

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE MINISTER AND HIS JOB

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 21st, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—II. Corinthians 5:20.

There is little public teaching respecting the character of the Christian ministry, and the duties of a minister of the gospel; perhaps because ministers are generally reluctant to speak about those matters which so intimately concern themselves. Notwithstanding there is clear teaching in the Word of God respecting the function of the ministry, and it has a very direct bearing upon the church of Christ, and upon the lives of Christians generally.

There appears to be some very low standards obtaining to-day respecting the duties of the minister, and not a few ministers seem to consider it their chief duty to discuss everything but the gospel itself. Some years ago a friend visited in my home with his little boy about five or six years of age. The father said to him, "Neil, tell Mr. Shields what you are going to be when you grow up." I said, "What are you going to be, Neil?" "A minister", he replied promptly. "That is fine", I said, "I hope you will become a minister; but when you become a minister, what are you going to do?" He answered, "Nothing"! And I fear there are some ministers who faithfully live up to that little boy's standard of efficiency.

We read of one recently who spoke in the annual meeting of his denomination about the duty of ministers to be loyal to Christ when "off duty". I was not aware that a minister of Christ could ever be "off duty". But this particular man, in a Christian assembly, said:

"Are we really committed to Jesus when we're off duty? Frankly, I must admit I'm not prepared to be loyal to God if it means my job. I feel my first duty in this world of competition is the preservation of my wife and family."

I am reluctant to believe that there are many ministers who have so low a standard of their calling as that.

The only way by which we may become informed on these matters is to consider what the Word of God

teaches. This is what an inspired apostle said of his own ministry: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Much depends upon a man's conception of the direction of his responsibility. If a man be an ambassador of Christ, if a minister is to be the servant of God, it is no part of his duty to please men; for, said this same apostle, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Let us look into this passage this evening. I invite your attention to three considerations: first there is reference, by implication, to *certain wicked rebels* who are in rebellion against their rightful Lord and King; then there is a *magnanimous Prince*, Who is graciously disposed toward His enemies; and a *pacifist embassy*, sent by the King to seek the reconciliation of His enemies.

I.

NATURAL MEN ARE IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD, for such are "enemies in their minds by wicked works". It is God's inherent right to rule. Men used to discuss the theory of "the divine right of kings". There were human monarchs who flattered themselves that they had some inherent right to exercise sovereignty over their fellows. We have largely departed from that ancient political doctrine in our day. Indeed there are laws which the righteous must disregard, and rulers whom it were a virtue to disobey. But whatever may be said of ancient and modern theories of human government, there can be no question that it is God's prescriptive right to reign. He is not King by human choice, but by virtue of what He is. He is the King of kings, the Source of all law and authority. We do well to remember that. In our day the great First Cause, as some so-called scientists boast, is pushed back as far as possible, and in the minds of many has become so remote a figure as to be unidentifiable. But according

to the teaching of the Word, the things about us came into being at the command of an Almighty Creator.

If that be so, we owe Him allegiance. Our supreme duty, whether ministers or not, is not to be loyal to our families, much less to be supremely concerned about our "job", whatever that may be. Our first duty is to be loyal and obedient to God. By every lesson of history, observation, and experience, by every law discoverable to science, by every sane philosophy of life, God ought to be obeyed. If He established the clouds above, and strengthened the fountains of the deep; if He separated the light from the darkness, and gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass His commandment; if He appointed the foundations of the earth; if He made the sun to rule by day, and the moon by night, and made the stars also; if even the smallest of His creatures, the ants, are obedient to the law of the seasons, and "the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming"; if suns and systems serve Him; if in all the intricately woven fabric of the universe there are acting and reacting laws to which all His creatures, man alone excepted, are instinctively obedient; if indeed we live in a universe of order where obedience is a condition of life; since the Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all, and even the angels which excel in strength, do His commandments hearkening to the voice of His word, and all His hosts, even all His ministers do His pleasure, it follows, in the nature of things, that all His works, including His human creatures, in all places of His dominion owe obedience to God. The Author of life and of light, the Maker of worlds and of men, must sit upon the throne and wear the crown; for the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom.

And it is against that righteous rule men have rebelled in ways without number. The tragic fact is that no man whose heart has not been renewed by divine grace is in agreement with God. Nothing is more self-evident in this world of trouble than that men have rebelled against God in actual conduct. Slanderers, liars, adulterers, thieves, murderers, are of course all of them rebels against the divine law.

But consider how true it is that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Look around you. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." With what horrible intensity of purpose, with what serpentine subtilty, with what almost superhuman ingenuity, men have multiplied means to contravene the laws of God! Oh the "many inventions" for doing evil! Men have reproduced themselves in wood, and steel, and other materials; and have made mechanical liars and gamblers and thieves and murderers. They have multiplied facilities for polluting human minds, for destroying human bodies, and damning human souls. The carnal mind is ever busy inventing new ways of sinning against God: new ways of attacking His Word, new ways of insulting His people, new ways of impugning His honour, new ways of crucifying His Son.

There is never an invention of the human mind that is not ultimately prostituted to purposes of evil. The radio, the motor-car, the moving-picture, and many other inventions, are good in themselves; and but for the evil minds of men might all have become exclusively the ministers of righteousness.

But what ingenuity men have displayed in the work of doing evil! What instruments of destruction they have

invented! A mechanized world has only made it possible for men to sin on a wholesale scale. I do not say that conditions are very much worse than in other days. It must, I suppose, be admitted that as facilities for doing wrong have been increased, so have the means of making the wrong-doing apparent been greatly multiplied. But from the beginning, the carnal mind has been "enmity against God". And subsequent ages have developed their own means of endeavouring to overturn His government.

Nor does the popular doctrine of evolution unwrite that historic fact. Personally, I utterly reject and repudiate the hypothesis. But if there were any element of truth in the evolutionary principle, we may all be glad we did not arrive earlier; for surely there is enough of the monkey and the beast in men to-day! Certainly along the evolutionary path, were it true, the race would have millennia to travel before there could be evolved an individual free from this moral bias, this fearful malady which the Bible calls sin. I repeat: I do not subscribe to the nonsense of evolution. To me, it is but the philosophy of fools; and its all too general acceptance as an explanation of the universe can be explained only on the principle that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them". The fact is, as in times of war, all the resources of a nation are commandeered in order to press the battle against the enemy, so all the resources of the human mind are constantly put under tribute to further human rebellion against God.

How rebellious is the human heart! Made to be the throne-room, the dwelling place of Deity, it has become the habitation of devils. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O daystar, son of the morning!" The garden has become a wilderness; the birds of song have taken their flight, so that it has become as an habitation of dragons. The holy temple is defiled; the palm trees and open flowers of gold engraved upon the walls roundabout have been displaced by pictures of abominable beasts and creeping things; and the holy of holies, the chamber of imagery, has become the abode of all manner of vile affections.

Nor is that all, for the Bible tells us that even conscience is defiled. That moral monitor within us, whose function is so difficult to explain, has shared in the universal disaffection of mansoul. It has proved itself an apt scholar at the feet of evil teachers. Parrotlike, it speaks whatever it is taught, with the result that that which was designed to be God's witness, to warn men against evil, has become a traitor, and, in agreement with man's natural perversity, conscience has become the justifier of every evil deed, so that many of the greatest crimes of history have been perpetrated in its name.

Time would fail me to describe all the units of this human army of rebellion. It must be enough to say that under the direction of the will, memory, imagination, judgment—all the faculties of the mind—have been conscripted, and enlisted in the rebellious army which would dethrone God. And in this rebellion we all have participated. Therefore the minister who would compliment human nature, must be a traitor to His Lord.

II.

Notwithstanding all this, the King is here represented as A GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN, who seeks the reconciliation of His rebellious subjects. Among men, usually it is the

vanquished, and not the victor, who sues for peace. But here God is represented as making the advance toward His rebellious creatures, desiring to be at peace with them.

It is not because God is indifferent to the life they live, or because He looks lightly upon their sin; for "God is angry with the wicked every day". He knows how to be angry. His holy nature is outraged by our sin. He does not come to us to propose our having our own way, and doing as we like. He requires us to be reconciled to Him. But not on the basis of compromise; rather to be reconciled to Him as God; to accept His government, and submit to His will.

There is a kind of preaching in our day which would imply that God seeks us because He needs us; as though it were not written, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee." But to hear some modern preachers speak, one might suppose that God was dependent upon men. Somewhere I have read of a certain lady at a social gathering of some sort, approaching a learned professor who was one of the guests of the evening, to seek from him a solution of what she supposed to be a very difficult religious problem. Said she, "Professor, have you heard that our rector has adopted the eastward position?" That is a great problem, which way to turn when you are in church! The professor said, "I had not heard that." "It is a fact, and some of us are greatly concerned about it."

I grant you that sometimes such trivialities may be symptomatic of more serious matters, but the professor answered the lady to this effect, "Madam", said he, "I am told by those who profess to know that the nearest fixed star is so many millions of light miles removed from the earth (I do not remember the exact figure). Some mathematically inclined persons have worked out a most interesting computation. They have assembled on paper the aggregate tonnage of all the world's ships, and have estimated their capacity if emptied of all passengers, and all other freight. They estimate that if all the ships of the world were filled with peas from keel to deck, and it were possible to sail from this planet to the nearest fixed star, and drop a pea every mile on the route, there would not be enough ships in all the world to hold the peas that would be required to mark the mileage from this earth to the nearest fixed star." The lady did not see the application, and said, "That is most interesting, most extraordinary." Having paused for effect, the professor said, "Madam, do you really think that the Creator of that star, one of millions, is very seriously concerned about this 'eastward position' of your rector?"

As though God were to be placated by forms and ceremonies, and all the millinery of ritualism! Why is God concerned about us? Is He troubled by our opposition? Does He need the poor services we can offer Him? Can we minister to His greatness, to the increase of Deity, by our prayers and praises, that He must seek peace between us? No! This sovereign God of ours is sovereignly independent.

The cost of war is always very great. Some years ago when Japan and Russia fought, before the World War, the world was amazed at victorious Japan's readiness to accept peace. But when peace was concluded, it was discovered that Japan's victories had been almost as expensive as would have been her defeat. The Allies in the World War won the day, and yet I am not sure that it did not cost us more than it cost Germany. Are we then to suppose that the resources of the great King are

nearly exhausted, and that He sues for peace because He cannot carry on the war? What resources He has!

Reflect a moment upon His resources of *time*. It is said that as Napoleon observed the sun westering on the evening of Waterloo, apostrophizing the sun, he said, "What would I not give to be possessed of the power of Joshua to retard thy march for one short hour?" But, lacking the power of Joshua, the sun went down, and, with it, Napoleon's sun set, never to rise again. But this great King against Whom man, in his folly, has pitted his strength, needs not to fight at all. Time is on His side. He has but to wait, and His enemies' strength decays. When He urges us immediately to become reconciled to Himself, it is because our time is short: He plans and works in the leisure of eternity; but men fail in their strength at last, and surrender to the one great Conqueror.

What *material* resources are His! Sometimes we act like little children. A little boy tries to copy something his father has. He makes a few wheels go round, and thinks he is an engineer. He makes a toy wagon, and is almost ready to compete in a race with his father at the wheel of a Rolls-Royce. Straightening himself, when he has lifted a few pounds, he puts himself on exhibition as though he were the world's strong man. So do we talk about man's power! of the marvellous inventions of the human mind. We speak with bated breath about Mussolini's mechanized armies, about the discoveries of chemists. What grotesque figures they present who parade in gas-masks! We lift up our hands in horror and say, The next war will be terrible. The last was bad enough—and the next may be worse. But how little is our human power compared with the power of Deity! If God should go to war with us, what chance should we have? "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire." "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."

When God shakes the earth the mightiest city crumbles like a house of cards. Men sometimes speak as though science had mastered the powers of the material universe. Sometimes we rather boast of our ability to "harness" the forces of nature. But what forces have we really harnessed? A mighty engine pulls a train of a dozen coaches at sixty or more miles an hour, and we call that power. But God's little snowflakes bring the monster to a standstill. We divert a little water from some mighty cataract, and think we are clever. But "by the breath of God frost is given". He breathes upon the torrent, and it sleeps. And when His lightnings cleave the skies, as He makes a way for the rain, man's mightiest works are brought to naught.

The recent voyages of the Queen Mary have reminded the world of the *Titanic* tragedy. Her engineers said she was unsinkable. But a little chip from one of God's icebergs elbowed the mighty *Titanic* out of its way—and she went down.

How helpless are men in the presence of such mighty forces. Challenging both man's impotence and his impudence, the Most High enquires, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treas-

ures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"

These forces are but some of the weapons in the divine armoury. And when the Lord opens His armoury, and brings forth the weapons of His indignation, who can stand before Him? He commandeth the floods. He is the Author of subterranean fires. The greatest, the mightiest things that man can do, with all his boasting, are not to be compared with the ordinary forces of nature which are at God's command. He can sink a world in a deluge of wrath if He wills to do so, or consume the cities of the plains with fires from on high. Let no man presume in the presence of God. Do not strut around as though God were afraid of you. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. . . woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" Of this mighty Man of war it is said, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

Therefore we cannot find an explanation of God's gracious attitude toward His rebellious creatures in any such directions as I have indicated. His powers are unexhausted and inexhaustible.

Consider, too, His *resources of mind*. Battles are not won by brute force. How keen the intellects which have planned these engines of destruction! How marvellous the brain which marshals all the hosts upon the field of blood! And if the mind of God had been exercised in devising means for our destruction, who could have resisted His will? If He in Whose mind the lightnings were born, and from Whom the sea received her power, at Whose presence the mountains flow down—if He had become thine enemy, O man, thy sword must have been broken in the battle; yea, then had He broken the arrows of the bow, and the shield and the sword and the battle. I say, therefore, if He bids thee be reconciled to Him, there can be but one reason for His so doing, and that is because He loves thee. For what other cause could He approach thee? Why plead with thee? Why parley with thee at all if He did not love thee, why should He send messengers to thee with tokens of love?

He might have commanded the waters, as in Noah's day, and swallowed thee up quick. Or destroyed thee with fire from heaven; or He could have commanded the pestilence, and that had been sufficient to put an end to all opposition. No; there is only one explanation of the divine dealings and pleadings with men; and that is that "God is love". It is for our sakes He pleads with us. On His part, it is for love's sake alone that He bids you be reconciled to God.

The truth of it all is that God loved the world. When the peace-makers, after the World War, assembled at Versailles and contemplated the ruin that had been wrought by Germany and her Allies, and the measure of guilt that was hers in precipitating the conflict, they said, "If we are to have peace, you must pay for it. You must make reparation." They tried to estimate the damage that had been done, and piled load upon load upon the offending nation. I do not blame them. It is easy for the experts to tell us that the burdens laid upon Germany, not only choked her, but brought chaos upon the rest of the world. It is easy to be wise after the event. But while the wounds of the war were still open sores, it is not surprising that men's judgments should have demanded some kind of rectification and of reparation.

But how easy had been the peace if someone could have come into that council-chamber and said, "I am possessed of infinite wealth. I will pay it all, every cent of it: All that Germany owes, all that Russia, Italy, Belgium, Roumania, Bulgaria, France, Britain, and the United States, owe. Make up your account; I will blot it all out; I will pay the bill." The peace treaty had been made easy by cleaning the slate, balancing the books, and giving the world a new chance. Yet that is exactly what God did: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." He Who is the Creator of all the world's wealth, the Source and Centre of all that is of moral worth in the universe, says, "Charge the cost of the war to me. I will liquidate it. I will pay." Therefore, be ye reconciled to God.

III.

To HIS AMBASSADORS He said, "Go ye to those who are in rebellion against Me, and in My stead, beseech them to be reconciled to God." That is the gospel message. Personally, as a minister, I am not greatly concerned about human estimates. None of us like to make enemies. All of us would prefer to make friends. I like to meet agreeable people. I would rather have any man's smile than his frown. But an ambassador's duty is not to consider what shall be the attitude of those to whom he is sent: he is commissioned rather to represent his king.

And his status bears some relation to the standing of the government he represents. The British ambassador is respected in all courts, and by all governments in the world—at least I hope he is. Britain has become involved through the folly of her pacifists, and through the utterly useless and senseless disarmament campaign, until she has been forced to take positions which every loyal Briton regrets. Never before did the British navy play the part she has played in the recent conflict. Perhaps it would be unjust, without a fuller knowledge, to attempt to appraise the wisdom of British statesmanship; but on the surface it would appear that England's foreign policy has been extremely weak. Why? Because instead of standing for principle independently she has become involved in the impossible principle of "collective security." The principle implies an altruistic ideal that has never existed as an actuality. The League of Nations programme was an impossible one. The United States would not support its President's creation, Japan withdrew, and every other power, as soon as their particular plan was opposed—as perhaps we ought all to have known they would—because human nature is what it is, withdrew. The League of Nations offered to the world a fool's paradise.

Be that as it may, an ambassador's standing inevitably is determined by his government's character and conduct. If the word of Britain to-day is not respected as once it was, there is a reason. She virtually said to Mussolini, "Thou shalt not"—and then permitted him to do as he pleased. I fear it may require a long time for Britain to recover her prestige among the nations. But it is not wholly Britain's fault. Amid the universal political confusion, who can say, This is the path, walk ye in it?

I represent a King Whose word never fails. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." This Bible is the word of God "that liveth and abideth for ever", the critics to the contrary notwithstanding. This King of ours will see to it that every provision of His word is executed to the letter. I venture therefore, as His ambassador, for once to magnify my office. It has been given to me, to my certain knowledge—as to many

another minister—on many occasions, to speak God's last word to a rebel before he went to meet Him. Moses went to Pharaoh again and again. At last in anger Pharaoh said, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day that thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more." Nor did Moses see his face again unless he saw it with those of other Egyptians, dead upon the seashore.

Who can conceive of Elijah as being concerned about his "job"? He delivered the Lord's message; then later Micaiah, a humbler prophet, a prophet all but unknown, mentioned only once, said to the king, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me." Elijah uttered a prophecy, and when Ahab was dead, and Jezebel painted her face and looked out of the window, and the avenger came and said, "Throw her down", they threw her down, and she was trodden upon by the horses feet until the dogs came and ate Jezebel and when men came out to bury her, "for she was a king's daughter . . . they found not more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands . . . this is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." When Ahab died, "the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord."

The word of God never fails. We cannot afford to say, No, to Him. Therefore we beseech you to be reconciled to God. There is no profit in our sinning. There is no profit in our rebellion. The price of reconciliation is paid. Thus the minister is commissioned, in Christ's stead, as though Christ Himself were here—dare I say it? yet that is what the Bible says—as though the King of glory were here, and were to show the wounds in His hands, and the marks of the thorns about His brow, and, baring His side, should show the place where the spear pierced Him—as though He were to say, "By these wounds, and by the blood which flowed for the expiation of your sins, I beg of you, I beseech you, be ye reconciled to God."

Will you come? What a glorious King He is! What a gracious King! I represent the most gracious, the noblest of all Kings, even the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Eternal life is in His hands, an everlasting kingdom is His. Perpetual felicity He wills for us, and fellowship with Himself for ever more, amid the splendours of His unfading city, where there is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. Therefore, I beseech you, be ye reconciled to God.

WHY NOT SUMMER ALWAYS?

There are few people who would prefer winter to summer. Summer is the time of greater physical comfort. It is the season when all the earth puts on her beautiful garments, when the woods are full of music, and the orchards and fields abound with fruit. But the summer passes, and notwithstanding all that man can do, the grass withereth, the leaf fadeth, and the flowers thereof fall away; until at last the cold and barrenness of winter ensues.

But what would be thought of a man, had he the power, who would deliberately convert summer into winter? And yet is not that what many believers do? Is it beyond

possibility that in the heavenly places in Christ one should enjoy a perpetual summer? The first Psalm says of the man who meditates in God's law day and night, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Earth's summertime is determined by the earth's relation to the sun. And summertime in the soul is determined by the soul's relation to Him Who is the Sun of Righteousness. If anyone be without leaf, or blossom, or fruit, it must be because of the soul's being out of right relation to God.

What is true of the individual, is true of the church. If any mourn that their moisture is turned into the drought of summer, let him return to the Lord with full purpose of heart, to Him Who is the soul's rest, and Who has dealt bountifully with us.

GOOD NEWS FROM AMBASSADOR CHURCH, WINDSOR

We have received good news from Ambassador Church, Windsor, of which Rev. F. W. Dyson is Pastor. They have recently made some alterations to the church building, including the installation of a baptistery. On a recent Sunday they had their first baptismal service in the church itself, and other candidates are still awaiting baptism.

When the church building was first acquired, under the pastorate of Rev. Wm. Fraser, it was offered to our people for \$13,000.00. At a still earlier stage a price of over \$30,000.00 had been put upon it. It is a splendid building, and in a fairly good location. It was formerly a Roman Catholic church. Next door to it was the priest's residence, which, for a time after our Baptist people took it, was used as a parsonage.

Now the building, the church without the parsonage, can be had for \$2,000.00, and it is believed for perhaps \$1,500.00 cash. It is a splendid property, and the land alone upon which it stands is worth far more than the price asked. Among our GOSPEL WITNESS readers there may be some friend who has a little money to invest. Of course, if there were anyone, or a number of people, who would contribute the amount so that it could be bought outright, that would be the ideal thing. But it is not improbable that someone, reading these lines, might be able to invest \$1,500.00 by putting up that amount for the purchase of the property, and taking a mortgage on the building. A reasonable interest, of course, would be guaranteed, as on any other mortgage.

It must be said that the Roman Catholic corporation in Windsor have been very patient, and no fault can be found with them as landlords. Notwithstanding, a Baptist church would feel very much freer if the mortgage were held by someone else. If there are any of our readers who would like to help in this Windsor matter, we should be glad to hear from them. When the church was originally taken over, we made an appeal through these pages, and about \$1,000.00 was sent in. This was used, in part, for an initial payment, and for seats and other furniture necessary to convert a Roman Catholic church into a Baptist auditorium. Any interested friends are invited to write to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, or directly to Rev. F. W. Dyson, 122 Randolph Ave., Windsor, Ont.

We earnestly hope there will be a generous response to this appeal.

BOOK REVIEWS

John and Betty Stam: Martyrs, by Lee S. Huizenga, M.D., F.R.G.S. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. 95 pages. Price 75 cents in cloth, 35 cents in paper.

This memorial volume, dedicated to Christian young people in all English-speaking countries of the world, is the outcome of a desire on the part of Dr. Huizenga, a medical missionary in China and life-long friend of the Stam family, to deepen and crystallize the profound impression made upon countless numbers of young people by the triumphant life and death of John and Betty Stam. Such a testimony as was given by these two devoted servants of the Master should inspire the heart of every Christian.

The Christian influences at work in home and school and church, the ways of God in moulding character and preparing His children for carrying out His own sovereign purpose for them, as well as their brief service ere they went Home, are sympathetically described.

The helpfulness of the volume is increased by the selections of poetry of high order, written by Mrs. Stam, some of them strangely significant in view of the circumstances; for example, the poem entitled "Stand Still and See", which closes thus:

"I'm standing, Lord.
Since Thou hast spoken, Lord, I see
Thou hast beset; these rocks are Thee;
And, since Thy love encloses me,
I stand; and sing!"

Reality, Profession or Possession—Which?, by the late M. D. Metcalfe, Joint Founder of Wallington Bible Institute. Published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., London, England. 128 pages. Price in England quoted as one shilling.

In this comparatively brief but readable volume, Mrs. Metcalfe gives a series of earnest, heart-searching, Scriptural appeals which might be characterized by the text, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith". Alike to the religious professor who is not a possessor, and to possessor who does not "possess his possessions", she makes a strong plea for reality and sincerity in our dealings with God and with man.

This volume will doubtless be used of the Lord in awakening many who have "a form of godliness" without "the power thereof".

—DR. OLIVE L. CLARK.

The Blood of the Cross, by Rev. Andrew Murray, M.A., D.D., 126 pages, 1935, published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London and Edinburgh, 1s. in England, 35c. in this country.

The famous South African pastor and missionary, Dr. Andrew Murray, while on a journey to Europe, was "definitely directed to a consideration of the 'power of the blood of Jesus'." As a result, Dr. Murray gave fifteen addresses at one period and five at another. The substance of the first ten was published under the title, *The Power of the Blood of Jesus*, and this new volume, now translated from the Dutch, puts forth the remaining ten (page 5).

Here "the deepest mystery of redemption" (p. 6) is viewed. We see, not only what Christ did for us as our Substitute (p. 89) and our Intercessor in Heaven, but also what He does in us as we believe. "God bestows salvation upon us in no other way, than *in*—not just *through*, but *in*—the Saviour" (p. 65). "By the eternal Spirit the blood has obtained an eternal, ever-availing, ever-fresh, independent, imperishable power of life" (p. 12); and "it will bring the soul that is entirely surrendered to it, to see and know by experience that there is no entrance into the full life of God, save by the self-sacrifice of the cross" (p. 38); for "Jesus, the living Priestly King on the Throne, cannot manifest in us His full power by exercising it from above, or from the outside, but only by indwelling. When He, the Priestly King, takes up His abode within us, He makes us kings and priests" (p. 122). By His blood we may adore Him for the "divine mystery" of election (p. 112f), and in it find "the pledge of a perfect salvation" (p. 81). —W. G. B.

Carey, by S. Pearce Carey, M.A., Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London and Edinburgh, 1s. in England, 35c. in this country.

This life of Carey, "the apostolic awakener of modern Christendom", written with keen yet sympathetic insight by his great-grandson, is not merely another biography, but rather a careful appraisal of the permanent value of the work of the founder of Indian missions. Compiled, as the author says, "after careful consideration of notable British and Indian estimates of him, and also in view of changing missionary judgments", this book, could well supplement the reading of a more detailed life of Carey, for it helps one to see in true perspective his life and work, and to form conclusions as to their meaning for his own and the following periods of missionary history.

A small volume of only one hundred and twenty-three pages, it is written in a lucid style, sparkling with apt phrasing and quotation, so that the reader will doubtless forget that it is not divided into chapters and read it through at a sitting. The early struggles, aspirations, pioneer experiences and remarkable missionary achievements of the heroic soul who believed that Christians ought to "expect great things from God, attempt great things for God", are graphically described, with much new material introduced. Especially interesting is the account of Carey's seemingly superhuman linguistic accomplishments, an account which the writer makes more vivid by such a passage as the following:

"Apart from the toil of the writing and rewriting, there was the tireless hunt for words,—a right Bengali word to be found or fashioned for every thought and word of the Bible—involving thousands of questions to his pundits and others, and then the constant checkings of the same, besides the worry of unstandardized spelling. Then his wrestlings with obscure biblical sentences and phrases, his ceaseless consultations of the Hebrew and the Greek, his weighing of variant readings, and his distress over dubious texts. And always his quest for a style at once literary and homespun, and for a faithful yet flowing rendering of the poetical chapters and books, his loyalty to St. Paul's packed thoughts, and yet a simplification of his 'labyrinthine' paragraphs. And all this in the heat or the steaminess of Bengal, with no punkas by day, and only little mustard-oil lamps or tallow candles by night! On the other hand, there was his joy in his task, his deepening reverence for the Book's wisdom compared with India's richest spiritual wealth, his thrills at its newly-realized treasures, and his rapture at being privileged to be the first to convey to Bengal this unparallelled gift. In this purpose to mediate to the multitudes of Bengal God's ever-abiding Word in their vernacular, was he not a shoemaker again? Compassionating those who for their life's hard pilgrimage and warfare and labour had only shoes that were 'old and clouted', he meant to substitute for these 'shoes what would never wax old', even 'the preparedness of the gospel of peace' (pages 43, 44).

Every missionary and prospective missionary will receive fresh inspiration from such a book as this, every teacher and student of God's Word will be heartened for his task by this account of the difficulties which were overcome by this versatile scholar and noble teacher, and every true Christian will revel in the story of the zeal with which Carey sought and won souls for Christ.—L. W. B.

NEWS FROM UNION CHURCHES

Hespeler

The Hespeler Baptist Church has been having blessed times recently under Pastor Charlton's ministry. Recently three were baptised and added to the Church. The Young People's Society is starting a series of open air meetings, after the regular evening service, to be held in the adjacent park. Last Sunday the Bible School broke its former record for attendance.

Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto

The Anniversary services of the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church were held on Sunday, June 14th. The Pastor, Rev. Alex. Thomson, preached at both services, and in the evening the ordinance of baptism was observed. Special music was brought by Dorothy and Shirley Claus of Tonawanda, N.Y., and Mr. Bert Hill of Toronto.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WM. J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 Third Quarter Lesson 28 July 12, 1936

SEPARATED BY INIQUITY

Lesson Text: Isaiah, Chapters 58 and 59.

Golden Text: "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."—Isaiah 59:1, 2.

Bible School Reading: Chapter 59.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Hos. 6:4-11; Tuesday—Amos 5:1-9; Wednesday—Amos 5:10-15; Thursday—Amos 8:1-14; Friday—Rom. 11:1-10; Saturday—Rom. 11:11-32.

CHAPTER 58

After the echoes of the pounding surf of 57:20 have ceased, we are faced with the turbulence of a triple command, carried on in the restless rebuke of the prophet. The theme of justice or righteousness (Ch. 56) is still to the fore.

Vs. 1-9a—The perverted worship of Israel is the theme. "Cry . . . spare . . . lift" are the commands. The function of a prophet in the Jewish theocracy was quite as much to forth-tell as to foretell; as much to teach his contemporaries as to prophesy about his descendants. The prophet was the mouth-piece of Jehovah, the spokesman of God (14; cf. Ex. 4:16). One hears very much about the need for "positive" preaching, and the utter uselessness, if not un-Christian character of negative preaching. Here is "negative" preaching for one. Like a clarion, Isaiah was to denounce transgression (59:12). The invective of the prophet is directed in particular against the ritualism of Judaism apart from spirituality. He is not attacking sacrifice or the sacrificial principle, but the perversion of sacrifice, and the crass, heathen-like dependence on ritualism. A spiritual religion is not ritualistic, witness the times of the patriarchs. As Bishop Lightfoot in his commentary on Galatians indicates, there was no good in the "spiritual" aspects of heathen religions, but relative good in their ritualism. In Judaism's ritualism there was relative good, but apart from its spiritual character it was "a mere mass of lifeless ordinances, differing only in degree, not in kind, from any other ritualistic system." The turning of the Galatians to Jewish ritualism was only a return to the ritualistic rudiments, the "weak and beggarly elements" of their heathen religion (Gal. 4:8, 9). A ritualistic system is for spiritual babes; it is elementary and immature (Gal. 4:3, 4).

Because the prophets have much to say about false attitudes of worship and particularly the worship aspect of sacrifice, that is to say the man-God or subjective relationship, we must anticipate the reason for their bitter attacks against perverted worship.

Isaiah speaks (2) of a religiosity that performed the mechanical requisites of ritual (1:11); that was ostensibly righteous (48:1; Jer. 7:9); that drew near to God with much delight (29:13). Pharisee-like they expected rewards for such scrupulous service (Mal. 3:14; Lk. 18:12), but found that Jehovah heeded them not, though He observed their works (cf. note 57:15). The Lord replies to their plaint by saying (3c) that their fasting was selfish (22:12; Zech. 7:5f.) and that the wickedness of strife was really the goal of their observances (4) not Himself (1:15; 59:2). Their voice in prayer certainly could not be heard, for they held up guilty hands. Here is a hint that the reason the prophets assailed sacrifices was the manner of their offering. The Old Testament never commended sacrifices without the precedent element of spirituality (Jer. 7:8-11; Matt. 5:25). Prayer was not heard unless the sacrifice came from a pure heart (Is. 1:15). Prayer and fasting of that nature was acceptable. There is no merit in the works of painful (5) fasts or yet in the untold sufferings of modern religious flagellants, whether Hindoo or Christian. Religious exercises such as fasting should be joyful not painful (Matt. 16:17). What the Jews of the day of Isaiah needed was a correct heart and mind attitude for their religion, one which would release from slavery (Neh. 5:10) and oppression of all sorts (1:17); one which would comply with the demands of human need which even Job knew (31:19) and others recognized (Ezek. 18:7, 16). The Saviour reminds us of such acts of mercy (Matt. 25:25) and the law recognized them as necessary (Deut. 22:1-4; cf. Lk. 10:31, 32 for violation of the Law).

Repeatedly other prophets reflect the unjust social conditions here mentioned but they recognize (cf. note 57:1) that there is a spiritual basis for the amazing evils (Hos. 6:4-11; Amos 2:6-8; 5:10-13; 8:4-10).

Compliance with the requirements of true worship will mean prosperity ("light") which will burst forth as birds from their eggs, water from a dam; and break as the dawn. Spiritual healing for Israel will follow (30:26; 33:24) and Jehovah Himself will go before with His Presence (really, the Second Person Himself, cf. note 52:12). "Thy righteousness" is really His righteousness, a thought necessary to complete the parallelism (54:17). Then (9) Israel will call and be heard, even as we shall be heard if we cry for salvation. But He calls first (49:7) in His sovereign mercy.

Vs. 9b-12 show the results of proper worship. We as well as Israel should not worship in order, pagan-like, to get blessings, or to indulge in wrong practices, or to escape judgment (Am. 4:4; Is. 1:13; Hos. 6:6); but simply because worship is due Him as God. Results will follow, of course—light (8; Job 11:17; Ps. 37:6); guidance continually (11; cf. note 49:10; 57:18); spiritual refreshing such as the Saviour spoke of (Jn. 4:14; 7:38), and spiritual usefulness (12). Literally the "old waste places" of the Holy Land are being excavated, but the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the Church (49:8; Am. 9:11).

CHAPTER 59

Vs. 1-8 declare the rejection of Jehovah by sinning Israel. Before Israel can be delivered she must acknowledge her sin. It and not the power of God (1) is the deterrent, for His hand is ready to save (note on 50:2), His ear not deaf but open (58:9). "But"—contrast (2) shows the divine wrath. Their iniquities, but typically ours have caused a breach, a gulf, a separation between God and man. And consciousness of sin *must* precede conversion and restoration. What those iniquities were we have seen (50:1; 56:9; 58:4, ff.). But it is the principle of sin which we here view, sin which in hiding God from us has necessitated a propitiation, an expiation for sin. He cannot, because He will not hear prayer (cf. note 58:4)—all because sin is not put away (3). Note the variety of instruments (Rom. 6:13) of unrighteousness: "hands", "fingers", "lips", "tongue"; and in v. 7, "feet" and "thoughts". No clumsy, no finely articulated sin is omitted from that category! The guilt of bloodshed was upon Israel (1:15; Jer. 2:30; Ezek. 7:23; Hos. 4:2); lying lay deep upon them (28:15); injustice crowded the courts (4; cf. v. 14; 5:7) and the chambers of justice (59:14). Fetishes prevailed (Jer. 7:4, 8); sin brought forth broods of iniquity (5; cf. Jas. 1:15) and Israel could do nothing but hide behind gossamer threads of spider web garments of flimsiness (6)! But their righteousnesses were useless as garments of covering (28:20; 64:6); their works iniquitous (cf. note 57:12); and their land filled with violence (58:4). This last sin precipitated the Deluge (Gen. 6:11). How gracious of God to spare Israel now! V. 7 is quoted in that inimitable guide to youth, Proverbs (1:16; 6:17) and by Paul in his sweeping condemnation of the race (Rom. 3:15). Small wonder their iniquities (65:2) were of such enormity that they knew no way of peace (8) knew no justice (9; Hos. 4:1) and had no peace of mind (57:20).

Vs. 9-15a, demonstrate the penalty of rejecting Jehovah in the form of a confession of sin for the nation with which Isaiah identifies himself. What a wealth of figures for blindness in 9, 10—all depicting judicial hardening, and yet all typifying our condition outside of Christ (II Cor. 4:4). Note the three words for sin in v. 12 showing the lofty view of sin held by Isaiah (Ps. 51:2, 3). Sin was against God chiefly (Ps. 51:4). V. 13 particularizes the sins. We can deny God (II Tim. 2:12; Matt. 10:33). The sinful conditions (13, 14) we have already noted. A familiar expression is in 14—showing the quotability of Isaiah. Even the righteous was ridiculed (15).

Vs. 15b-21 reveal redemption promises. God sees our sin too. But He found no deliverer, no intercessor as Moses was once (Ex. 32:32), therefore He must save Israel (cf. 51:9; 52:10 notes). The Messiah now appears in the garb of a warrior whose accoutrements are the believer's (Eph. 6:14) by faith. At His last coming (18) He will punish sinners (65:6); reward us according to deed (II Cor. 5:10); and gather His own in glory and power, and unbelievers in judgment (19, R.V.; cf. II Thess. 2:8). Israel is to be restored (20; Rom. 11:26) according to His immutable promise and covenant (21).

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

From *THE WITNESS*, London, England,

Rev. Henry Oakley, Editor

Dr. Shields' Latest Book

While we were away Dr. Shields kindly sent us a copy of his new book, with a very honouring inscription in his own handwriting. There are fourteen sermons in the volume; seven are from the Old Testament and seven are from the New Testament, a proportion that discloses at once something of the preacher's mind. "All Scripture" is not a meaningless or out-worn phrase to him. The first sermon, "Other Little Ships", gives the title to the book.

I have read the sermons with the attention and experience of a preacher. I once wrote "The homiletics of Dr. Shields are miles apart from Mr. Spurgeon's". A minister soon after said to me: "I think you are wrong in that," and I straightway said, "I think myself it was a mistake which I discovered almost before the words were in print." Now after reading these sermons right through almost at a sitting, I am sure I was wrong. Dr. Shields handles a text in his own way, but it is certainly in a way that was Mr. Spurgeon's.

These sermons are the sermons of a great preacher. Interesting, clever, instructive, pleasing preachers we have in abundance, but the truly great preacher is terribly scarce to-day. Possibly the first figure would give the number of such in Great Britain. Great preachers differ, of course, in their greatness. There was the greatness of Mr. Spurgeon, and the greatness of Dr. MacLaren, and the greatness of Canon Liddon and Dr. Parker. "One star differeth from another star in glory". Dr. Shields has a greatness after his own order, but greatness it surely is. Select any one of these sermons. Take the one at which the book falls open, "The Swelling of Jordan"—a subject at which most preachers stagger a little. But here Dr. Shields is in full stride. He seizes the principle of the text and applies it in the most masterly way—the philosopher, the theologian, the evangelist, the orator, all appear in him in this sermon. There is no other word in our language that can describe this sermon except the word "great".

The scripturalness of the sermons is one of their marked features. It is remarkable how scriptural they are without being exegetical in the way Bishop Westcott and Dr. MacLaren were exegetical. Some of these sermons Dr. MacLaren could never have preached, and yet even Dr. MacLaren was not more scriptural. It is one of the charms of the sermons that they offer you the finest of the wheat without dissecting the kernels. Sermon number eight, "How to be hospitable to the Truth", is an example of this. Scriptural it is in every part, but in no way exegetical in the way of the exegete.

The spontaneity of the discourses is a rare delight. When you read the work of a preacher like Dr. J. H. Jowett, for example, however much you take pleasure in the perfection of his phrasing, you cannot rid yourself of the smell of the midnight oil. There is somehow the reminder of the old hand pump and not of the easy rush and flow of the spring on the hillside. It is perfect ease and naturalness that is characteristic of Dr. Shields' work. The sermons are like the flow of a mountain river that has reached the valley, in which there is no suggestion of toil, or the faintest hint of exertion, or of exhaustion. It just flows and gives you the impression that it could flow

for ever and know no weariness. The greatest matters of life are presented and discussed with perfect ease. Take the sermon on "The Culture of the Soul", on page 209. It is a profound philosophical discourse, but its sunny ease has a charm like the singing of birds.

Another of the delights of the volume for me is the illustrations. They are culled from everywhere, but chiefly from the preacher's own experience, and for me these are illustrations that tell as well as illustrate. You may read through the whole thirty-two volumes of Dr. MacLaren's sermons and never know that he was a man among men and so it is in the sermons of Dean Church. They kept an unchanging severity of impersonality. In the biography of Dr. MacLaren there is a passage in which he defends this, but I believe his great sermons lost much of "the human touch" just because they were so severely impersonal. I do not think there need be any sacrifice of literary grace and ideal in wisely and carefully using our experience in illustration of truth. Dr. Alexander Whyte was a prince among preachers who had given tireless attention to style and he achieved great perfection as a stylist; yet he never excluded illustrations from his life and doings. Personally I think some of the most telling passages in these sermons and passages that will longest linger in the memory and life of the readers are the stories from the Doctor's rich and varied experience. Here is one from the first sermon, "Other Little Ships":—

"I heard Professor George Jackson deliver an address before the Toronto Ministerial Association. The subject was, I think, 'John Morley, the Priest of the Outer Court'. He extolled John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone, he described his blameless character, his wonderfully serviceable life, his amiable disposition and held him up as a kind of superman; being careful to point out that in the production of this character religion had no part; for John Morley was an agnostic. I happened to walk up the street with Dr. Jackson after the meeting and I said, 'Doctor, has it ever occurred to you that Morleyism never yet produced a John Morley, that you cannot find a John Morley where Christ is not preached and His principles unknown? All the influences that made him what he was had their origin in the very religion which he refused to acknowledge.' 'There were also with him other little ships'; and everything that is good in what we call our civilization is there because Jesus sails the seas."

You cannot turn many pages in this attractive book without reaching some aptly quoted verse of a hymn—not a strained passage from a modern poet the meaning of which is difficult to catch, but a verse where the meaning stands at the front door. Again I let the book fall open and within three pages is this verse.

His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep;
All that His Heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.

The general preaching of to-day refuses such quotations, but the general preaching of to-day is without power and I rather think Dr. Shields can teach us how to get the power back again. But natural and easy quotation needs great ability. How much I have coveted and do covet it, but it seems not for me, admire it and covet it as I do.

I must stop although I would have liked to write upon the originality, the boldness and the splendid evangelicalness of these sermons.

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