon the residue of His people is also promised. The figure of a feast is indicated in the reference to crowns worn by participants on certain occasions; Ephraim, with the faded crown or wreath, while Judah has the divine crown of glory. Note the faded crown of the world, relating to fame, wealth, pleasure, and other things of time; and the crowns offered to the servant of God (2 Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; I. Pet. 5:4).

Drunkards (vs. 7, 8)—Drunkenness was one of the chief sins of Ephraim—as it is of many of the nations in the present day. The evils of strong drink cannot be exaggerated. By partaking of drink, men and women are made to err in vision, stumble in judgment, go out of the way, become unclean, and defile their surroundings. The whole being is affected, as manifest in the words, deeds, affections, desires, manners, habits, and judgment, of the one thus influenced. In this case, the priest and the prophet had erred in the same way; and when the religious leaders go astray it must be doubly hard for the people to go straight. The only safe course respecting this evil is total abstinence therefrom, and open antagonism thereto. Nothing good can be said of the liquor business. It is the foe of all decency, morality, spirituality, and sound government. Its finished product is the drunken, helpless, hopeless, wretch, who is a menace to himself and to all with whom he comes in contact. And those engaged in the nefarious business are in it, not because they love it, or take pleasure in its product, but solely that they can make money in it. "The love of money is the root of all evil" (I. Tim. 6:10). Young people who know nothing about the old filthy saloon need to be warned respecting the more subtle and dangerous beer parlour. It is anything but a joke to partake of this poisonous fluid (Prov. 23:32).

Scorners (vs. 9-13)—In this section, the drunkards are recorded as expressing their resentment at the message of Isaiah. They ask, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? they that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Does he think he is speaking to children with precept upon precept, line upon line? None are so difficult to teach as those who refuse to listen. The answer is given that God would certainly teach them in this manner, and failing to heed Him, they would fall backward, be broken, snared, and taken. Disobedience to the counsel of God brings its own sad consequences. Continuance in sin hardens the heart, and this leads to destruction (Prov. 29:1). Note the method of teaching, with its line upon line. God leaves man without excuse in relation to the things pertaining to Himself, and judgment will be given in accordance with responsibility (Matt. 11:23).

The covenant of death (vs. 14-29)—In this section a further message is given to the scorner concerning divine judgment.

They are looked upon as having made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell. Instead of trusting in the Lord in their difficulties, they expected aid from other sources. When the enemy swept through the land their trust would be found to be but a refuge of lies, and as such, it would be swept away, and they would be trodden down by it; indicating their defeat probably by the Assyrians. Note the application of this to all who are trusting in the things of the flesh for salvation, rather than in God. Some trust in good works, others in church membership and church ordinances. Some may be trusting in lodge affiliation, or parental relationship. Whatever it may be, it will be found to be a false refuge when divine judgment comes upon men. In contrast with the refuge of lies, the security of those who trust in God is set forth. For them, there is a sure foundation. Note the fulfilment of this in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11); Observe also the certainty of judgment, the hopelessness of all outside of Christ, and the work of Christ in redemption (Eph. 1:7). His own are built on Him (Eph. 2:19, 20). Emphasis is again laid on the fact that everything would fail those who were not trusting in God (v. 20); and the divine adaptation to circumstances, whether of judgment or mercy, is intimated in the illustration of the husbandman (vs. 23-29).

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM (29:1-24)

The siege (vs. 1-8)—In this section, the siege of Jerusalem is depicted. The city is referred to as Ariel, meaning the lion of God. Several things are related of it. Its sacrifices are mentioned, together with the distress which would come upon it with the siege, the enemy without, the humiliation within, and the empty victory which would be gained by the foe. The Assyrians would not benefit from their efforts. God can restrain enemies, and defeat their object, even while permitting them to attack His people. He can say, "Thus far, and no farther." And ultimate deliverance is given to His own.

Unbelief of the people (vs. 10-12)—The unbelief of the people respecting Isaiah's message is here related. They staggered, yet not with wine. They were asleep, and the word of God to them was a sealed book. Unbelief is always a hindrance to the understanding of the things of God, and evil consequences always flow therefrom, as in the case of Israel at Kadish-Barnea (Num. 14:26-34), and the people of our Lord's own country in His day (Matt. 13:58). Note the fact that the sleep, the closed eyes, and the closed book, were a result of the unbelieving attitude of the Israelites. Many saints of God are asleep these days, and lack understanding of the things of God for a similar reason. It is faith which pleases God (Heb. 11:6), and receives His blessing (Mark 9:23). It is time to awaken out of sleep (Eph. 5:14).

Superficial worship (vs. 13-16)—The condition of the people is further described in explanation of their attitude toward God. They drew near Him with the mouth, and honoured Him with the lips, but their hearts were far from Him, while they followed the teaching of men. Note the application to those who have only a form of religion, while they deny the power thereof (II. Tim. 3:5). Such an attitude is hypocritical, foolish, evil, and deadly; and betrays a wrong relationship with God. Of what use is a godless religion? The action of the Lord respecting such people is then indicated. The wisdom of their wise men would perish, and the understanding of their prudent men would be hid (v. 14). Punishment would be meted out to them respecting that in which they boasted. Their wisdom and understanding would be turned into foolishness (I. Cor. 1:21). Note the reference to the potter and the clay, and its application to God and His creatures (v. 16; Romans 9:20, 21).

Blessing (vs. 17-24)—These closing verses of the chapter depict a change in the people. The deaf would hear, the blind would see, the meek would increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor would rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. The reason for this change would be the judgment of God upon the scorner, and the unjust persons. When the wicked are dealt with in accordance with their wickedness, then the righteous are given an opportunity for rule and rejoicing. The mercy of God is evident even in His judgments; and in this day of sin is His grace particularly manifest. Our salvation is due to His mercy (Titus 3:5). Within us there is no good thing (Rom. 7:18), but in Christ we are accepted before God (Eph. 1:6).

ONLY TWENTY-SIX 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.

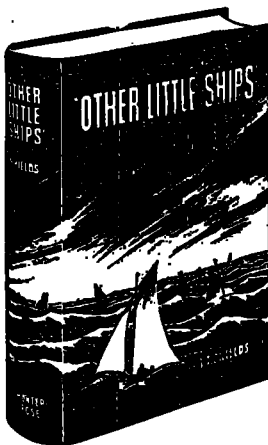
No gift would be too great for Toronto Baptist Seminary, even to the extent of half a million dollars. Nor could any sum be so small that it would not be appreciated. Help us to balance our books by the 31st of March.

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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