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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, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.  
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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church

(Stenographically Reported)

"Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."—II. Kings 7:9.

This text is part of the story of Israel's many wars. On this occasion the Syrians were their adversaries, and for many weary months Samaria had been straitly shut up, none went out, and none came in. It was completely besieged by a vastly superior foe, and Samaria had been reduced to a condition of starvation. The people were dying, and had been brought to such dire straits that they had actually resorted to cannibalism; and the king, on hearing of this, had announced his intention to take Elisha's head.

When anything went wrong in that ancient time it was always the fault of the prophet; nobody else had any responsibility for it; it was always the fault of the man of God who brought to the people the divine admonition to turn away from their sins! But on hearing of this Elisha uttered a great prophesy: "Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." There was neither flour nor barley to be found within the walls of the city, and yet the prophet promised that there should be an abundance of food on the morrow. "For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us." And without waiting for further inquiry the Syrians took to their heels; they left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, with all their commissariat department, all the provisions that had been laid up for a great army; with all the wealth which they carried with them to the battle—they left it all behind, and threw away their garments that they might be the lighter, and be able to make the better speed.

But the people of Samaria knew nothing at all about

it: they still imagined that the hosts of Syria were round about them. But "there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." They were possessed of the spirit of that hymn,

"I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must for ever die."

Thus, they turned their faces toward the camp of the Syrians, and on arrival there they found the place deserted. The tents of the officers and the men were there, there was an abundance of provisions and of great wealth; they had the whole camp of a great army, with plenty of food and raiment, everything to satisfy their desire, all to themselves. They began to enjoy it, but they said among themselves, "It is too bad for us to keep this all to ourselves. We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace. Yonder is Samaria with its many thousands of starving men, and women, and children, the king himself within: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household." And they went as messengers of a real gospel to tell the news to the beleaguered city that there was plenty of food, and that the enemy had been utterly routed.

That is the story of the text, and I want to use it this morning to illustrate the duty of every one to whom the gospel has proved the power of God unto salvation.

## I.

WE, TOO, HAVE BEEN BROUGHT BY DIVINE GRACE TO A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS. Those of us who know the Lord have a secret for which a hungry world is longing, and we do not well if, in view of our fuller knowledge, we hold our peace.

What, then, was the truth which had dawned upon these leprous men, of which the people of Samaria were still in ignorance? In the first place, *they had discovered that a foe which Israel greatly feared had been dispersed*; that the battle which they feared they would never be able successfully to fight had already been fought in their behalf; that the foe which surrounded them and threatened them with death had really been put to rout by the power of God Himself; and that, whereas the doors of Samaria were bolted and barred to keep the enemy out, they had at that moment, although they did not know it, the fullest possible liberty to walk abroad.

The picture of Samaria, my friend, is the picture of every human soul in its natural state; for though we boast so much of our democratic privileges, though we are so fond of insisting that we are our own master, there is no man who is not conscious of a very clearly defined limitation round about him. His soul is held in bondage in spite of his boast that he is a free man. There is not one of us here this morning, whether we have been converted, or are still in a state of nature—there is not one of us who is not conscious that round about us are forces superior to ourselves. We may not give them a name; we may not have a very clearly defined conception of whence they come and what their full purpose respecting us may be; but there is not one of us who has not had to cry as one great master of old cried, "When I would do good—when I say I will open the door, I will push it back, I will step forth into full freedom, and I will realize within myself the purpose of my creation, for God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness', and I will rise to the height of my privilege as one who was made to wear a crown and sway a sceptre: I was made to be king, and I will be a king but—when I would do good, evil is present with me." The soul is besieged; he cannot move abroad as he desires. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Who shall break through the Syrian host? Who shall give me the mastery of these principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places?—

"Look how we grovel here below,  
Fond of these earthly toys;  
Our souls can neither fly nor go,  
To reach immortal joys."

We are held in bondage; we are a besieged city: "A strong man armed keepeth his palace." I appeal this morning to your experience, for there is not a man or woman here who does not know that what I say is true. I want to talk to you personally; I wish I could sit down with every one of you and say, "Come now, be honest, are you the man you want to be? Are you the woman you think God planned you to be? Do you live the large and luxurious life of the Spirit that the soul within you longs for? Come tell me! Nay, rather, answer to God!" I know your answer, it is this: "No." Why? And you can only answer, "Can't you see them?—the Syrian hosts round about."

But many of us also can say, "This is a day of good tidings", for there is One Who took the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and nailed it to His

cross; He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly: "The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise." Oh, there are many arrows in His quiver; His armoury is full of weapons of war, like the tower of David where hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Our God can disperse the enemy. And some of us while admitting that we were once besieged, have to say, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about . . . for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people." There are many of us here this morning who have experienced just what these leprous men experienced: we have discovered that the power of evil is broken, that principalities and powers are dispossessed and dispersed, that "the strong man armed" has found his match in One Who is stronger than he. Do you know it, my brother? Have you been able to cry, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"; "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ"; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"? The deliverance for which every sin-bound soul is longing is possible to all, as many here this morning have experienced. "This day is a day of good tidings"; and if you know that, you do not well to hold your peace.

Another element in the good tidings was this: not only was the enemy dispersed, but *an abundance of food was provided*. There was enough in the camp of Syria to make fine flour cheap in Samaria. There was "bread enough, and to spare." And these men said among themselves as they went through the camp, "We shall not live long enough to eat all this. It is a day of good tidings, and yonder is a whole city hungering for the very thing that we see spread out in abundance before us." Are there any hungry people? Yes; there are many people who are hungry and do not know it. Was it yesterday, or the day before, I passed one of the great theatres down town in the middle of the day, and the street was thronged with people coming out. I wondered how they found leisure for that kind of thing. I do not go to the theatre, but I am faced in spite of myself with their advertisements in the daily papers.

They were eating strange things in Samaria. People do eat strange things in the days of famine. When Paris was shut up in the Franco-Prussian war, rats were an expensive luxury. We should not relish them; but hungry people will eat almost anything. Samaria must have been in sore straits when an ass's head was esteemed a delicacy! And if you look at the newspapers which advertise the mental pabulum upon which some people are seeking to nourish their souls, you will conclude that the human soul must be in a state of siege, and reduced to a quality of fare not much superior to that of Samaria. A soul made in God's image and likeness must be in a terrible condition when it feeds upon such offal as is now provided for the amusement of the people. If there are any here this morning who are in the habit of attending those places you know what I say is true. When an immortal soul has nothing better than that to feed upon, it is hungry indeed. And when you come away you are not satisfied. The same is true of some so-called places of worship.

Nor is the man who madly concentrates all his energies upon the getting of this world's goods. We must have food and raiment, houses to live in: there is a place for the consideration of these matters; but

when you see that which characterizes our day, and which has characterized every other day—men and women madly grasping after the things that cannot last; trying to feed the soul upon temporalities, trying to nourish the spirit upon the things of the material world, spending their money for “that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not”, trying to satisfy the soul without God, you can only conclude that the soul is besieged by the enemy and reduced to spiritual starvation.

“During the war Germany did not allow her enemy to know that she was hungry. She tried to create the impression that she had plenty to eat, and could hold out indefinitely. Meantime, they were starving. And so many a man will not give in; he covers it up; he tries to persuade himself and others that this world is satisfying a hungry soul. But he knows better. Haven't we all been there? Don't you know about it, you who are Christians? Do we not sing,

“I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,  
But, ah, the waters failed;  
E'en as I stooped to drink, they'd fled;  
And mocked me as I wailed”?

We had more joy in our prayer-meeting last night, without any admixture of regret—pure unadulterated joy—than you could find in all the theatres and places of amusement in this city, or in the whole wide world. You cannot be satisfied with the fare of a besieged city, but “this day is a day of good tidings.” We have discovered, or there has been revealed to us, a secret which the whole world ought to know, and we do not well to hold our peace; we do not well to be content, like the prodigal's brother, to sit alone at the father's table when there is “bread enough and to spare” for those who are without.

There is another word: not only was there deliverance and an abundance of food; but *there was great wealth in the camp of Syria*,—riches untold, garments of beauty, jewels of gold and of silver; and when these poor leprous men saw all these fine treasures, they said, “These were not designed for us; we cannot wear them all; there is enough here to make all Samaria rich. Let us go and tell the king's household.” The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ was not designed to make us poor; it was not designed to take anything of real value from us: it was designed to make it possible for us to live in luxury. There is a great truth in that simple hymn which we sometimes sing:

“My Father is rich in houses and lands,  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands;  
Of rubies, and diamonds, and silver, and gold;  
His coffers are full: He has riches untold.”

We are not saved that we might walk about in ragged garments. It is not the will of our glorious King that we should be arrayed in sackcloth and ashes, that we should wear homespun: “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” Is not Jerusalem exhorted to awake and put on her beautiful garments? It is a luxurious experience to be a Christian. Every day the Beloved of our souls sends to us some special love-token; every day there are dainties from the King's table. No, I can put it in a better way than that: “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.” Do you know it as a Christian? I know there are some people who are

called Christians who live on something less than soda-biscuits, who have half-starved existences, who live on the husks. I believe there are a great many people called Christians, who are church members, who have never got beyond that cry of the prodigal—very commendable as far as it goes: “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” He said, “How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare! . . . If I could only get back there into the servants' quarters, so that I might get a little bit of the surplus of my father's house to save me from starvation, instead of feeding upon the husks which the swine eat, I should be content.” And there are some people who have never got beyond that; they are willing to be hired servants in the Father's house; or, like the woman who came to Jesus, and to whom, to test the sincerity of her faith, for she was a Syrophenician woman, He said, “Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs—If you will just give me a crumb I shall be satisfied.” It was only to test her, because our glorious Saviour said, “Great is thy faith. I never feed anybody on crumbs. He that cometh to me receives all the fulness of the Father's house.”

Why are you living on crumbs? There is wealth in Christ Jesus: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” I read of “unsearchable riches”. There is incalculable, inestimable, incomparable, infinite wealth in Christ awaiting the command of faith. Do you know that? “O yes,” somebody says, “I know that; I have seen something of the wealth of my Father's house.” Have you told anybody about it? Are you telling anybody about it? “We do not well” to hold our peace.

I am always interested in *the contrast* as well as the comparison. I often quote to you a verse of a hymn:

“Join all the glorious names,  
Of wisdom, love, and power;  
That angels ever knew,  
Or mortals ever bore:  
All are too mean to speak His worth;  
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.”

There is no illustration of redeeming grace in the realm of human endeavour that does not fall short in some particular of the spiritual reality. Who were they? Four leprous men. What did they find in the camp of Syria? Deliverance from the Syrians, food for starving bodies, wealth for the poor; but alas! alas! *they found no cleansing for the leper*. It was still as lepers they must preach their gospel; and if there were lepers yonder in Samaria, they had no word of hope for them. But could they have found the divine Healer in the camp of the Syrians, and could they have stood afar off and said, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean”, and if He had graciously answered, “I will; be thou clean”, and immediately their leprosy had been cleansed; and if to their freedom, and their food, and their wealth, they could have added the glad tidings of cleansing for a leper, then indeed, they had had a gospel worth preaching. But we have that: “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

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

Shall we not therefore resolve anew,

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die."

## II.

"We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace." **THEY WERE IN DANGER OF MAKING A GREAT MISTAKE.** And that is the danger that faces every redeemed soul—the danger of trying to live for ourselves, withholding our testimony, failing to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, and Judaea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. That, indeed, is what has happened. It is inconceivable that such great companies of people should assemble themselves together in organizations called churches, that they should meet twice every Lord's day for a whole year, that they should organize themselves into all kinds of societies, that they should pour out their wealth, and in the course of a year turn into the treasury of that organization thousands and thousands of dollars, and that they should spend three-hundred and sixty-five days of the year professing to be about the Master's business, and as a result that there should be no souls turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Something must be wrong. What is it? It is that they who know that this is a day of good tidings are holding their peace!

It is possible for the minister to hold his peace. What would you have thought of these men if they had said, "Now, we are comfortable; we have plenty to eat, plenty to wear, and are in no danger of being destroyed by the Syrians; we are in comfortable circumstances, let us get up a concert; let us have an entertainment. Let us find some means of amusing ourselves." These men did not talk like that. They said, "There is more urgent business than our amusement. There are people who are dying for want of the things we have. Let us go and tell them." Yet that is what the church is doing—that is what the blood-bought, redeemed Church of Christ is doing—everything but the one thing that it was put into this world to do, namely, to bear witness to the power of the Saviour's blood to save poor sinners from their sins. And what is true of the organization as a whole becomes largely true of the individual members. These people did not organize. There were only four of them; but even one of them could have told the story as well as four, one could have witnessed to this great truth alone. Let any man in the power of the Holy Ghost bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, and his testimony will be heard to the ends of the earth. Try it. Do not say you are weak and small. Let God have His way with you; bear your testimony, and see what God will accomplish.

They said, "If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us." And they were right: it was impossible that they should enjoy alone the fulness they had found. And that is why some people do not enjoy their religion, *they tarry till the morning; and mischief does befall them because it is of the very nature of the Christian religion that it must be shared if it is to be enjoyed.*

I must not keep you longer save to remind you of *their resolution.* They said, "Now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household." They resolved that they would tell the good news. What would you have done? Would you have said, "Well now, if you are going to the king's household with an important message like that, you must be careful how you tell it. You had

better write it out; you had better be sure that it is grammatically phrased; you had better be sure that your deliverance has the proper literary flavour; you must be careful to express your good news in polite speech; because you are going to the king's household." I think the lepers might have said, "We may not know how to tell it very politely, but we are going to the city and we will tell the porters, and we believe hungry people will rejoice in our message however rough our speech. At all events, we are going to tell it."

How long are you going to wait before you tell the good news? If you wait too long possibly you will not have any good news to tell. I have seen it again and again: hundreds of young men have gone to college full of the zeal of the Lord for the cross of Christ, for the gospel of His Son; but by the time they have passed through the hands of certain professors, they have no zeal for anything; they drift away into business or something else. I do not say, do not go to college. By all means, go: God wants your best; train your mind to the utmost. This gospel of the grace of God demands the utmost that any man can give; and the most brilliant intellects the world has ever known have been laid at the feet of Jesus, with all their splendid powers. There is nothing you possess that is too good to surrender to Christ; and you do well to resolve that all your powers shall be cultivated to the highest degree. But be careful in the course of your training; do not allow anybody to spoil the message; "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"; for the gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Another says, "That is all right for the student, but I have to go to work in the morning, and I cannot go to college." Well, do not go then. If you cannot go God does not want you to go. But that is no reason why you should not tell what you know. Tell it anyhow; tell it to the king's household; and in the doing of it, do you know what will come to pass? *The Word of the Lord will be fulfilled.* Only the day before Elisha had said, "Thus saith the Lord," and through these poor leprous men that plan and purpose of God found its fulfilment, and God was glorified. Go and do His will; go and tell the story in the simplest way you know how, stammeringly, hesitatingly, clumsily, perhaps; but never mind, tell it. Nobody stops to ask the nationality of the man who turned in the firm alarm; nobody enquires whether he had a Scotch accent, or whether he was a cockney, or whether he was an out-and-out Canadian, or whether he came from the North country, or whether he had a rich Irish brogue. Somebody cried, "Fire!" and the firemen came and the flame was extinguished: that was the main thing. *It is not how you do it; but in the name of the Lord and the power of the Holy Ghost, do it, and do it to-day!* And if we all go to work, and we are all at it, and always at it, then God will carry the news to the king's household, and ere the day is done the King's children will be sitting of His banqueting table; the fulness of divine grace will be enjoyed by those for whom it is prepared.

Is there anybody here this morning still outside? Is there anybody here this morning not a Christian? Any sin-bound, hungry, impoverished soul? I bring you the simple message, and tell you that there is not only deliverance and food and wealth, but there is cleansing for the leper, too.

Let us drink deeply of the wells of salvation, and then advertise the path to the Spring to all the world.

## A GOOD MAN'S DEFECTS

### A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Thursday Evening, April 16th, 1936.

*Eighth 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 15 (continued).

Before we leave Asa, the good king of Judah, let us glance at the supplementary record of his life in the sixteenth chapter of Second Chronicles.

Asa was one of the good kings of Judah who, in the main, did that "which was right in the sight of the Lord". The Lord wrought by his hand many victories, and greatly prospered him. Then he found himself in a difficult situation when opposed by Baasha, the king of Israel. Instead of meeting the emergency in faith, he stripped the house of the Lord of all its treasure, and with its silver and gold, and other articles of value, he purchased for himself the help of Benhadad, king of Syria. Instead of trusting the Lord, he turned in his trouble to a heathen king; and apparently with success, for the battle issued in Asa's favour.

The sixteenth chapter of Second Chronicles tells us something of the sequel of that departure. Incidentally, let me remind you of the importance of going to Headquarters for your example and authority. Moses was not permitted any discretion in his copying of the pattern shown in the mount. He was enjoined to copy the original pattern. So must we. If you follow the best man in the world, you will be sure to go wrong, because the best and wisest man is full of imperfections, and you will be far more likely to copy his defects than his excellencies.

Good as Asa was, he stumbled into grave error, as even the best of people may do. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It is well that the example and teaching of any man should be brought into the light of the supreme authority, the Word of God. If they are not in accord therewith, it is our responsibility to reject them. It will never excuse us by and by to say that we believed in Mr. So-and-So, and he thought so-and-so, and did so-and-so; and we thought that must be right. We shall be judged by our attitude toward the Lord Himself. We must assure ourselves that what we believe, and teach, and practise, has divine sanction. Nothing less should satisfy us.

That principle *inheres in our New Testament individualism*. We are never excused for going like a flock of sheep. As we are held accountable for our individual response to Christ, so we must be held accountable for our individual obedience to Him. The whole genius of religious individualism places upon each one the responsibility to study for himself, to know for himself, to act for himself, and ultimately to give account of himself to God. If we are right with Him, all will be well.

We might take a chapter from Asa's history, and say that it was worthy our emulation—and be correct in our estimate. The danger would be that we should take the wrong chapter, and follow him in his attitude of expediency and compromise. We need to be especially on guard in times of crises in our Christian life. It is easy to follow the Lord when we are in Christian company, when circumstances are favourable, when there seems

to be no special temptation, when we labour under no conscious personal disability—when, indeed, it seems to be quite profitable to follow the Lord. But the true character of a man is displayed by his behaviour in that crisis of life when he has to stand alone, not with the crowd; when he has to make his own decisions independently of everybody else's judgment; when he has to bare his heart before God, and in the face of some overwhelming difficulty from which human power is impotent to extricate him, say, "God helping me, I will do right. I had better go down in the battle than turn aside and win by unfair means."

How many people to-day seek the help of Benhadad! How many churches there are! Almost anyone can join a church nowadays. It is generally supposed that we cannot do without the support and help of certain people. I have known ministers who were in bondage to some Benhadad, afraid of their lives to move for fear of what Benhadad would say, ready to make every possible sacrifice in order to maintain his friendship. "We could not afford to do without him." Young men, let me tell you this: the man whose heart is perfect before God, and who will walk before God, and do what is right in the sight of the Lord, can afford to do without anybody—and everybody. No man in any walk of life is ever strong, really strong, until he is brought to the place where he has to stand alone with God.

How many examples there are in Scripture! God's victories were not wrought by great companies as a rule. It was by a Shamgar, with an oxgoad; a Samson, with the jaw bone of an ass; a David, with his sling and stone; or an Eleazer, who, when all the men of Israel had run away, stood in the patch of lentils, and drove God's enemies away. God requires real men. There is no calling in life, I care not what it is, that will test your manhood like the gospel ministry. Yet I do not wonder that many people have little respect for the ministry. Do not follow the Asas, good as they may be. If you follow them too far, you will become involved with the king of Syria, and get into much trouble.

Having done this, and while he was congratulating himself on his shrewdness, if someone had said, "Asa, you ought not to have done that: you ought to have trusted in God", he probably would have replied, "Do not be narrow. There is nothing inconsistent between a faith in God and a little worldly prudence. I know I am outnumbered numerically, I cannot meet the present situation; and I am justified in seeking help from the king of Syria." When he had met with a measure of success, he would have said, "There you are! I told you we would win."

But "at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

The suggestion is that the Lord is actually looking for people who will trust Him, as though He said, "I have a reservoir of infinite power that I want to flow through the lives of men, that I may show through men what I can do for people who trust Me." The eyes of

the Lord run to and fro in the earth looking for people who are worthy of trust.

What does He find in us? People who can shout, Amen, and, Hallelujah, when the wind is in our sails, and when everything is favourable; but who, at the first sign of trouble, run into Egypt for help, or seek alliance with Syria, or Assyria? "Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." You can never settle any trouble in life by a compromise with evil. Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right. The prophet said to Asa, "Instead of getting yourself out of trouble, you have put yourself into trouble. The Lord says to thee, From henceforth thou shalt have wars."

There are not very many people who like to be corrected. Do not say you do, because you do not. I do not. I am rather humiliated when I find I am wrong. I should like to be always right. Of course, it is easy in a general way to say that we are not always right, that we make mistakes; but to put our finger on one thing, and say of that, "I was wrong; I made a mistake there", is a different matter. When someone comes to you, and points out a mistake, what is your attitude? Can you "take it"? Can you receive instruction? Spurgeon once said that to admit we made a mistake yesterday, is only to acknowledge that we are a little wiser to-day. But it is difficult to give instruction to some people because they will not admit they are wrong. It is the part of a wise man, and an element of true greatness, when some mistake that he has made is pointed out to him, and he sees it to be a mistake, not to try to cover it up, and, by making a detour, get back on the right road without letting people know he has been off of it—it is a mark of true greatness for a man to say, "I am wrong."

I have not always admired the present Premier of Great Britain. It may seem presumptuous on the part of a mere layman to criticize the Government's foreign policies. I notice that the Minister of War said in England the other day, "What have these ignorant clergymen to do with it? How dare they criticize the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government!" If I had been there I should have said, "Both you and your Premier, and the whole Cabinet, had to admit that you badly needed criticizing not very long ago." Mr. Baldwin saved his Government from complete disaster by going before the House and saying, "I am wrong. We are all wrong. We are sorry. We will not do it again—will you trust us?" The House trusted them. If he had tried to defend Sir Samuel Hoare's policy he would have been overwhelmed.

We, as Christians, would do well to learn when we are rebuked, especially when unmistakably we are rebuked by the Word of the Lord, to say, "I am sorry."

The word of the Lord came to Asa, saying, "You are a foolish man." What did Asa do? He was very wrath! He was angry! Did you ever get angry with the Bible? When some matter about which you have a question, is brought into the light of the Word of God, that it may speak authoritatively on the subject, did it ever cut like a sword? Sometimes it may even say, "Thou fool!" You are inclined to say, "I think that is not the passage I want to-night! I needed comfort to-night—not that passage of rebuke."

When you students have settled in pastorates, you will exercise the office of the prophet, as did Hanani; and sometimes your preaching will make the people uncomfortable. We are not to make the pulpit a "coward's

castle", and throw stones at people who cannot answer back. Nothing is more contemptible than that. If a particular person needs a rebuke about any matter, go to him straight, and, as a man, tell him so. But sometimes, quite unknown to you, your message will cut clean across somebody's course, and you will see Asa pick up his hat, and walk out, out of sorts, angry with the preacher. You must not be unduly troubled when that is so. But let us learn to be other than like Asa. When we have done wrong, and the Word of the Lord rebukes us, let us pray for grace that we may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ", and frankly say, "I am wrong." I emphasize this consideration because I believe there are few things that rob us of more blessing than our foolish pride that will not allow us to retrace our steps.

"Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing." When you are older, as preachers, remember what I now say. I have met with all that. I have had people so angry with me—about what I did not know—they seemed ready to cut me in pieces. I remember when a boy, my father told me this story. Preaching in a certain city in England, in the church of which he was Pastor, at the close of a Sunday evening service, a member of the church came to the vestry and said, "I should like to see the Pastor for a minute or two." He was shown in, and was accompanied by another man. My father greeted them, and the church member said, "I want you to be good enough to answer a question or two for me, if you will." My father said he would be glad to, if he could. "First, did I ever mention this gentleman's name to you before?" "Not to my knowledge." "I have never described his character, and state, and record, to you?" "You have never mentioned him to me, nor have we had such a conversation."

The man continued, "For a long, long time I have tried to get this friend to come to church. To-night he came with me, and as soon as the benediction was pronounced he turned on me angrily and said, 'It is a fine thing to invite me to church, and before I come, go to your minister and tell him all about me. I will never come again.'" My father said to this man, "I do not know anything about you. If anybody has been speaking to you after that fashion, you had better say, with the Samaritan woman, 'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?'"

When the word of the Lord is preached, when the truth is proclaimed, it is almost certain to disturb the peace of the Asas who are determined to pursue a course of compromise and expediency. And sometimes the prophet, who is especially commissioned to preach to that man, may have rather a hard time. If your Asa has the power to do so, he will put you in prison—"For he was in a rage with him."

"And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time." Let me pause here to speak to some of you who are not young in the Christian life. Asa was not a young man: he was well on in life at this time. He was a man who had had rather an illustrious career; and, as I have said, a man of many excellencies of character, and of many worthy achievements. It is possible, if the Lord permits us to have a little success, that after a while we may begin to flatter ourselves that we cannot go wrong. The most conceited people I have ever met in my life have been old people—when they were approaching their second childhood. I suppose that is the

explanation. When a man is twenty or twenty-one, as a rule, he is nearly equal to Solomon. You cannot teach many people much at that age. But when he gets a little older, he begins to think that perhaps he does not know very much—and after a while he may actually learn something, and become measurably successful in his sphere, and attain to some prominence.

When I was a boy, and had done something I had been told not to do, I recall my mother's saying, "Why did you do that? You seem to think that anything becomes you." We may all grow into such a state of complacency as to suppose that anything may become us.

When a woman goes to a store to buy clothes, she endeavours to find something that is becoming. And she is wise. But we ought also to try to develop a character that is becoming. Our acts ought to be becoming; our general conduct such "as becometh saints". But it is possible gradually to come to Asa's position, and imagine ourselves independent of all human estimation: If one should attempt to offer this man of long experience and great achievement a little advice—and he may be a good deal younger than Asa—even suggesting, "I would not do that if I were you", in anger the proud man retorts, "Who are you to talk to me?"

Do not assume that attitude. Remember that if you live to be as old as Methuselah—and a day older—you will need to learn something on that extra day. You will not have learned everything even then. Therefore we ought to be growing men, and growing women; especially as Christians, growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

Learn to take your medicine—and like it. I do not know whether I ever did take it or not, but I do not think there is anything more offensive than cod liver oil. I have seen advertisements to the effect that "the children like it." But I never did believe it! But when the Word of the Lord is about as palatable as cod liver oil, because it tells us we are wrong; do not be merely resigned to its rebuke, but rather let us ask the Lord for grace to like it, that we may learn to sing,—

"I worship Thee, sweet Will of God,  
And all Thy ways adore;  
And every day I live, I long  
To love Thee more and more."

Thus we shall avoid Asa's error.

And now a word or two about Nadab, that we may finish the chapter this evening. You will notice that the fifteenth chapter of First Kings is not in chronological order, because Baasha is mentioned in the sixteenth verse before Nadab's death is recorded.

"And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." Nadab, then, was the second of Israel's kings: Jeroboam was the first, Nadab his son was the second; and he was the last of Jeroboam's line. That line died out with Nadab. He did evil, and particularly in that one sin of encouraging idolatry in the kingdom of Israel, at Dan and Bethel. You will remember that Jeroboam came to the throne by conspiring against Rehoboam. He was a servant of Rehoboam, an industrious man to whom Rehoboam lost ten tribes of his kingdom when he rejected the counsel of the elder statesmen, and the ten tribes broke away from him, and Jeroboam found himself carried to the throne of the new kingdom. Jeroboam has passed, and

his son follows him; but just as Jeroboam lifted up his hand against Rehoboam, so treachery broke out in Nadab's ranks, and Baasha, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, lifted up his hand against Jeroboam's son, Nadab. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Nadab's sin came home to him in due time. Baasha lifted his hand against him, and he utterly destroyed the house of Jeroboam: "He left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite"—the blind prophet whose prophecy we studied a few weeks ago—"because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin; by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger: Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?"

So closes our story for this evening.

## WE HAVE A BIRTHDAY

THE GOSPEL WITNESS is fourteen years old to-day, and is a much-travelled young agent, having found its way into practically every country in the world. It is rich in experience therefore, and incalculably wealthy in the gospel it bears—but in no other way. It had no capital to begin with—it has none now. But the financial year just closed saw all accounts paid, with a small balance—a very small balance—on hand. This was made possible only through the generosity of the Lord's people, to whom we are deeply grateful.

But a birthday present would be welcome, to enable THE WITNESS to continue its journeyings throughout the earth, with its message of light and life. We are happy to believe the ministry of THE GOSPEL WITNESS has resulted in hundreds of conversions. We have had hundreds of testimonies from preachers of the gospel at home, and from missionaries on almost every known mission field, many of them saying they value THE GOSPEL WITNESS more than any other periodical which reaches their desk. We covet the prayers and practical support of our readers, that THE WITNESS may, more effectively and widely than ever, bear testimony to the power of the gospel.

## THE EDITOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Dr. Shields returned from Rochester, N.Y., Saturday; preached Sunday morning and evening in his own pulpit, and left again on Monday for a week of out-of-town engagements in connection with the Separate School issue that is before the Province of Ontario. Monday evening, May 11th, Dr. Shields spoke in St. Thomas Hall, St. Catharines; Tuesday evening, in the Technical School, London; Wednesday (this) afternoon, in Park United Church, Chatham; and in the Arena at Windsor this evening. To-morrow (Thursday) he will speak in the City Hall at Owen Sound; and in the Oddfellows' Temple, in Hamilton, on Friday evening.

Dr. Shields will return home for Sunday, the 17th, and speak in Oddfellows' Temple, Barrie, Monday evening; in the Masonic Temple, St. Thomas, Tuesday evening; and in Victoria Hall, Brantford, Thursday evening, May 21st. GOSPEL WITNESS readers are invited to attend these meetings. See local newspapers for particulars of the meetings.

## ANOTHER WORD TO GARDENERS

A word to the wise is said to be sufficient, but inasmuch as the article below was published somewhat late in the season last year, THE GOSPEL WITNESS ventures to print it again this year in order that the "seed" idea which it expresses will find favourable soil and propitious weather and so be productive of a bountiful harvest. It will be of particular interest to our readers to know that the garden which is spoken of in the following article was indeed fruitful, and to the members of the Fenelon Falls Church the Toronto Baptist Seminary extends its gratitude for their work of patience and labour of love.

The Bible has much to say about gardens. The first scene in the Book of Beginnings is laid in a garden; our Lord prayed in a garden, and many of the parables and illustrations of Scripture are taken from the art of gardening. We shall, then, be on Scriptural grounds if we tell the story of a garden, and draw a lesson therefrom; and though the lesson is of a different kind from that contained in most sermons, it is very practical and will be welcome for that reason to many of our readers.

The garden to which we refer is situated in the beautiful village of Fenelon Falls, on a piece of rising ground just behind the church building. A few weeks ago the pastor of the church, who is a bit of a gardener himself, and a man of vision to boot, asked one of his farmer-members to bring his plough and prepare the soil for cultivation. Then he invited the young people of the church to what is known in country districts as a "bee". This member of the species has no sting, but does much hard work; and as a result row after row of beans, beets, peas, tomatoes, and corn, were planted. The women of the church have undertaken to can the produce of this garden, and the pastor has promised to transport to Toronto as many jars as the women prepare, for use in the Seminary Dining Room next winter. Thus far the young people have transformed their labour of love into a sort of garden party where people work as well as talk, and we trust that the women of the church will make light work of their part of the task, and that the whole venture will be blessed of that Chief Gardener Who gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

This is the story of one garden, but it could be multiplied many times in our churches within motoring distance of the Seminary, and we could make use of the produce of many such fruitful gardens, for we are like the

Old lady who lived in a shoe  
Who had so many children  
She didn't know what to do.

The chief difference between that celebrated lady and ourselves is that we do not live in a shoe, and we *must* do something for our "children", of whom in the neighbourhood of forty sat down to our table regularly five days of the week for thirty-two weeks last school year. Almost all our students whose homes are not in Toronto rent a room and prepare their own food; two or even three students live, eat, sleep, and study, in one drawing-dining-parlour-kitchen-bedroom; and manage to make ends meet on a budget that scarcely assumes even microscopic proportions. The Seminary has found by experience that the most effective way to help such men, and at the same time the most economical, is to provide a substantial dinner once a day at less than cost price (and this is about one-third the price paid in neighbouring restaurants). Bread, milk, meat, and other staple articles of diet, must be purchased at city prices, but in past years friends from nearby churches have sent us considerable quantities of vegetables, canned goods, fruit, pickles and other foodstuffs. One farmer, with whom ready money is a scarce commodity, found an excellent way of helping. When he killed a calf he sent in enough veal to provide two excellent meals for hungry students; on another occasion it was pork; and several times fresh eggs enriched some delicious rice puddings that only Mrs. Cullington knows how to make. Another brother, who, like Nimrod, is a mighty hunter, provided a rabbit dinner one day.

There is little need to say more about the lesson of this garden, but we hope that many other churches will emulate the splendid example of the Fenelon Falls Church. There are some who will read these lines that will not be able to work in a "bee" with others, but who could consecrate a row or two of their garden to the Lord's service, and an hour or two of their time each week for hoeing them, and a few

jars in their cellar for preserving the produce, and who could then make arrangements in the fall to transport the fruit of their labour to the Seminary kitchen. May your garden be fruitful!  
W. S. W.

## NEXT SUNDAY

Next Sunday will mark Dr. Shields' 26th anniversary in the pastorate of Jarvis Street Church. The special speaker for the day will be Dr. J. W. Hoyt, of Warsaw, Indiana, formerly of Chicago, Ill. WITNESS readers within motoring distance are invited to share the day with Jarvis Street and its Pastor.

## LAST SUNDAY EVENING'S SERMON

Dr. Shields was unable to revise last Sunday evening's sermon before leaving for out-of-town engagements; it will therefore appear in next week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

### Maple Hill

The Maple Hill Baptist Church has just entered its sixth year. In connection with the anniversary occasion we had three days of spiritual feasting. Sunday morning, April 26th, Rev. Edward Cook of Nigeria addressed an open session of the Sunday school. His message was much enjoyed and God was pleased to bless it in the leading of souls to Christ.

In the evening, Prof. W. S. Whitcombe, who had spoken at Baldwin in the morning and Mt. Albert in the afternoon, brought a soul-stirring message.

On Monday evening a devotional talk was given by Rev. W. H. Newman, and following that Rev. Thamer of Nigeria gave an illustrated missionary address. The hearts of the people were deeply stirred.

Tuesday evening we had a time of rich blessing under the ministry of Rev. Walter Fleischer. Mr. Fleischer came as a substitute, but many felt convinced that he was God's man for the occasion.

Concerning the meetings, one made the statement that he felt that never had better services been held in the Church. We look forward to the summer's work with the greatest of hopes, under the ministry of the pastor, Mr. John R. Armstrong.

### An Invitation from Niagara Falls, Ont.

The Trinity Baptist Church, meeting at 1792 Ferry Street, in the south end of Niagara Falls, Ontario, of which Rev. J. F. Dempster is pastor, extends a cordial invitation to visitors in Niagara Falls during the summer months, to attend their church services. The Bible School meets at 10 a.m., and the preaching services are at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. The Adult Bible Class meets in the afternoon at 2.30.

### Who Would Like to Help?

The Belleville Baptist Church has just launched a building campaign. They feel the need of a suitable building in a suitable location, and are hoping to raise sufficient funds to secure a lot and build, or to buy a building and remodel. They will be glad of your prayers, and also of any monetary assistance that anyone feels led to render. A good work is being done in Belleville under the ministry of Student-pastor J. Scott, and we heartily recommend them and their work.

The Calvin Baptist Church, Toronto, has also come to a crisis. They are forced to vacate the theatre in which they have been holding their services, on July 1st. The only promising place for meetings is a building of their own construction, which will cost about \$5,000. Anyone feeling led of the Lord to help with contributions, or loans, which they would repay as soon as possible, should communicate with the pastor, Rev. Frank Roblin, at 26 Ashland Avenue, Toronto. They also ask an interest in your prayers.

### 25th OF MAY RALLY

Do not forget the Rally to be held in Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, on May 25th, with Dr. J. W. Hoyt as special speaker. This will be a great day of fellowship and inspiration, and you can't afford to miss it.