

# The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.  
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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Editor S.S. Lesson: WILLIAM J. JONES

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

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

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE HOME

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 14th, 1913

(NOTE: The Pastor will be absent from his pulpit for three weeks. There are many hundreds of sermons on file which have been delivered in Jarvis Street Church, and stenographically reported during the last fifteen years. But, for a change, the Editor thought it might be interesting, and perhaps useful, to publish a few sermons from manuscripts. More than twenty years ago he preached a series of sermons in Jarvis Street under the title: "Applied Christianity", the first of which appears in this issue. This sermon is not printed from a stenographic report, but from the preacher's manuscript. Other titles to follow are: *The Christian as a Church Member, The Christian as an Employer, The Christian as an Employee, The Christian as a Business Man.* At least three of these will be printed in succession, and the rest, from time to time as opportunity offers.)

"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."—Mark 5:19.

For several Sunday evenings I am to try to follow the Christian through the ordinary relationships of life; to show, as far as I can, what his conduct must be, if it is to conform to the teaching of God's Word.

### I.

Obviously, therefore, our first task must be to ascertain WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

Let it be understood at the outset that good behaviour in all these relationships does not, in itself, entitle a man to the name of Christian. These are all human relationships; and a man may be ideally related to his fellows in all these respects, and yet be estranged from God.

A Christian, then, is a person who is rightly related to God. That is the fundamental thing. The first and great commandment is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God". And however exemplary a man's conduct in all life's relationships may be, however blameless and beautiful his outward character, if he is not related in peace and love to God Himself, he is not a Christian.

Let no one substitute the second summary of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour", for the first, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God". That would be to turn the tree of life upside down, and put the branches where the roots should be. "Applied Christianity" means Christianity applied, and you cannot apply what you do not possess.

Christianity consists, essentially, in being on good terms with God, and with men only as a consequence thereof. Our relationship to God must govern our relations with men.

The demoniac of Gadara cried out: "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God?" But now he is sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind, and even prays the Master for leave to stay with Him. So the true Christian is peacefully and joyously and lovingly related to God, and longs above all other things to be ever with Him.

But that is a very incomplete definition of a Christian. For, one will enquire, How is a man to be brought into such relation to God? Can a man make himself love God?

The next line of my definition is this: A Christian is a person who is rightly related to God, because God has done some special thing for him. Please note that carefully. A Christian is one for whom God has done something, and not one who has done something for God; or for whom man has done something, or who has done something for man.

This man had been separated from home and friends because he was in the grip of a superhuman evil power. Now that power has been broken, and the evil expelled. His whole nature is changed, and he is "in his right

mind". Jesus spoke of the "great things" the Lord had done for him.

Every true Christian has had a "great" thing done for him. He, himself, has done nothing: everything has been done for him. His debts were paid by Jesus Christ upon the cross. His sins have been forgiven him on the ground of that great transaction. And something has been done *in* him. His mind has been changed, renewed by the Holy Ghost. He has been regenerated, born again, made a new creature in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The true Christian is *one who is conscious of the change that has taken place, and deliberately chooses to be with Christ*. The attitude of this man illustrates what it is to believe in Christ. So to trust and love Him as to desire to sit always at His feet.

And because he knows all this to be true, *the Christian has something to tell*. He is a witness to a great truth which all men need to hear, and to believe. I can, therefore, now put the fragments of my definition together: A true Christian is one who is rightly related to God because of some great thing which God has done for him, and in him, and of which he is fully conscious, and he therefore has a testimony to bear for God.

## II.

It follows, inevitably, that A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BEGIN THE APPLICATION OF HIS RELIGION BY LIVING IT OUT AT HOME. This course is divinely enjoined, and it is eminently reasonable, as are all divine injunctions: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on Thee".

It may, freely, be granted that *there is no harder place to prove ourselves*. It, perhaps, ought to be easy, but we all know that it is hard. No one knew so well what this man had been as his own friends. They knew, as no others did, what means had been vainly tried to save him. Therefore no one was so well qualified to judge of the reality of the miraculous change.

When certain of the enemies of Christ came face to face with the miraculous opening of the eyes of the blind man—who had been told, after his eyes had been anointed, to go and wash in the pool of Siloam—they were disposed to question the genuineness of the miracle, and it is said: "The Jews did not believe concerning him; that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight." That is to say, they enquired at home for proof of the reality of the miracle. And that is ever the place where the most reliable evidence is to be found. We are all well known at home. There we live in negligée: we are not dressed up for company. We do not act a part at home: we are known as we really are. I have known a few people who professed to have attained to a state of sinless perfection. But I have yet to find the first man who could obtain corroboration of his professed perfection from those who lived with him.

*The Christian is designed to be a witness to the truth*. And truth always seeks the light. Truth never refuses to be investigated. It is vain for anyone to complain of the world's harsh judgments. It is of the very nature of things that a tree should be known by its fruits. And a religion that is nothing more than a philosophy of life, a theory of other-world relationships, a religion that is Christian in name only, will never commend itself to men who need a present salvation adequate to the needs of time and of eternity.

Christianity, therefore, *must be applied*. The triumphant religion will ever be the tried religion. Surely I state but the merest commonplace when I say that one incarnate Gospel, walking on two human feet, working with two hands, and speaking with a sanctified tongue, is worth to the Kingdom of God, and to the weal of the world, a thousand volumes of Christian apologetics.

## III.

THEREFORE, LET US CARRY THIS LAMP OF TRUTH INTO A HOME, AND SEE HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD THERE BEHAVE.

What if the Christian *be a husband*? "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." It may be that in these days when so much is said about sex equality, the doctrine of the husband's headship of the wife will not be accepted without challenge. And that the husband is the head of the wife, and that wives should be in subjection to their own husbands is certainly contrary to the generally accepted standards of to-day. I must confess that I have known many husbands—too many husbands, in fact—who have fully lived up to their privileges as the head of the house, without recognizing the corresponding responsibilities. But a strict and faithful application of Christian principles will always be found to point the way to a reasonable course. The Christian husband is the "head" of the wife, and ought to live out that principle in his home. To yield that position, and to fail, justly, to rule his own household, constitutes a serious dereliction of Christian duty. Furthermore, we have the authority of the Word of God for this truth, that wives ought to be in subjection to their own husbands, not only when they are abroad and in the public eye, but when they are at home, and there is no eye but God's to see them.

But will some man go home from this service this evening, and quote the preacher as having counselled, on the authority of Scripture, the exercise on the part of the husband of lordly, arbitrary, powers at home?

Let me pause a moment here to give utterance to a truth that needs special emphasis in our day. There is a tendency in some quarters to build a doctrine upon a single text, and to elaborate an ecclesiastical system; or otherwise utterly to nullify New Testament ecclesiology by the citation of passages ruthlessly wrested from their context. Were the same principle applied to the Scripture before us, it would be possible, on scriptural grounds, to justify the most arbitrary husbandly dictatorship. But let us hear the Scripture again: "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." The husband is to be the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.

And what does His headship mean? It means this: He is the Saviour of the body. And what did He? What does He still for His church? He took, and still takes, our griefs, and carries our sorrows. He is the true Burden-Bearer, the Companion Who always walks on the side where the storm is beating, to shield His beloved from all harm. Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. He loved with a love that counted no sacrifice too great. He gave Himself, in life and death, for His bride, and left her with an insurance of eternal

life. But not only so, He gave Himself for her to the end that He might make her beautiful, that He might give her "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". He lavished all His wealth upon her that for her shame she might have double, and for confusion, might rejoice in her portion, that everlasting joy should be hers; that He might clothe her with the garments of salvation, and cover her with a robe of righteousness, even as a bride is adorned with her jewels. He so gave Himself for her, and made such provision for her need that He might ever be proud of her, and present her to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

And that, to the measure of a man's ability, is what it means to be a Christian husband; to be like Christ, to take all the hard places, to bear all the heavy burdens, and to be, in all things, the wife's saviour; to put her first, always, among mortals; to surround her with a tender ministry of undying love; to give himself to her without reserve, to make her, in the true sense, beautiful in his eyes; in a word, to live for her and die for her.

Oh, ye wives, tell me, will any of you object to your husbands being head of the wife after that fashion, after the manner of Christ Himself? If subjection to your husband be analogous to the church's subjection to Christ, having a clear, and strong, and true, and tender head, to think for you, to plan for you, to order everything for your comfort and enjoyment, and your highest good, would not such subjection be a foretaste of paradise itself? What woman would ever object to such subjection?

And ye husbands, it is peculiarly your high and holy privilege to represent Christ in your homes, to be the head of your house as He is the Head of His. I beg of you, ponder this truth this evening ere you sleep. Could the house be prayerless, think you, where He is? Think of it in the morning ere you leave your family. Did Jesus Christ ever begin the day without prayer? And think of it as the evening shadows gather. Can you imagine how eagerly Bethany awaited His coming? And do you give your wives reason to count the hours of your absence, and, because you are so much like Christ, to feel time to move slowly while, and because, you are away?

*But what if the Christian be a wife?* How is she to apply her religion in a home where the husband is the head. It is a poor rule that does not admit of mutual application. Therefore, wives are to be in subjection to their husbands as the church is in subjection to Christ. The church glories in her Head. It is the supreme passion of her life that her glorious Husband shall have the preeminence. She is to make the best use of all that her divine Husband has purchased for her. She must not neglect the treasures of grace, nor fail to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things. It is His delight to provide her with a wardrobe that is the envy of the angels; but it is hers to put on her beautiful garments. She is to be His closest companion, to be to Him the joy of His heavenly home, to be in all things serviceable to her Lord, and ever to display the greatness and the glory of His matchless grace.

Is that a fair picture of an ideal wife? It is, at all events, a picture of the ideal which every Christian wife should set before her. *But what if she has no help at home?* What if her husband is not a Christian? Is she still under obligation to strive to realize so high an ideal? If possible the obligation is only increased by that consideration: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your

own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy woman also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

I do not say that this is easy. It is possible only by divine grace. But it is thus possible, and it is God's way; or it is, at least, one way by which He brings men to a knowledge of the truth.

*But what a holy place this conception makes of the Christian home!* Well do we speak of marriage as holy matrimony. Shall not husbands and wives, who have named the name of Christ, endeavour, by His grace, to realize the scriptural ideal in their own homes! Then there would be heavens below. Then our homes would be centres of holy influence, by which multitudes would be blessed, and God would be glorified.

And ere I leave this, *as a sidelight upon this doctrine*, and in no light mood do I refer to it, I venture to say that such applied Christianity as this would go far to settle many of the vexed questions of the day. The fact is, applied Christianity is the only solution of the problems of the world.

But once more I must enquire, *What if the Christian be a parent?* I was surprised to find, on looking into this part of my subject, that so little is said in the New Testament in the way of explicit directions to parents, concerning their children. Inferentially, of course, there is much teaching, but there is little explicit direction. There is first of all *the obligation to make provision for the children's temporal wants*. The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And again: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." That, of course, speaks for itself. No Christian father can be true to his trust who does not recognize his obligation to do his utmost to provide for his children; and, so far as it may be in his power, to see them well established in life. To neglect that duty is to deny the faith, the Scripture says, and to be worse than an infidel.

It is further enjoined that *Christian parents should be rulers of their own households*, having their children in subjection with all gravity. An unruly and undisciplined family is a reproach to a Christian home. Of course, I know parents cannot change the natures of their children. Still Ishmael may come from the home of Abraham, and Esau from the house of Isaac. But while they remain children, their subjection to their own parents is a possible witness to the rule of the God of order in the home to which they belong. The neglect of this plain duty on the part of Christian parents is eminently dishonouring to God.

There is also an admonition to fathers to *provoke not their children to wrath*. There is no doubt that habits of ill-temper are often formed in little children, and little tongues are early soiled with bitter and unfilial speech, by parental thoughtlessness, or ill-humour. Let it be remembered that a child's heart is to be kept with all dili-

gence, and its lips from all evil speech. Parents will then be as slow to provoke their children to anger as to any other immorality.

But further, *it is enjoined upon Christian fathers that they bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* That surely means that the responsibility for imparting definite religious instruction rests upon the Christian father. The Book says *fathers*, not mothers. Consistent with the teaching that the husband and father is the head of the house, it puts the responsibility for the instruction of his children plainly upon his shoulders. No religious instruction in the public schools, no Sunday School teacher can ever take the place of a consecrated Christian father teaching his children the ways of the Lord. This is applied Christianity: "Go home to thy friends (thy wife, husband, children) and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Surely, surely, of all people in the world your own children should hear the glad news of salvation from your lips! Think you, if this were done, so many children of Christian homes would remain outside the fold? Is it not promised: "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth"? Is not His righteousness promised unto children's children? Will not you fathers and mothers go home this evening and erect the family altar, if you have not done so? Will you not try to speak to your children of their soul's interests? If you neglected it when they were little children, remember they will never be younger than they are to-night. I beseech you to pray God to give you grace to bear witness for Christ before your own children. And I covet for you members of Jarvis Street the joy, the joy unspeakable, of leading your own children to Christ.

But all this, and all that is not explicitly directed, *grows out of the holy relationship of the Christian husband and wife, which I have so imperfectly described.* The children will inevitably feel the presence of God if husband and wife are really one in Christ Jesus. What if they are not? What if only one is a Christian? Well, you are to seek not to be loosed. But Christians should not marry any but Christians. I know that is a delicate question. But if a Christian man and woman will put Christ first, there will be no danger that either of them will marry one who is not a Christian. I know well that conversion has often followed after marriage; for the grace of God ever abounds. Notwithstanding, it is written: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Let the wedding be deferred until the soul has been married to Christ, otherwise you are courting sorrow and laying up for yourself a store of grief.

*What if the Christian be a son or daughter at home?* Quite irrespective of their parents' worthiness, Christian children must *honour their father and their mother.* Of course, that means to show them due respect, but it means vastly more. It means to support them where support is necessary. The son or daughter who permits father or mother to suffer while it is in their power to minister to their support, dishonours the Lord Who bought them. The fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother", is described as "the first commandment with promise". It lies at the foundation of all happy human relationships, and the son or daughter who obeys it will find his days long in the land which the Lord his God shall give him. Boys and girls, who profess the name of the Lord Jesus, quite as truly as young men and women; must take pattern of Christ, Who was ever a most dutiful Son.

The Scripture teaches the duty of children *to obey their parents in the Lord.* Much sorrow and suffering have come to young people from the neglect of this admonition. Be thankful for Christian counsel made wise by years of experience, and be obedient to the head of the house as the church should be to Christ.

*But children must put Christ even before their parents,* and they must obey only in so far as their parents' commands are in agreement with the Word of God.

And what shall I say of *brothers and sisters?* Only this, that home should be to the Christian a place where the cross of Christ Jesus should be most fully exemplified. We must begin there. We must make Christ the Master there, if anywhere. Let Him be welcomed at the front door, and to every room in the house. Bid Him take up His dwelling-place, and let Him be recognized in all family relationships. Let Him be acknowledged at the table, consulted in all family counsels, made a Sharer in all amusements, Partner in all your reading, the Theme and Inspiration of your Music, the Lord and Master of your Home. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

### SEMINARY NOTES

#### The Northern Ontario Development Board

A government which had an eye to the fabulous wealth stored up in the incalculable resources of minerals and timber in the vast Northern stretches of our province, instituted the Northern Ontario Development Board to open up that new country. Pastor H. C. Slade of Timmins, whose zeal for the spiritual welfare of the people in that region, might well earn for him the title of the "Bishop of the North," suggested that the Board of our Union would do well to set up another Northern Ontario Development Board to look out for the advancement of the Kingdom of God in those northern regions. Suiting his action to his word he has led off, as these pages have already chronicled, in a two weeks' campaign of Gospel preaching in the town of Kapuskasing, situated some 160 miles North and West of Timmins where the Transcontinental Railway crosses the Mattagami River, whose waters flow into James Bay. Down this river come the logs that the gigantic mills convert into paper, which is transported by the railway to the great newspapers of the world. This town is one of the most beautiful in all the North. But as one who has been there with Brother Slade, I give it as my conviction that it is a place that requires the "much prayer and fasting" that the Master once laid down as the condition of victory. May we urge upon those who are anxious to see the Lord bare His arm in these neglected districts, the necessity of labouring together in prayer with Pastor H. C. Slade and his brother, Mr. W. R. Slade, of the Seminary, as they carry on this arduous task.

We also have good news from Pastor J. R. Armstrong whose churches, with practical missionary interest, "lent" him for the preaching of the Word in Kirkland Lake, a thriving mining town in Northern Ontario near the Quebec border. The evident agreement of all who have had to do with this new undertaking, both in Kirkland Lake, in providing ways and means of providing for the preacher, and in the churches in Southern Ontario in sacrificing the services of their pastor while he is absent in this missionary undertaking, is a manifest token of the Spirit's working.

Mr. Armstrong writes: "We are making considerable progress here in the work, although at times it seems very discouraging. We had a meeting in the Oddfellows' Hall on Sunday. This week we are having open air meetings in various parts of the town. During the day we visit the district with bills and get into the homes where possible. The bills announce the meeting in the open air and also the one on Sunday. In this way we hope to make contacts with a large number of people. Saturday and Sunday nights we had open air meetings. The one Sunday night was very good because there was not as much traffic to disturb."

Pray that the Word preached in this apostolic fashion from house to house, in the open air, and in the regular services may be blessed to the salvation of souls.—W. S. W.

## THE EDITOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

It is not often we share with our readers letters that reach us from time to time, save as they relate to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, or the Seminary. But we are happy to include in our GOSPEL WITNESS family a great army of ministers, many of whom write the Editor from time to time on matters of personal interest.

Recently we received a letter from the United States which raised some questions which, perhaps, are being asked by others. Because of the importance of the subject, our reply was rather a long one, and we asked permission to publish the letter, if need be; promising of course, to eliminate all marks of identification.

We publish below a letter which we have marked, "An American Pastor's Enquiry". Then follows our answer, and that, in turn, is followed by the American minister's acknowledgment. The letters will speak for themselves.

## AN AMERICAN PASTOR'S ENQUIRY

\_\_\_\_\_ Va., June 29, 1936.

Dear Doctor Shields:

For many years I have been a subscriber to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and your sermons published in it have helped me more than I could possibly tell you. Not only have they helped me to a better understanding of my Bible, but they have helped me in many other ways.

I should have told you this a long time ago, instead of waiting till I come to you for a favour, but my reason for coming to you is, because I believe you can set me right.

I believe in the "Eternal security of the believer", and I believe I understand what Jesus was talking about when according to Matthew 24:13 he said, "But he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved". But I am unable so far to see how this statement harmonizes with his statement in John 8:31 which reads as follows: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed."

I have understood that John the Baptist did not need to be baptized in water for the reason that he was ordained of God for a specific purpose; that he was "full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb", and that he died a saved Jew under the law.

I understood that the reason the thief upon the cross was not baptized in water after he believed, was because it was not humanly possible under the circumstances, and that he really died a saved Jew under the law.

I understood that believers in Jesus Christ under the law, or during his ministry here among men, were not born again in the New Testament sense—that the new birth was reserved for the dispensation of Grace, and that there were two classes of saved people during his ministry: the righteous under law and the righteous who received Christ as the Messiah.

Dr. Shields, I thought I understood these things, but when I consider carefully the following Scriptures, I must confess I am terribly confused, and must come to you for help.

"Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."—John 5:24.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—John 1:12, 13.

You see my main difficulty, I feel sure: If believers in Christ under the law were born again, then I fear my belief in the eternal security of believers and in New Testament baptism is somewhat crippled.

When he said "Power to become the sons of God" could he have had the Day of Pentecost in mind?

You will know immediately how to help me out of my difficulty and I trust you will not hesitate to do it in the way that suits you best and in a way that will make the least demand upon your time and patience.

I am pecking this letter out on the typewriter myself because I am ashamed for my stenographer to know that I am so ignorant of "The Truth".

Thanks a lot in advance,

Sincerely yours in His name,

## OUR ANSWER

July 17th, 1936.

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 29th ulto. I thank you most heartily for your kind words of appreciation respecting THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

After reading your letter I have concluded that you have imbibed somewhat the principles of current dispensationalism. More and more I am coming to see that so-called Dispensationalism is a positive heresy. You have asked for my opinion, and I am sure you will not object if I express it most frankly.

To begin with, then, the cardinal, fundamental principle of all sound theology is a recognition of the absolute sovereignty and immutable holiness of God. Incidentally, let me say I am enclosing a copy of last Sunday evening's sermon, showing that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. If God be unchangeable, it follows inevitably that what is necessary for the salvation of the soul at one time is absolutely indispensable at another. The sermon of last Sunday I think proves to a demonstration that God has never communicated with men through any one save through Jehovah-Jesus, the Word that was made flesh, and by Whom all things were made. If He said to Nicodemus in the days of His flesh, "Ye must be born again", though it may have been set forth in other terms, and under other figures, the same requirement was necessary under the Old Testament dispensation.

I believe that what you have understood about John the Baptist, and that believers under the law were not born again in the New Testament sense, is a very serious error. The Lamb was slain "from before the foundation of the world." The New Testament tells us that He died "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (covenant)", and again that Christ was "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past", or, "done afore time". You are familiar with this latter passage in Romans, which means that the cross was just as necessary for the righteousness of God as it was for the justification of the sinner. On the strength of the Sacrifice that was yet to be offered, God passed over sins done afore time. He accepted, so to speak, the promissory note of the Son that in due time He would offer Himself a Sacrifice for the sins of the world. Thus, may I reverently say, did the Father repose absolute confidence in the Son.

So the covenant of grace between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has ever been the only ground of the soul's salvation. And because that is so, the Old Testament is just as full of the gospel as the New. Paul says in Galatians, "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham." The Old Testament believers dimly believed in the Messiah that was to come, and all the sacrifices of the law pointed to the necessity for His coming. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Men from Abel to the end of all time who have been, who are, or who shall yet be, saved, must be saved in exactly the same way, through faith in the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ.

The seven dispensations of the Scofield Bible are the veriest rubbish. There never were seven dispensations. The teaching of the futurists, that men are saved by different methods, and on different principles, in different dispensations, in my view, is an absolute heresy, and one of the worst sort. Read the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Hebrews, and you will see the unity of the church of Christ, the body of His election. They were all saved by faith. It is said even of Moses that he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt", while as yet God had not been manifest in the flesh. If a new creation is necessary in the New Testament dispensation, it was equally necessary in the Old. What, for example, would you make of the fifty-first Psalm?

Now as to the doctrine of eternal security. If you once postulate God, and the principle of salvation by grace, and by grace alone, its inevitable corollary is that such as are saved are saved for ever. God is not an Experimenter. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." It is said of Moses that "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible". It was because he saw Him he was enabled to

endure. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." But he is not saved because he endures; he endures because he is saved. The Holy Ghost by Paul strongly insists in all Paul's epistles that men are justified by faith alone. James, on the other hand, insists that man is justified by his works. Is there any contradiction between the two? None whatever. A man is justified in the sight of God by his faith; for when a man confesses his faith in Christ, the Lord knows whether it is genuine or not. If it be genuine, if the divinely enlightened soul has recognized God in Christ, and trusts Him as his Saviour, the moment he does so, God knows it, and he is justified, by his faith. But he is not—and cannot be—justified in the sight of men by his faith, for the reason that nobody knows whether his faith is genuine. Therefore he cannot be justified in the sight of men but by works.

Christ said of Himself, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." That discernment which recognized the divine qualities of the person of the Lord Jesus would be of a very high order. But Christ said in effect, "If you are unable to penetrate beneath the surface of things, at least accept the testimony of my works." So of the believer. We cannot know whether people are genuine or not, but when we see the fruits of a regenerated life in their characters, their faith is justified even in the eyes of men; and they are justified by their faith. So the proof of a man's being saved is to be found in his endurance.

Take, for example, the parable of the sower in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. In every case, the seed was the same; the fruits were affected by the quality of the soil. In the case of the wayside hearer, the truth never got in at all. In the case of those who were likened to stony and thorny ground, they received the truth mentally, they were moved by it emotionally, and they presented an appearance of being saved. But the fact is, it had never entered their hearts. There was no depth of earth. The "root of the matter" was never really in them. In one case they were turned away from their profession by persecution, and in the other case, by the absence of it: "The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches", were too much for them. But the result was the same: the green blade withered, and there was no real fruit.

And there were degrees of fruitfulness among those who received the Word, but in every instance the seed that entered into good ground—that is, ground that was prepared for its reception, as the heart is prepared for the reception of the Word—became fruitful—"some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

I should say that you are far from stating the truth when you say that the thief "died a saved Jew under the law." "By the deeds of the law shall no man be justified." Which does not mean that those who had died before Christ came were justified by the deeds of the law, but a general term embracing everybody. To say that the thief upon the cross "died a saved Jew under the law", I should say was an outrageous error. Certainly he was not baptized because, as you say, it was not humanly possible under the circumstances; but that he recognized Jesus as Lord, as the Messiah, the One Who was to come, and that he recognized what I wish some Premillennialists could recognize, the spiritual character of His kingdom, is evident by the fact that he prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." I think Cooper was right when he said,

"The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away."

The thief was saved through faith in the Lamb of God Who "taketh away the sin of the world." Baptism is for those who are saved, as a confession of salvation, as an outward acknowledgment of the soul's unity with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection.

You say, "I understood that believers in Jesus Christ under the law, or during his ministry here among men, were not born again in the New Testament sense—that the new birth was reserved for the dispensation of Grace."

My dear brother, there never has been any other than "a dispensation of grace" for those who have been saved from the beginning. I know of no greater heresy under heaven than to believe that anybody was ever saved on the ground of his own righteousness. I repeat, I am positive that the plain teaching of Scripture is that no one has ever been, or

ever can be saved, in any other way than by grace. You had better hold on to the plain and unmistakable significance of John 5:24; John 1:12, 13. You will observe that those referred to are not born of blood,—or of bloods—which is to say that grace is not transmitted. Men are not saved because they are Abraham's seed after the flesh. Nor will anybody ever be saved because he is Abraham's seed after the flesh. They are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh": A man never becomes a Christian by making up his mind that he will be such, nor by his own determination to be such. Such as are saved are born, "not of the will of man, but of God".

Another scripture says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." That is to say, salvation begins with God. He planned it; He devised the means to effect it; He sovereignly, and of His own will, begets men by the word of truth. The outward sign of the fact is that they believe on Christ, or as in the first chapter of John, that they "receive him", and, receiving Him, they have the right—that is to say, they are justified before God in becoming the sons of God.

I must say that I cannot see your "main difficulty" as you affirm, when you say:

"If believers in Christ under the law were born again, then I fear my belief in the eternal security of believers and in New Testament baptism is somewhat crippled."

Why? That there were many false professors in Old Testament times, as there are in the New, there can be no doubt. There were apostates then as there are now. There were different kinds of soil then, as there are now, and consequently different results. But consider the case of Jacob. What an example of the triumph of sovereign grace the whole story of Jacob presents! You ask, "When he said 'power to become the sons of God', could he have had the Day of Pentecost in mind?" Not necessarily, for the word "power" in that text is not the same as in such passages as: "The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"; or, "The power of his resurrection"; or, "The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe". The Revised Version more accurately translates it, "To as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become the children of God". The reference is not so much to Pentecost as to Calvary. The "right" to become His children is derived from the atoning sacrifice offered for sin. The passage to which I have already referred, Romans 3:25, specifically in its context says that men are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus", explaining the setting forth of Christ as a propitiation, as designing to "shew (declare) his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus".

The power bestowed upon the waiting disciples is described thus, "Ye shall be endued with power from on high", and has an entirely different significance from that of John 1:12, "To them gave he power". It refers rather to the "dynamic" of the Holy Ghost. What John 1:12 really means is, receiving Christ as the propitiation for our sins, we receive with Him the moral right to the standing of the sons of God. But for the efficacy of the Sacrifice of Calvary, the power of Pentecost had never descended.

You will find that argument in Peter's sermon. When Christ had offered Himself as a Sacrifice for sin. He at length returned to the Father, and, "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear". But He obtained the right to "shed forth" the Holy Ghost upon men in such measure by virtue of His sacrifice.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the Holy Spirit never operated in the lives of men until after Pentecost. David prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me", and the entire Old Testament was given to us by men who were carried forward by the Spirit of God.

If salvation be of grace—which is but another way of saying it is of God—if it be all of grace, or all of God, His work throughout, then it is without condition. Of course, that is high doctrine. It drives one inevitably to the acceptance of the Calvinistic position, which is but another name for the New Testament gospel. Salvation is of grace in the sense that God designed it, that He paid the price of it in the death of His Son, that He alone makes application of it in the

(Continued on page 8)

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WILLIAM J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 3rd Quarter Lesson 34 August 23rd, 1936

### DIVINE JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapter 4, 5, and 6.

Golden Text: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."—Jeremiah 6:16.

Bible School Reading: Jeremiah 6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Rom. 6: 15-23; Tuesday—Amos 5:21-27; Wednesday—Micah 6:1-8; Thursday—Matt. 25:14-30; Friday—Hab. 1:5-11; Saturday—Deut. 28:7-14.

### EXPOSITION

Chapter 4:1-4 continues the theme of proffered repentance of the previous chapter. Repentance for Israel will mean ultimate blessing to the nations, to the world (cf. Gen. 22:18); spiritual quickening and cleansing to the individual; and regeneration spiritually. The figure of fallow ground which needs clearing, and of circumcision implying regeneration are noteworthy. Jeremiah more than any other prophet emphasizes the need of individual regeneration—all under the figure of circumcision (cf. 24:7; 31:33; 32:29; Matthew 26:29; Rom. 2:28, 29).

The next section (4:5-31) describes impending national peril and punishment. Jehovah warns the people to flee to the protected cities of the land, taking their household goods and kindred (6). A mighty nation, lion-like, is the instrument of His wrath which is not turned back as the nation had supposed (8). So great, so thorough will be the punishment that kings, prophets, and priests will be affected by it. These leaders may have thought the words of v. 10, and Jeremiah may have considered the judgments of God as judicial in the words of that verse. But it is more likely that Jeremiah is giving way to temporary unbelief, as he does later (20:7).

In vs. 11-18, the enemy is pictured as a sirocco, a violent Eastern "hot wind", not a wind to bless, but to curse, a wind too stormy for winnowing and cleansing, but strong enough for punishment. The swiftness and suddenness of the invading hosts (not the Scythians for they did not touch Jerusalem) of the Chaldeans (Hab. 1:6-8) and cruelty are here portrayed (18). Israel's wail is pathetic, but so is Jehovah's appeal (14). He begs them to cleanse themselves of vain thoughts (sins against neighbours (7:5-9) with a vigorous washing (Ps. 51:2). The idea of swift and terrible judgment is carried out in v. 15 under the figure of a lonely voice moving in warning tones from Dan in the North to Ephraim near the capital city. Other cities in the land are to be destroyed by the enemy who lie in wait in their tents as keepers of fields dwell in their booths (17).

Israel is to blame for her sins, yet Jeremiah as a true prophet of his people is pained in his soul with a beating, palpitating heart. One destruction will follow another for a considerable time, for the people are wise in their own conceits, but foolish in wickedness, and in disregarding Jehovah (22) they merited the failure of the Lord to reply to their question concerning the length of punishment.

A vision of chaos typical of retrogression, falling back into sin both for the world, as well as for Judah, now follows (23-28). The language of the vision is that of Gen. 1:1, the primeval, pre-creation chaos of the universe. Even the most fruitful parts of the land were broken down by reason of the presence of the Lord. For all the mourning, the desolation of the land, the Lord will not make a full end of His people. This is the oft-recurring prophetic concept of a remnant.

Jeremiah, probably in a vision, sees the besieged inhabitants fleeing from their enemy, seeking covert in the whole land, either in rocks or caverns, or thickets. All the outward embellishments, and bedecking will not serve to save Judah who is likened to a woman powdering her eyes with antimony in order to adorn herself. The lovers of Israel will turn against her (cf. 2:14, ff.), so that she falls or faints into the hands of her would-be murderers (31).

But there is hope, as chapter 5 suggests. If one just man

can be found, punishment will be withheld (1-9). But all are unjust—all (typically) have broken the marriage vow (5). No man is found who can answer to Jehovah's description (1). The rebellious people refuse correction or instruction (3), not knowing truly the ordinances or the law of God (4). But even the underprivileged poor are not alone, for priests, experts in the law, "great men" are altogether guilty (5). The Chaldeans, likened to a leopard (Hab. 1:8) will slay them, because of their transgressions. Even though the Lord made them vow allegiance to Him, yet they committed adultery, both actual and spiritual (7). A more terrible picture of sin it is hard to conceive, and a more just cause for visiting punishment on a people, it is difficult to find.

But for all this Israel pleads innocence. Jehovah wields the sword, however, commanding the enemy to punish Israel (1). They are to break down vineyard wall and root out all but the vine itself. The people even imagine that He, Jehovah would not so visit them (12). So iniquitous are the people, however, that they call down upon the true prophets, the very imprecations of such an one as Jeremiah called upon them (13)! A nation fresh in its vigor, yet from an old capital (Babylon) will attack them (15), with the sword (or any sharp instrument). Israel who served foreign gods in their own land are about to serve foreign masters in another land, because they refused true prophecy (19).

In vs. 22-29, Israel is seen as darkened in mind (21), dull of comprehending God's uniform working in the natural world (22), especially His goodness in the early and latter rain and the harvest (24). From such mercies they turned away, seeking God in hypocrisy (26, 27) and riches by craft.

The chapter closes with an indictment of the whole nation, prophets, priests, people, especially the priests and prophets who ought to teach the Law of God.

Chapter 6 pictures the doom of Jerusalem, vs. 1-8, describing the approach of the enemy in realistic language. Warning, signal, flight (cf. 4:6) are all portrayed with graphic vigor. Jerusalem was as valuable to the Orient nations as a rich pasture (2), hence the impatience of the foe (5). Jehovah is willing to allow instruction to Israel, however (8), lest His mercy suffering torture for the sake of His people, be violently "wrenched".

In vs. 9-15 is depicted the capture of the city, the thorough purging (9); the prophet's forced unburdening message to men of all ages (11) for their covetousness (13), their worthlessness as surgeons, their shamelessness (15). And their flimsy effort to thwart punishment is pictured in 16-21 (cf. note Is. 58:2). Rest would come only in the old ways. (because the true) for the fruit of sin is sure (19).

The cruelty of the enemy (22-30) is terrifying, more so as it is announced by Jeremiah (24) who is again assured of His divine commission under the figure of an assayer (27). As pedlars with their wares, so is Israel with her brass and iron (i.e., base) ways. Blow as the bellows might, her alloy is so interfused that it is impossible to refine pure silver from her (30).

### APPLICATION

"Fallow ground" (4:3) is uncultivated, relatively fruitless, weedy wilderness, yet good soil. All that is needed is labor. So in believers' lives, whose souls are either for good or bad—weeds or fruit. Sowing good seed is not enough, for breaking up includes cleansing as well as plowing. Thorns must be plucked up (1:1) for the true, inner cleansing from sin of the gospel.

Divine mercy is shown in vs. 8, 14 and compassion in the faithful remnant (27). The prophet, like Christ and Paul felt for the nation. Such ought the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings" be to us.

The lodging of evil thoughts, that is sin (14). But it is not in man himself to rid himself of them. The washing is God's (Tit. 3:5-7).

Chaos is caused by sin (23). The false pretences of sin are doomed to failure (30). "What wilt thou do?" is echoed in the wail of the lost who are without God and without hope in the world.

In 5:1 is typified that righteousness which will stand the test of life itself, and also the principle of vicarious righteousness. Christ alone is our righteousness. The true people of God, the New Jerusalem are pardoned for His sake alone.

The purposes of chastisement are instruction, but they can be frustrated by the obduracy and stubbornness of sin in believers (3).

We can (12, 13) deny Christ (II. Tim. 2:11-13) as did the people, Jehovah.

Nature teaches us of His goodness (Matt. 8:27). And how

we ought to see the force of God's lesson that He preserves the harvest to us Christian workers (Gal. 6:9).

As the people compromised in tolerating the priests and prophets who denied Jehovah (30, 31) so to-day believers may neglect to refer to the Law of God, the Bible, when false teaching and living abound.

The forces of wickedness brave suffering and discomfort as few believers do (6:4). As fresh and vigorous as a fount is the deep-seated nature of sin (7). But terrible is its punishment (9). Yet the converse truth is that we should be thorough in gleanings for souls.

Apathy of hearers (10) is no excuse for teachers or preachers to lag. Our duty is to proclaim the Word, trusting that the results will come in His time, as they did after the Captivity for Israel. Yet believers (14) may assiduously feign healing qualities, and thus become physicians of no value by glossing over spiritual defection. Religious leaders may lead hosts astray by a false diagnosis, or by a false crying of "Peace".

### THE EDITOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 6)

effectual calling of such as believe by bestowing upon them the gift of repentance, enlightening their understanding, making them to understand Who Christ is, implanting within them a desire toward Him, enabling them to trust Him—the fact is, faith is not the condition of salvation, but is the first-fruit of it. It is the cry of the new-born child.

You will not object to my publishing this letter, although there will not be a line in it that will indicate to whom it refers; but I may feel it an advantage to publish it for the sake of others; for I am sure that the dispensationalism of our day involves the gravest of errors, and is positively vicious.

Please write me again, and let me know whether I have offered you any help.

But before closing, glancing at your letter again, I observe you say you have some difficulty with John 8:31: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." This belongs to the same class as the other passages. The only proof of our being His "disciples indeed" consists in our continuing in His word. But we are not His "disciples indeed" because we continue: we continue because we are His.

With warmest regards,

Yours heartily,  
T. T. SHIELDS.

— Va., August 1, 1936.

My dear Brother Shields:

"I have sought but I seek it vainly" for words to express my thanks for writing me such a wonderful letter in reply to enquiry dated June 29.

You have my permission to publish all or any part of our correspondence relative to the matter.

Your letter and your sermons have helped me a great deal. In fact, I can not begin to tell you how much they have helped me.

It is all very clear to me now, that all people who have ever been saved or ever will be saved, have been saved and will be saved in exactly the same way—by grace through faith.

You will be interested to know what was my chief difficulty. Possibly you may find some one else as dumb as I have been. It was this; I was carelessly thinking of salvation and righteousness as meaning the same thing.

Possibly you did not suspect that such a condition of mind could exist in a sane person, but it did; and while your letter contained no specific mention of the possibility of such a misunderstanding, it contained other portions of the "Word" divided in a way that started me upon a line of thought, which, through the work of the Holy Spirit brought about the revelation.

Thanks a thousand times, and may God continue to pour out his blessings upon you, is the prayer of

Your sincere friend,

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