

# 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

CAN ONE LIVE AS A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD OF TO-DAY?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 8th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.  
"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."—Matthew 24:12, 13.

This text, as you know, is part of the Olivet discourse. There can be little doubt that the verses I have read have special application to the period immediately preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. The chapter later deals with what theologians describe as "last things". Personally, I believe it is better that we should leave last things to the last. In the providence of God His people will be preserved during the period, whatever the conditions and whatever the time.

But, although these verses may have a particular application, in principle they are timeless. When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. But in the midst of—and in spite of—abounding iniquity, there are always those who endure because they are saved. That is the outline of our study this evening.

### I.

IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY THERE HAVE BEEN, AND I SUPPOSE WILL YET BE, PERIODS WHEN INIQUITY INCREASES UNTIL IT RISES TO THE PROPORTIONS OF A FLOOD. Sin is always with us, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". But there have been, probably are now and will yet be, periods when the ordinary levels of life in that respect will be exceeded, and iniquity will especially abound.

The *antediluvian period* was one such. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . and God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me." Then followed a time of judgment, which was an act of mercy on the part of the Divine Ruler, an act of moral sanitation, a piece of moral surgery when, for the physical salvation of the race, the plague spot was removed. The flood of judgment, while it was actual, was yet in a sense a sym-

bolic judgment. The tops of the highest hills were covered. So wicked had the earth become that only by a judgment that completely overwhelmed it, could the plague be removed.

*Sodom and Gomorrah* are set forth as an example, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire". That, too, historically marked an occasion when evil was at the flood-tide, when "iniquity abounded". Our Lord referred to the destruction of the cities of the plains, indicating that it was a special divine visitation, and indicating too that, wicked as they were, they were not so wicked as some others whose privileges were then greater.

Again, you will recall that *when God's people were sent into Canaan as an avenging sword*, it was because the iniquity of the Amorites was now full. Four hundred years before the prediction of judgment had been made, but God's people were told that the Amorites' lease had not yet expired, and that therefore they must await the passage of four hundred years before they could enter into Canaan. If some professedly charitable people, who find objection to the biblical record of Israel's dealings with the Canaanites and other nations, could but read these records in the light that shines from above, I think they would see no objection to them on ethical grounds. Certainly there was a time in which God used His own people as an instrument of judgment upon those whose iniquity had now become full, and could no longer be suffered to remain.

Our Lord's reference to *Tyre and Sidon* would indicate that there was a punitive element in their experience. They did not then abide because of their iniquity. But you will recall too how He pronounced woe upon the cities in which His mighty works had been done. Their rejection of Him was symptomatic of a lawlessness that ex-

ceeded that of men of ancient time, for, said He, "If the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Thus spake He concerning the cities of greater privilege that had been visited by Incarnate Deity.

Surely we are justified in concluding from this that *the destruction of Jerusalem* here specifically predicted occurred in a period of human history at which iniquity was at the floodtide. It "abounded". Hence the judgment. We are to bear in mind that the historical records of this book are written by the pen of inspiration, and perhaps there was nothing unique in the historical periods here described except that the record of them is written from the divine standpoint. We read of the "old world", the antediluvian world, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Canaan, of Tyre, and Sidon, of Babylon, and other nations with whom God dealt, and ultimately of Jerusalem and its people. We read of them as they appeared to the eye of Him Who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity". If the history of mankind subsequent to the conclusion of the biblical record could be written by the pen of inspiration, in the same light in which the Book was written—and perhaps if the history of our own time were similarly recorded—we should see the hand of God at work, and should look upon the events of our day in an entirely different light, and with an entirely different perspective than that in which we now view them as we read of them in the newspapers of the day.

In the light of these historical events we may perhaps seek some explanation of the principle here enunciated. That iniquity does seem to go in cycles, and that there are periods when the tide comes in like the natural tide—and "abounds"—are indisputable facts.

That leads us, with the context in view, to *the consideration of some conditions which were precedent to this state of abounding iniquity described in our text*. It is useless for us to study God's Word as though it were an ancient book largely obsolete. We must learn to find in it principles that endure, and that are applicable to us, and to our day.

What were the conditions which issued in this tide of iniquity, according to the saying of our Lord? There were "wars and rumors of wars". That has never been unusual. There always have been. We are not to be troubled as though they were the immediate forerunner of the end: "The end is not yet." Wars actual and rumoured are no clear indication that we are near the end. Any student of history knows that war always leaves something in its wake from which it takes the world, or a nation, a long time to recover. At such a time moral standards are lowered, restraints are withdrawn, and men in the mass act strangely—heroically in some cases, but in the main unnaturally—yet when you have made the best of it, what a condition obtains!

"Nation shall rise against nation." There are times when the sea of human life takes on a special turbulency, the storm breaks, and the tide comes in. It has been so; we have seen it. We have seen it in our day, and we are specially thoughtful of it at this particular season of the year.

There would appear to follow upon these human conflicts *a period in which there is developed a special antagonism toward God and toward the things of God, so*

that the people of God who would follow Him suffer special persecution. They are hated particularly for His name's sake. It is easy to recognize that that is very largely characteristic of our day. Much of modern religion is sheer humanism, from which the idea of a personal God is all but excluded. Religion is defined in terms of human relationships. Individual salvation, which has to do with the relation of the individual to God, is relegated to the background. Religion is supposed to consist of life, as the reports of the United Church had it, on the "horizontal plane". We have not to go to Russia to observe a condition in which the very thought of God seems to be repugnant to the minds of many.

Following upon that, there is *a period of multiplication of false religions*. There rise up false prophets who deceive many. How they are multiplied in our day! There is no sphere of life in which people are more credulous than that of religion. Can you imagine anybody outside the asylum being caught by the utterly absurd pretensions of the negro Divine? One is reminded of the saying of a noted Japanese scholar who, when he had returned home from the United States—and he might have said the same of Canada—told the Japanese people that they have a curious custom in America. "They have", said he, "institutions which they call asylums for the insane in which they confine a certain portion of the population—evidently with the intention of creating the impression that the rest of the population is sane." A bit of humour, but what insanity has taken possession of people to-day? Any man who will stand on his head and call himself a prophet of the Lord, can get a crowd. False prophets are multiplied.

Spiritism, Christian Science, Russellism, are now old! It is about as difficult to keep up with the fads and fashions in religion as it is in the matter of dress or motor-cars. There ought to be a national religious show once a year so that we might study the new models! Yet people who call themselves the intelligensia, the very intellectual, follow "like dumbdriven cattle"—without driving, however. They have not the sense of cattle. And if you examine all these cults you will find they simply mean and propose the exclusion of God from human life, by the substitution of something for God. That is bound to issue first in the lowering of moral standards, and ultimately in their destruction and elimination, until every man becomes a law unto himself.

At such periods it does seem as though *the very worst of human nature comes to the top*, and people "betray one another". Tragedy abounds. Was there ever a day when people generally were more utterly unreliable than they are to-day? One scarcely knows whether he is safe in trusting anyone. I heard yesterday of a bank slogan to this effect, "Trust God, but make everybody else pay cash." In private life, in business life, in national life, the word of a man means nothing. "They . . . shall betray one another." A man stands for one thing to-day, and if it becomes a little expensive you find him allying himself with the opposite camp to-morrow. All that prepares the way for the rising of a flood of iniquity.

Why are conditions as they are to-day in every sphere of human life and activity? I believe it is because God has been excluded. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." There is no standard of right and wrong because of the war, and all that has followed, and the multiplication of false religions. These things have confused the human mind. Even our pulpits have told people

the Bible is not the word of God. Therefore the people say, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry." What can you expect but that iniquity will abound when these conditions obtain?

## II.

**ABOUNDING INIQUITY COOLS THE LOVE OF MANY.** Iniquity is like a plague that is not only contagious, but infectious; it is atmospheric; no actual contact is necessary: *like a frigid atmosphere iniquity cools men's love.* I remember after the influenza epidemic a naval officer visiting some relatives in this city, told me that he was on a battleship or a cruiser, I forget which, in mid-Pacific. They were between one and two thousand miles from land. At noon half a dozen men reported sick, and by six o'clock nearly the whole ship's complement was down. They had to heave to because they had not enough men to man the ship. The plague was in the very air.

I crossed just after the war on the *Mauritania*, with the first returning troops from Europe, a company of American mechanics. They had never been to France, but stationed in England. They all wore masks across their mouths, some sort of linen screen, right out at sea, with the object of preventing the 'flu. We all ought to wear masks, if such could be invented to prevent our breathing the infidelity of the time that is everywhere. You cannot get away from it. It is in our schools, our colleges, our universities, our churches—everywhere. It is atmospheric. With every breath we draw, every word we read, almost every word we hear, there is something that is antagonistic to the God of the Bible.

The times are *circumstantially* cooling to the love of many. It is hard to live in these days, terribly hard to live. When one reads of the iniquity of these men whose operations are revealed in government investigations, men who will make millions out of almost nothing, and grind their employees into the ground, so that they have scarcely enough to keep body and soul together, he is full of indignation. People complain of capitalism. There is nothing wrong with capitalism. Rather it is the devil in the hearts of capitalists. It is human nature. Get all you can. Only an infinitesimal part of the robbers of this country are in the penitentiaries. A host of them are officers in Christian churches. I do not wonder that iniquity abounds when men are served the pabulum the pulpits furnish to-day.

On the other hand, when the man finds life almost unbearable, and is made a slave, sees his wife and children want, and is helpless to improve the situation, it is no wonder that "iniquity abounds". We do not justify it: we only explain it. In the days of the Egyptian taskmasters, when the whip was laid upon Israelitish backs, and they were told they were idle, Moses came to preach deliverance, and they said in effect, "Moses, do not talk to us. Life is so hard and so bitter, we do not know whether there is any God or not; we cannot believe it." The first response of the people to Moses' appeal was to say, "Leave us alone. It was hard enough before you began to preach to us, but now we have to deliver the tale of bricks and we have no straw." "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage."

There is iniquity on both sides, and the circumstances of people are often such that they can scarcely see the stars, and have no heart to lift up their eyes to the hills "from whence cometh their help". Yet, on the other

hand—for this is a world of strange contrasts—*recreationally, people are encouraged in wrong-doing.* Was ever sin made more attractive, more alluring, more fascinating, than it is to-day? I have the profoundest sympathy with young men and women who find it difficult to stand for God in a decadent day like this. Pleasure abounds everywhere. There are people who will spend their last dollar for some sort of pleasurable stimulant in the form of sports or a theatrical performance, when they have no bread. We have come to a time when men live by stimulants mentally, physically, and religiously, rather than on nourishing wholesome food.

Religiously, evil-doing is facilitated by the religious movements of the day. There are some things—one shudders to speak of them. But I will go as far as this: when the representatives of leading churches are put into the witness-box to justify what twenty-five years ago would have been a crime, and when the name of the Christian church is invoked to support the grossest immorality, what can one expect but that "iniquity will abound"? Surely I need not stress the point.

I am not a pessimist. I am looking for the morning—and the morning is coming. With our God, "the evening and the morning" mark the day of His employment. He is moving toward the city of which it is said, "There shall be no night there." Ultimately the shadows will pass. But I am speaking of these parenthetical periods of life when the tide of iniquity flows in, and am trying to get at the reason for them. Iniquity abounds; it will abound in the days immediately preceding the coming of our Lord. I am not of those who are in the divine secret, and have had a private look at the clock of divine Providence, so as to be able to predict what God is going to do. I do not know anything about it. Yet I think I know quite as much as those who profess they know everything. But this is clear, that immediately before our Lord returns the world will be in a condition similar to that of Noah's day, for our Lord said, "They knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

I do not presume to say that the present is more than one of the periods of iniquity's floodtide. If we keep clearly in view the perspective of history, and remember through what days and years—and centuries—of darkness this old earth has passed again and again, emerging at last into larger and fuller light, we shall be careful not to shut the predictions of God's word up to a particular period, and shall refrain from the presumption of dating the prophecies of God's word. I do not believe we can time God by our clocks. He is the Infinite. His time is His own and will come at last. But when it may be, we do not know.

But "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold". There are many of the Lord's professing people in our day who have become cold. I think it is a singular and striking expression, their "love" is cold. Their religion has ceased to be a personal matter. Religion is systematized and institutionalized, and such God as it knows is little more than an idea. Even the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a mere abstraction in the view of many. In the presence of all these difficulties they become religiously cold.

Years ago, at a Baptist convention, just before a great debate, a certain professor of theology came to me and said, "I wish you would not precipitate that matter tomorrow. I wish you would agree to the appointment of a committee, and take the discussion from the floor of

the Convention." "And then what, another innocuous resolution?" He replied, "But what are you going to do? This thing you call Modernism is universal. It is a great tide flowing in. What can you do?" I will tell you what I said to him: "Professor, for my part I must do this. I will stand up against it like a man, and go down under it if I must, but I will not compromise." "But what would you have us do?" he said. I replied, "You must determine your own course. But I will have a clear conscience on the matter, and to-morrow we will find out where the people stand."

Do you see the mental attitude of that professor? "Iniquity abounds. Personally, I have not forsaken the faith of my fathers. I believe as I have always believed; but others do not; and when everybody believes the opposite, why be singular? We must accommodate ourselves to it."

I did not like the argument of an address which I read by Sir Austin Chamberlain. His speech was to this effect. "Whether we like it or not, Sovietism is here; Nazism is here; Fascism is here. And the question for the statesmen of the world to determine is how they can adjust themselves to these things, and live in peace with them." Is not that a dangerous attitude? That is how they argued with William Pitt, when many in England would have made terms with Napoleon the tyrant. Pitt said he never would, that the system which Napoleon advocated was destructive of all free institutions. We cannot set other nations' houses in order, nor interfere in their domestic affairs. But a nation needs to be as careful of its company as an individual. And if these liberty-destroying political systems cannot be isolated, we ought to isolate ourselves as completely as possible. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone", was the divine quarantine order. Nationally and individually we ought to observe the principle. One cannot keep company with the devil without becoming like him. Therefore when these false religions abound, and standards are lowered everywhere, should there be those who will say, "I wish it were otherwise. I am reluctant to do it, but I suppose we shall have to accommodate ourselves to it," let us protest, for our own soul's sakes. If we cannot prevent the flood, let us at least refuse to sail with it.

I received a letter from England some years ago, from a mother who had been a missionary, saying that her daughter was coming to Toronto. She was very anxious that the girl should come under the influence of this church's ministry, and asked me if I would have some one try to secure her attendance. The next Sunday morning, as I was coming from the vestry to the platform, a young lady walked up to me with this lady's daughter in tow, to introduce her to me. She had arrived in Toronto, to study in one of the universities. You can guess which one it was—it was a university which has since moved to another city—I will not further identify it.

That young lady came into the membership of this church. After a while she came to me and said, "Pastor, I have come to ask you to have my name deleted from the church roll." "Why?" She said, "I cannot stand up against it." "Against what?" "The reputation of this church. It is said to be puritanical, fanatical, and I know not what." "Did you ever, Miss So-and-So, read this: 'As concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against'? We must not make ourselves objectionable, but if we endeavour to be true to the Lord, we must not expect the world to love us." "I cannot

stand up against it", said she. I said to her, "I am afraid you are not frank with me." "Do you mean that I would deceive you?" "No, not that. But you have not given me the real reason. You have got out of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; you do not pray as once you did, nor study your Bible. Is not that true?" She was silent for a few moments, then the tears came. "You have correctly diagnosed my case," she said. "Are you going to forsake the Lord Jesus?" "Oh, no." Before she left, she kneeled with me and rededicated herself to the Lord, and said she would keep on with her Sunday school class.

Later I got another letter in which she said, "I am writing to renew my former request. Do not blame the University because of false teaching. I could withstand that. But I am vice-president of the lady students, and I have by nature some social gifts, and I have become, without seeking it, a leader among the girls. I simply cannot maintain my position in the University and my membership in Jarvis Street Church at the same time. Please do not ask me to come to see you. Do not try to persuade me. I have definitely made up my mind, and shall be guided by other stands in future."

"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." That is how it works. If you young people in offices, in shops, wherever you work, try to give a clear witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find the very atmosphere of the place against you. This vile world is not a friend to grace to help us on to God.

That is not only true individually, but it is true collectively. My professor friend said, "How can we battle against the tide? What can we do?" Most churches have yielded to the tide! You may call me censorious if you will, but I speak but sober truth when I say that the most effective servants of the devil in Toronto are to be found among the ministers in the pulpit—not these abominable beer-parlours around us. They are bad enough, doubtless they are procurers to the flames of hell, but they would not be here if it were not for the damnable apostasy of the modern church. They could not be here if the professing Christians of Ontario had not allowed their love to become cold. They would make themselves felt in every sphere of human life.

If we are to have an improved society, we shall have to do what Elisha did when the men said of Jericho, "The situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren." "He went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." Until we have a revival in the Christian church, in the churches that bear the name of Christ, and get back to God and His Book, in spite of all the nostrums that are proposed for the alleviation of the world's ills, we shall be no better but rather worse. Indeed, I believe society generally is in the condition of that poor woman who had "suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse". It is very difficult in our day for people to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth", and everywhere be true to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

### III.

But let us turn now to THE FINAL ASPECT OF THIS MATTER: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same

shall be saved." God will always have "a remnant according to the election of grace". God never leaves Himself without witness. He had it in Noah's day. He has had His witnesses in every day from then until now. Dark as the day is, I doubt if there ever was a day when the world had more people in it who would be willing to die for the Lord Jesus than to-day.

*We are in grave danger when religious life is as superficial as it is to-day.* There are many in whom there is no root, many comparable to the thorn-and-briar-infested ground, who continue for a little while, but "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by (they are) offended." Like the young lady of whom I spoke, they "cannot stand up against it". What is the colloquial phrase?—They "cannot take it". They cannot stand up against the opposition of the day. There is danger even among evangelicals of our life being too superficial.

Anyone can tell which are the well-grounded and solid trees after a high wind has passed through the forest. They are still standing when others that had a worm at the root have fallen. When these new cults exert their influence the depth and strength of religious convictions are made manifest. How must we all mourn as we see many who once professed faith in Christ, being "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"! If we are to stand we need to be "rooted and grounded in Christ".

I was in London about three years ago, and attended a certain meeting held in the interests of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. It was held in a fairly large building, and it was crowded. One address was excellent and sane. The second was delivered by an elderly man, handsome to look upon, with white flowing hair and beard, and attractive personality. He was apparently unwell, for he sat as he delivered his address. He told his hearers about a great tribulation that is to come. He described it in detail. The horrors of Madrid are mild in comparison—the streets were canals flowing with human blood, in some places up to the horses' bridles. Horror upon horror he described, which are to take place in the Great Tribulation that is to come. Then he paused, and with a most dramatic gesture he clasped his hands and said, "But, brethren, we shall not be there." From all over that hall there were shouts of "Hallelujah" and "Amen." To what? I have never been able to find a word of Scripture to justify that dangerous heresy. The idea that those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord are to be a favoured generation, and of all the generations of men the only company of believers who are to escape tribulation! "In the world ye shall have tribulation." There has always been tribulation; there will always be. Perhaps it will culminate some day in a tribulation which shall be the greatest tribulation of all.

But how people love to talk like that! Can Heaven itself be Heaven and look unmoved on hell? Whence comes that spirit shot through with moral cowardice? "We shall not be there"! Why? What better are we than the millions who went to heaven by chariots of fire, who were sawn asunder, who suffered every infamy and agony that hell could inflict upon them. That theory can never produce heroic Christians. It is not scriptural. If it be so that iniquity shall abound, and with it perse-

cution, people of that school will soon be swept off their feet.

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Thank God, *there will be some who will endure.* Are you among the number? Do not date your endurance in the future. Begin in your office to-morrow, if you would show, as Peter and John did, that you have been with Jesus. When the man who had been healed stood with Peter and John, what did the enemies of Christ behold? Beholding the *meekness, the gentleness?* Oh, give me a word! my vocabulary is straitened! There are those who represent the true Christian as being like a jellyfish without spine. No! No! It was not when they saw some brand of goody-goody attitude that people said Peter and John had been with Jesus: "When they saw THE BOLDNESS of Peter and John . . . they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Said Peter, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." "Ah", said the people, "they are like their Master. They must have been with Him, for He was always bold; He never turned His back upon the foe."

Young man, if you would be one hundred per cent. a man, from the crown of your head to the sole of your feet, a real man whom even the devil cannot make afraid, keep company with the Lord Jesus. He will make you bold. You will be patient and gentle, but in the crises of life you will be able to stand—to endure. Moses was meek above all men, and yet it is said that he "endured": "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Do not be like Peter on the other side of Pentecost. There are a host of people like Peter, ready to tell you what they will do if perchance they should be mistaken and should have to pass through the tribulation. Peter dated his courage in the future. Peter was a futurist. "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I not deny thee." I can see him standing on his tiptoes—a great big man. The Lord said so kindly, "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Do not talk about what you are "going to do". Get into Christ's company, and go from His company—nay, rather in His company, to your task to-morrow, and by His grace, endure, stand up against whatever may meet you.

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." *Which does not mean that they are saved by enduring.* What cowards we are! We run from our shadows, afraid of our lives—like Peter. But the Lord made Peter bold, and He can make us bold. He enabled Peter to endure: He can help us to endure. Do not depend upon your own resolution and say, "I see the danger, and therefore I will endure, that I may be saved." Make sure you are saved, that you have eternal life. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I remember spending one summer camping. Brother Brown here does it every summer: I do not know how he endures it—once was enough for me. I lived in a tent. We had thunderstorm after thunderstorm, and every night a gale. Before turning in I went around to every tent peg with my mallet, to make sure we were secure. Then the storm would come, and with it lightning, and peals of thunder that seemed as though they would split the earth. What did I do? I went around with my

mallet again. I wanted to make my calling and election sure!

It will do no harm to re-examine the foundations, to make sure there is no element of self-trust in your faith. Your faith must be tried as the gold that perisheth: "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire"—what for? That it "might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Many people have what they call faith, but there is an element of trust in themselves in it. Some big man thinks he is strong—and fifty per cent. of his faith is in his wife. "So long as she prays for me, I shall be safe." Another has faith in his church, in his minister, or faith in circumstances. "Certainly", such an one says, "I am a believer." But when his wife is taken away, or circumstances alter, and prop after prop is removed, the poor man finds himself at last alone with God. Only then does he really know the measure of his faith; only what is left from the fire, is the pure gold of simple faith.

How much faith have you when you are circumstantially shut up to God alone as manifested in Jesus Christ—when there is nobody else in whom to trust? God often brings us to the edge of the precipice, and as Whittier beautifully said,

"The steps of faith fall on the seeming void—  
And find the Rock beneath."

When one comes to the place where he is ruined without God, the man puts forth the foot of faith to step—he does not know where. But faith always finds it is not ruin: it is God. He never yet failed one who trusted Him. Trust Him, and you shall be able to "endure unto the end". The proof of the genuineness of our religion is to be found in our ability to stand, by God's grace; to endure to the end.

Are you a Christian? Do you know Christ? Then give thanks to the God of all grace. You have proved Him; and because He has been your help, therefore in the shadow of His wings you will rejoice. Is there someone here who says, "I have seen so many professing Christians who, away from church, were no better than I; but if it be so that it is possible for a man to be saved and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, I will trust Him to-night." Will you trust Him? He will keep you until there is no night, until the morning comes.

### AN ADVANCE ON THE NORTHERN FRONT

In days of war when armies battle to the death for some strategic point, the smallest scrap of news is eagerly sought after by those who wait at home. When the reports tell of battles won and advances made their hearts beat high with hopeful thanksgiving: "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country". After this manner those who have followed the course of the battle of the Lord in Northern Ontario this summer, will rejoice in the following good news, which we have reason to believe will be followed shortly by reports of further advances.

The causes commenced this summer at Kapuskasing and Kirkland Lake have been taken over by the Board of the Union, thus ensuring their financial support. Pastor John Cunningham has given up his church at Scotch Line to undertake this venture in pioneering at Kirkland Lake, while Kapuskasing will be under the care of Pastor Brackstone for the next few weeks. In addition to these causes the Board has also made a grant toward the starting of a work in a new gold camp in the North, of which more later. The work in Sudbury, started by student-pastor John Boyd, continues to grow, and the blessing of the Lord is manifest in the salvation of souls. The Union has no financial responsibility for this latter work, but we commend it to the prayers

of our people along with the other new causes. Only the power of the living God can win the victory in this country where the forces of evil openly vaunt their strength, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." And not least ought we to give thanks for the example of the Timmins Church, where the blessing that has attended the preaching of the Gospel in these other Northern towns has so stirred the people that greatly increased offerings have been received for missions.—W. S. W.

### SEMINARY NOTES

How a School year slips around! The First Quarter will be over this week.

#### Dining Room

Our last notes concerning the Seminary dining room have been answered in a fine way. Last week one friend brought several jars of pickles; a small church sent seventy quarts of preserves and pickles, about thirty pounds of jam, with potatoes and other vegetables; this morning we saw the "steward" carrying a pumpkin and heard him remark that more vegetables had come. A friend of the Seminary recently installed a large Frigidaire, and when we looked into it this morning, along with other good things, there was a huge roast from another "friend of the Seminary". To all such friends the School says a very hearty, "Thank you. Come again!"

#### THE SEMINARIAN

Our School paper begins its eighth year. What improvement we see! We reprint the first article by Editor F. S. Cook.

#### EDITORIAL

##### "I Press On". Phil 3:14

"In the words of Paul, the aged apostle, we phrase the prayer and passion of the Seminary and of the Seminarian. Perhaps as never before, the feeling of the entire school could be characterized by those three simple words, for on all sides the desire seems to be, that we might attain to new heights spiritually and scholastically. Elsewhere, in this issue, the spiritual life of this institution has been ably portrayed by our "headboy", Mr. T. D. M. Carson, so that we shall not make any further remarks about it here.

But, we suppose, a few words of explanation about this new issue are in order. We are well aware of the great number of periodicals in the field of Christian literature, and our desire is not that we shall merely add another "paper" to the already long list, but that God will enable us to publish a paper that will be a blessing and spiritual help to its readers. We know that this has been true in past years, and we earnestly pray that as we "press on" it may be also true.

With that thought in mind, we toyed for some time with the idea of issuing a printed copy, realizing that such a step would add greatly to the appeal of the Seminarian. But one thing kept assailing our thoughts. Would the circulation warrant the added expense? At length we decided, and this is the result. We hope that it meets with your heartiest approval.

But—this issue was published more or less in faith, believing that sufficient interest would be aroused by the Seminarian to allow us to continue with its publication in printed form. May we ask you a pertinent question? What is your opinion of it? Is it worth the expense? If it is, then do your part! You know what it is. We would also urge you to pass the Seminarian along to your friends that its scope of blessing may be widened, and that the interest and the band of prayer-helpers may be enlarged."

The subscription price is Sixty Cents per year. Here our friends may feel the very pulse of Seminary life. Subscriptions may be sent to *The Seminarian*, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2, Ontario.—W. G. B.

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Life-Changing Evangelism* by Rev. Jos. Pearce, published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 128 pages, cloth boards, 1s. (35c in this country).

A Methodist minister of experience, who is also an author, here writes well on the incentive to evangelism. "With many sanctuaries depleted, the masses indifferent to God and becoming paganized—the call is clear and clamor-

ous for a renaissance of primitive evangelism. The church must again become, and in yet more pronounced form—the Church Evangelistic, for only so can she save herself and be God's instrument for saving the world" (p. 13). The book is primarily an appeal to English Methodists, and advocates, alas, "republishing the doctrine of entire sanctification". Nevertheless, it will prove a real spur to those whom it reaches.—W. G. B.

*The Soul of Egypt*, by Allison Douglas Boutros, published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 126 pages, 1s. (35c. in this country).

International developments of recent times have brought Egypt again to the fore. The house of iron bondage for the children of Israel, the place of refuge for the Holy Family, Egypt figures largely in the Bible. Here is a book which would take you into "the soul of Egypt" as a Christian missionary to the fourteen million Moslems and the one million Copts ("considering only the arable land, Egypt is the most densely populated country in the world", p. 48), has seen it from 1913 to the present.

These are years of change. Instead of the veil the modern woman of Cairo appears in a chic French hat. A new nationalism has swept the land. Even the millenium-old Mohammedan university, with its fifteen to eighteen thousand students, is changing. But the condition of the common people is appalling—poverty, dirt, disease, superstition, fatalism, polygamy and other such terms are inadequate to describe it. In this stronghold of the false prophet Christian work is all but impossible. Here is one way this American woman and her husband have done it:

"Secreting a number of well-bound New Testaments, at one wedding where the Grand Mufti himself (the Egyptian head of Islam), the Prime Minister and other such dignitaries were guests, we were able to give away all the Testaments, and Prince H. was among those who later wrote an appreciative letter" (p. 44).

The number reached is discouraging, but here and there are gathered real gems for His crown. The book is rich in description and enlivened with telling personal incidents. If you would know the inside story of this modern land of the ages-old Sphinx and pyramids, read *The Soul of Egypt*.—W. G. B.

**NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES**

**ANNIVERSARY SERVICES AT SECOND MARKHAM**—The 88th Anniversary of the Second Markham Baptist Church was observed on Sunday, November 1st, with Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, M.A., of Toronto Baptist Seminary, and a former pastor, as the special speaker. Being favoured with fair weather, the attendances at both morning and evening services were large. Mr. Whitcombe gave two very helpful messages, and special music for the day was much enjoyed. It was altogether a day of great blessing, for which we thank God.

**ORANGEVILLE**—Rev. G. W. Searle had the joy of baptizing four more believers in the Orangeville Baptist Church on Sunday last.

**ELLWOOD CITY, PA.**—The Lord is continuing to bless the group of Regular Baptist brethren who meet in their own church just outside of Ellwood City. Mr. Robt. Morrison is now ministering to them very acceptably. On a recent Sunday the Sunday school had a record attendance, and at the evening service it was necessary to bring in twenty more chairs.

**FENELON FALLS**—Dr. Hoyt has come and gone. Fenelon Falls is grateful for his services, and will look forward with happy anticipation to a return visit. For three Sundays and two weeks this glowing soul has preached the unsearchable riches with power and good success. A number of souls have been saved, including some who are young, and at least one man beyond the three score and ten stage. Dr. Hoyt's ministry was evangelical in the widest and deepest sense: he blessed and helped every department of the church's life; he laboured for the pastor and gave wise counsel to all that sought his help. One cannot conceive of any type of church that would not receive invaluable help from the services of this man whose heart runs over with a love for Christ and a passion for souls.

**PASTORS' AND PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE**—Rev. Clarence M. Keen of Buffalo, N.Y., a Spirit-filled preacher and outstanding Bible teacher will be the speaker at the Pastors' and People's Conference to be held in Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, on Tuesday, November 17th. Sessions begin at 2.30 and 7.30 p.m. All are cordially invited to attend these meetings. Bring a friend, and don't forget your lunch basket.

**DYNEVOR ROAD, TORONTO**—Rev. E. Hancox has accepted a call to the pastorate of the Dynevor Road Baptist Church, Toronto. This is a work recently begun in a very needy district in the north-west of Toronto, and we hope that our readers will remember it in prayer.

**KAPUSKASING**—Rev. Robt. E. Brackstone has been assisting in the work at Kapuskasing and writes as follows: "At our first meeting last Sunday evening (November 1st) several raised their hands desiring to be saved. I had the unspeakable joy of leading a young woman to Christ during my visitation. We are meeting in the well-equipped Orange Hall. The group of believers here is eager for the continuance and success of the gospel meetings. In the homes we have three prayer meetings a week. Pray for us.

**LIBERIA**

**WORD FROM MISS LANE**—"Once again Liberia says, 'Good afternoon'. You will know by this time that we are in the midst of the rainy season, yet in spite of it all we get out to the towns and farms each week. The other day we went to a farm owned by a Mano man who lives near here. When we reached the farm grass hut where the people sleep during the farm season, we told them to call the people in from the farms around. Soon we had a nice little gathering of those who had gladly left off cutting rice while we gave them God's message. After hearing their thanks we went back to the town, where we sat under a nice thatch roof while the folks there heard God's Word, and then we went off home again.

"On the mission our Sunday school, day school, and Church services all go on as usual. We have had another baptismal service when three of our school girls, a woman and a young lad all followed their Lord in baptism. Four of these are quite young, so pray earnestly for them that God will keep them and make them to be real lights for God. Indeed, pray for us all."

We are asked to pray for the school children, that they may be drawn closer to the Lord, and that many will truly receive Him into their hearts. Also that there may soon be a mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God upon these people. We are also asked to join in praise to God for the reception given to the gospel in the various farms and towns; for answered prayer with regard to one woman for whom they have been praying for a long time; and for the reports from the evangelists of the people hearing the Word of God in the towns.

**BOOKS BY DR. SHIELDS**

- "Other Little Ships" . . . . . \$1.50
- "The Most Famous Trial of History" . . . . . .50
- "The Oxford Group Movement Analyzed" . . . . . .5
- 25 Copies . . . . . 1.00
- "The Hephburn Government's Betrayal of Its Public Trust" (Separate School Address) . . . . . .10
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Address: THE GOSPEL WITNESS,  
130 Gerrard St. E.,  
Toronto.

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WILLIAM J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 4th Quarter Lesson 47 November 22, 1936

### BURNING THE ROLL

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapter 36-38.

Golden Text: "Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words."—Jeremiah 36:16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ps. 118:1-15; Tuesday—Ps. 118:16-29; Wednesday—Ps. 116:1-19; Thursday—Ps. 130; Friday—Ps. 40:1-17; Saturday—Ps. 119:89-104.

### EXPOSITION

To-day's lesson deals with incidents in connection with the Siege of Jerusalem. The topic of Ch. 36 (which like 35 forms a break in the chronological sequence of 32-44) is THE ROLL—Its Writing (1-4); Its Reading (5-21); Its Burning (22-26); Its Rewriting (27-32).

In the year 605 (cf. 25:1) the Prophet was commanded to write the prophecies delivered by him since his induction (cf. 25:3) in a roll. This volume (from "to roll") was writing arranged in columns parallel to the two rollers, so that the parchment was read as unrolled (3). The contents must be judged by v. 2 which seems to point to chs. 1-21 and probably 46-51. Their length is no objection to the reading of the Roll frequently. It was Jehovah's hope that Judah would repent (cf. 26:3—showing that Jehoiakim must have heard some of the prophetic word before). Jeremiah dictated to his secretary (4), commanding him to read the roll to the people in the Temple on a fast-day (6), because of his inability to appear in public (5), possibly because of ceremonial uncleanness ("detained"—I. Sam. 21:7). Baruch was the grandson of Maaseiah (II. Chron. 34:8), brother of Seraiah (51:59), and thus of high rank, as his reception by the princes (15) would indicate. God still hoped that the peril of the city, the occasion for the fast, would produce repentance. No other time (cf. Is. 58) would prove more propitious for hearing the Word, for letting supplications fall (cf. R.V. mg.) as petitioners fall prostrate in prayer, and are accepted of God (7). The detailed account follows (9, 10). Apparently, the writing of the roll took nine months or so, for its reading did not take place until December, 604, when the fast was proclaimed (9). [The Law required but one stated fast (Lev. 16:29).] Baruch took advantage of the offer of one of the princes (12) Gemariah who gave for a reading place his chamber (35:4) [located in the upper court (20:2) near the new gate (26:10)] where princes gathered before the Temple services. His father (note 26:24) as a scribe had taken great delight in the Word of God (II. Ki. 22:8ff.) and it was now his son Micaiah who was stirred by the Word (11) so that he "went down" (26:10) to the Palace where other princes had gathered (12). There he declared the content of the Roll (13) whereupon they deputed Jehudi (of Cushite—probably Ethiopian in descent but a worshipper of Jehovah as his ancestors' names indicate) to fetch Baruch who acquiesced, reading the Roll to them (15). Favourably disposed both to the Prophet (26:16) and him as their equal (note v. 4) they nevertheless quailed at the import of the Word (16). Curiosity triumphed over concern or genuine interest in the prophecy as they enquired concerning the manner of the revelation (17). The amanuensis declared his humble part as secretary (18), whereupon the princes, probably remembering Uriah (26:23) cautioned him to go into hiding with the Prophet (19). Forthwith they took the news of the Roll to the king who was sitting in the interior winter rooms of his house (22) for the season was cold and damp (Ezra 10:9). He immediately sent Jehudi, a prince (14) to get the Roll from Elishama's chamber and to read it to the whole court (20, 21). No sooner had three or four columns (R. V. mg.) been read than the king (or possibly Jehudi at his direction) cut the manuscript with a penknife or scribe's knife (for making and mending reed pens; and cutting up writing materials), tossing it and successive cuttings into the brazier which burned brightly in the middle of the room (23) until the whole parchment had been read and destroyed. Jehoiakim could have read for himself, but apparently he knew the contents of the Roll (cf. v. 3), and unlike his

father in similar circumstances (II. Ki. 22:11), he nor yet his courtiers were afraid (24). Some of the princes had not forgotten the Word though their remonstrance was vain (25). Jehoiakim searched vainly for Baruch and Jeremiah, for they were hidden by Jehovah (26) who commanded a second roll to be written (28) the extent of whose additional words (32) we do not know. The monarch was to have no permanent successor, but to suffer horribly (cf. 22:18 f.), and bring punishment upon his descendants (19:15; 35:17).

In Ch. 37 an incident is described similar to that of 21:1 (see note). For the sequence of events in this chapter, see note 32:1, ff.) This mission took place later, however, and was occasioned by the increasing intensity of the siege. Jeremiah was still free (4) when Jehucal (38:4) and Zephaniah (21:1; note 29:25) went to him. He denounced hopes of relief from the temporary Babylonian retreat (7) indicating that Zedekiah's league with Egypt was of no avail, for though the Chaldeans had left only wounded men, one to a tent, God's purpose would stand—the city would be destroyed (10). During the raising of the siege, the Prophet [whether to get produce from the priest's lands, or secure his purchase (32:9, ff.)] sought escape, and was arrested at a North gate by a sentinel and charged with desertion to the Chaldeans (13). Many had deserted (38:19; 52:5) and the charge was plausible, in view of his prophecies (21:9). Though the Prophet made rebuttal, the irate princes (so different from those of 26:16; 36:19) threw him into Jonathan the scribe's prison (which usually adjoins an Oriental magistrate's house) into a cistern (6:7) or pit (R. V. mg.) with vaulted roof (cells). Thence the weak Zedekiah fetched him for a secret conference concerning the Word of the Lord (17). There was no further revelation than had been given, whereupon having delivered the Word with a side thrust at false prophets (19), Jeremiah asked for and secured relaxation of his horrible incarceration (20, f.) to the court of the guard (32:2).

Four of the princes [including Pashhur (21:1) Jehucal (37:3), and Gedaliah, son of another Pashhur (20:1, f.)] hearing the words of doom from the Prophet (21:9, f.) who had liberty still, demanded his death, charging him with weakening the remaining warriors (cf. 37:13) by his prophecies (4). The weakling monarch (24 ff. 37:17; see App. ch. 34) admitting his helplessness, allowed them to consign the Prophet to Malchijah's miry dungeon (cf. 37:16) or pit whose waters probably had been drained by the siege (6) requirements. The dungeon being in the court of the guard and thus the Palace court, was close to Ebed-melech's place of employment. He, hearing of the desperate plight of the Prophet who was famishing (the rapidly-diminishing food supply could not reach a prisoner) and exhausted, plead for his release (8, 9). The king ordered a number of men to accompany the Ethiopian who had taken pains to secure from some lumber room, old rags of torn and worn-out garments with which to pad the arms of the Prophet (12). Quick work brought the prisoner to his former freedom (13) of the court of the guard. Soon the king sought counsel again of him, conferring in some private passageway leading to the Temple (14). Having secured immunity (15, 16), the Prophet conveyed the information that if he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar (who was at Riblah—39:5) whose princes were storming the city, Jerusalem would escape burning, and he and his house would live (17). Resistance meant the opposite (18). Zedekiah, however, feared the ridicule of the Jews who had already surrendered (19) whereupon the Prophet reassured him (20), describing the ridicule of his predecessors' wives (22), and the destruction of the city (23) which would follow upon disobedience. It would be as if he himself (R.V. mg.) had burned the city! The king, for fear of his princes, then pledged secrecy of the Prophet who complied, informing the princes only of his request for remission of sentence (24-27).

### APPLICATION

Passing by the many in our day who destroy the Word, we may give reasons for writing the Word of God. It is stored up for wider audiences, for rereading, for testing, verification, and final testimony against all unbelief. See how modest Baruch, like all faithful ministers of the Word, did not add to or detract from the revelation. The rewritten Roll signifies the truth of progressive revelation (36-32). No old truth is denied or superseded; just so is the relation of the New Testament to the Old.

# THE STORY OF THE PLOT THAT FAILED

## The History of a Church's Struggle to Maintain an Evangelical Ministry in a Free Pulpit

By T. T. SHIELDS

### CHAPTER II.

I must frankly acknowledge that the telling of this story has been delayed because of the impossibility of divorcing it from personal considerations and reference. Such conflicts as these chapters will relate nearly always gather about some personality. If a pastor has any qualifications for his task as a leader of God's people, it would ever be impossible to tell the story of his pastorate while keeping the man himself entirely in the background. These chapters therefore must naturally assume something of an autobiographical character.

On the other hand, it will be impossible to tell the truth of this matter, and leave out of the reckoning those who, so long ago, as it now seems, organized themselves with a view to terminating the ministry which, in spite of their efforts, continues to this day. We shall, however, endeavour in our recital to relegate personalities to the shadows so far as may be possible, while keeping the principles at stake plainly in the foreground.

Another consideration must be borne in mind. Many of the historical portions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, were written long after the events recorded had taken place; and, while the writer often speaks as a contemporary witness, yet it is evident that he writes in the light of the perspective of the years, and records primary events as they have proved to be related to ultimate issues. So will it—must it be, in the nature of the case—as I tell this story. That is to say, I am writing of 1910, more than twenty-six years later; and, while official records will be requisitioned to insure the factual accuracy of what is written, it will be impossible but that I shall read and record the occurrences of 1910 in the light of 1936.

I became Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, May 15th, 1910. The manner of my being called, and the immediate effect of it upon denominational affairs, have had special significance in the light of subsequent events.

I am an alumnus of McMaster University only by adoption, and that at a much later date than 1910. Altogether apart from considerations of Baptist orthodoxy and its opposite, McMaster University had some characteristics which I was never able to admire. And, having now in Toronto Baptist Seminary, a modern school of the prophets of our own, I would name these objectionable characteristics in order that our school, in these respects, may be as unlike McMaster as possible.

In the characteristic of which I now speak, McMaster University was no exception to the rule. Nearly all educational institutions are alike in that of which I am about to express disapproval; because the tendency toward this objectionable feature inheres in college life. But it is not the less unworthy on that account.

Certain officials of McMaster University, not of the Governing Bodies, but of the Faculty, had come to regard the Baptist denomination as McMaster's special preserve. Non-McMaster men were tolerated for the doing of rough work, even as the Chinese coolies were used to do rough work on the Western Front in the Great War. Train-

loads of coolies passed through Canada. But no one ever supposed that one of them carried a field marshal's baton in his knapsack, or could by any possibility become colonel of a regiment, to say nothing of the possibility of commanding a brigade or an army. To my personal knowledge certain of the Faculty of McMaster looked upon non-McMaster men as useful only for preparing dugouts, lighting fires, and perhaps for carrying meals to the graduates of McMaster University.

It was, hence of McMaster, so far as it was humanly possible, to reserve the larger churches as being the more comfortable berths, not for McMaster's products in general, but for her special pets. I know that the truth of this statement will be denied, but such denial will not affect the truth: I know whereof I speak. Indeed, I could take my readers farther back than 1910, to a day when, at an associational meeting, a certain McMaster University professor said that the day would come when it would be impossible for any non-McMaster man to hold the pastorate of a Baptist church anywhere in Ontario or Quebec.

Not all McMaster professors entertained that narrow and selfish view. Indeed, the idea was as repugnant to some of the professors, and to many of its graduates, as it must have been to any and every man who believed in the spiritual character of a church's mission, and of its spiritual success being conditioned upon its being led by someone who preached because he was a "man sent of God". But a professor absorbed in his work may become so obsessed by his institution as all-unconsciously to be led to reduce the progress of the kingdom of God to terms of the progress of the institution he serves.

I shall not argue the point. I could produce the proof if confirmation of my statement were necessary. Few of the present members of the Faculty of McMaster are in a position even to entertain an opinion of value on the subject, for the reason that they were not then there, and therefore have no firsthand knowledge of the things of which I write. But that was the official attitude of McMaster University toward the churches of the Denomination.

The pets of those in authority were not necessarily those of greater ability, but rather those who had little independence of thought, and, having come in many instances from educational nothingness, gave all glory to their *alma mater* for such progress as they had made; and therefore, implicitly, by their attitude and bearing, pledged their perpetual allegiance even as a vassal to his liege lord. If therefore the larger churches could be occupied by men who were either intelligently or blindly loyal—but loyal in any event—to McMaster University, the Denomination might then be used as a great estate for McMaster to cultivate in its own interests.

At this point, let me earnestly express the hope that the doors of Toronto Baptist Seminary may close, and the institution cease to exist, rather than it should ever arrogate to itself the position of a lord of the manor who, through his sons, would become ruler of all.

An educational institution allied with New Testament

churches has but one reason for its existence: it must prove itself to be the willing servant of the churches, and never at any time their master. The danger is that men who have been thrown together in college life for a number of years; will naturally be interested in each other, and, without deliberately planning, or even intending to do so, may constitute themselves a kind of denominational ruling class.

I would in this connection urge the students of Toronto Baptist Seminary—and graduates—to remember that they owe the institution that has helped them only this, that they should assist that Institution to help others as they have been helped. As Baptists we should ever guard with the utmost jealousy the absolute autonomy, by which is meant, the independence and sovereignty of the local church. No educational or denominational influence from without should ever be permitted to interfere with the free and full expression of the collective will of a company of regenerated, and therefore spiritually-enlightened people, brought together to exercise the functions of a New Testament church.

This writer had for years directed his attention chiefly to his own church. I had always co-operated in the missionary and educational enterprises of the Denomination. I had never been the enemy of one, but always the friend of all. On the other hand, as Pastor of a church, I had refused to allow denominational secretaries or boards ever to dictate to any church of which I was Pastor. We did our own work in the way in which we thought God would have us do it, and, to the best of our light, under the direction of the Spirit of God. For that reason, quite apart from theological considerations, I had not always been popular with the denominational secretariat.

God had greatly blessed the ministry in Adelaide Street Church, London, of which I became Pastor in September, 1904. He had given us the ear of the city. We had been forced to take a large skating-rink for our Sunday evening services, to provide accommodation for the people who came; and also to enlarge our church building to between three and four times its original capacity. Conversions and baptisms had been numerous, and the membership of the church had practically doubled. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that there was no record, certainly within the bounds of the Convention, of any such spiritual progress as had been made in Adelaide Street Church in the same length of time.

I had been made Chairman of the local Home Mission Board while still in London, and that gave me a seat on the General Board. Once in all the years I had been honoured by being asked to give a brief address at an afternoon session of the Convention which, through a crowded programme, was forced forward to the evening. But, with the exception of one Sunday spent in a Toronto pulpit one summer time, my ministry had been exercised entirely apart and beyond the bounds of Baptist official life in Toronto.

Early in January, 1910, I returned to London from attendance at a Home Mission Board meeting in Toronto and found in my mail a letter from Jarvis Street Church, asking me to supply the pulpit for a Sunday, and naming several dates from which to choose. I had to leave early next morning to preach in Chicago on the Sunday, and so, without time for much thought, had to clear up my mail that evening, and, selecting the last of the three dates named, I promised to go to Jarvis Street.

On my return from Chicago I received an invitation

from a prominent church in New York, warmly and urgently asking me to spend two Sundays with them in February. One of the Sundays was the date I had promised to go to Jarvis Street. I had never preached in New York, and was rather anxious to accept the invitation. There was no reason in my own situation why I should go anywhere, except that feeling which comes to any minister after a prolonged period of intense application in one place, that a Sunday or two elsewhere would be a welcome change.

I telephoned Toronto and asked if they would relieve me of my Jarvis Street engagement. I did not propose to break it. I supposed the Pulpit Committee had been rather at a loss to know how to supply the pulpit, and had communicated with me as one who might possibly be endured for a Sunday. I did not consider the engagement of any special importance either to Jarvis Street or to myself, save only, of course, as it is always important that an engagement once made should be kept, unless it can be cancelled by mutual agreement. That was my proposal. But the member of the Committee to whom I telephoned was a man who could easily be misunderstood by long distance, and I interpreted his reluctance to relieve me as an implication that one must be somewhat of a simpleton, under any circumstances, to refuse an opportunity to preach in Jarvis Street. That led me to press my request for release a little more strongly, while, of course, I explained I would keep the agreement unless I could be voluntarily excused. I later received a letter agreeing to the cancellation of that engagement on condition I would supply on a later date, March 6th. I remember the date clearly without reference to any record as the date of my father's birthday.

I therefore went to New York and enjoyed ten days of most happy fellowship. Into that I need not go save to remark that the church was undergoing renovation, a new organ was being installed at a cost of thirty thousand dollars or more, and I was asked if I would return and preach at the church reopening. A couple of weeks later I supplied in Toronto. Though early in March, the weather was warm. There was no snow, and we had a thunder-storm in the evening. The congregations were not large, but the Faculty of McMaster University was well represented at both services. It was a fairly enjoyable day. By no means a mountain-top experience, and yet a day when one felt that something had been accomplished in the name of the Lord.

Some weeks later the Chairman of the Pulpit Committee of Jarvis Street Church, a Deacon, and one who was also Chairman of the Board of Governors of McMaster University, wrote me a very gracious letter, asking me to meet him at dinner on a certain evening at a London hotel. I accepted the invitation. I found Dr. D. E. Thomson one of the most gracious souls I had ever met. There was not a touch of condescension in his approach. He told me kindly that they had been looking to the Lord for direction, that they had searched the British Isles and the American Continent, and at last had turned to a London, Ontario, Pastor, in the confidence that he was God's man. We went to his room and prayed together about it, and had a long conference, and I told him that I could commit myself no farther than to say that were it

clear to my mind that I ought not to go to Jarvis Street I would frankly tell him so, but that I could not possibly irrevocably commit myself until the call had actually been given. I recall I said to Dr. Thomson, "Jarvis Street Church can better afford to have its call declined than I can afford to accept in advance a call which may never be extended." In due course the church acted upon the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee, and I was invited to become the Pastor of Canada's premier Baptist church.

It may help some of my brother-ministers if I relate a very simple incident connected with this matter, and which, chronologically, should be stated here. New York had sent me a further invitation: The church was pastorless. The Chairman of the Pulpit Committee was an old army officer, a very cautious man. He enquired whether I would consider a proposition to hold certain services. I replied asking him to state what his proposition was, but before I heard from him, on the Saturday, to be exact, I received the official communication from Jarvis Street Church advising me of the church's call. On the Monday I received the calendar of the New York church, which had been mailed on Saturday, announcing me as the preacher for the next Sunday. I had frankly told Dr. Thomson of the New York matter, and he said, "There is no doubt they have their eye upon you." When I saw I was announced for this important occasion, the reopening of a large church after a large expenditure of money, it appeared to me there was nothing for me to do but to go. On the other hand, I could not go with Jarvis Street's call in my pocket unanswered.

That drove me to the necessity of making an immediate decision. What should I do? I was well aware of McMaster's antagonism toward all non-McMaster men. I knew that Toronto would be a very difficult sphere in which to labour; and, strange as it may seem to some, so far as I knew, conflict of any kind was foreign to my nature. I had never had a church trouble in my life, but had often been called to endeavour to compose differences in other churches.

I knew, too, that I was too independent to be popular with denominational officialdom. My wife was even more sensitive, and perhaps in such matters, more discerning than I; and was especially adverse to the idea of going to Toronto. My personal inclination and other considerations pointed toward New York, except that it was a city over which the Union Jack did not fly. I hope I am not a narrow nationalist, but that consideration entered somewhat into my reckoning, though I am sure it was by no means the determining factor.

Then I considered the circumstances. I had not sought the notice of either place. The situation of that time was not of my creation. Yet circumstances had been so ordered that Jarvis Street had called me; and the other church, in the interests of a visit to which I had set aside the first invitation from Toronto, had postponed their action. I therefore felt I must either decline Jarvis Street, or accept it before going to New York. The Jarvis Street people, as many of them as I had met, had been extremely kind, and I felt if Dr. Thomson was a fair representative of them, nothing more gracious could be expected this side of heaven. At the same time, knowing the denominational situation, I was reluctant to say, Yes. But,

after weighing all considerations in the balances, I concluded that the Lord, the Head of the church, was in the Jarvis Street call; I therefore accepted it.

It would be beyond the legitimate scope of this story to recite my later New York experiences: it must be enough to say that had Jarvis Street delayed its action a little while, all other circumstances might easily have pointed to New York; and, humanly speaking, the rest of my ministry might have been exercised under another flag.

It may interest those of my readers who have a copy of my book, "Other Little Ships", to know that the first sermon preached in Jarvis Street Church, Sunday morning, March 6th, 1910, is the last sermon published in that book; and that the first sermon preached by me as Pastor of the church in May, 1910, is also in the same book, entitled, "The Second Mile".

My pastorate in Jarvis Street began quite happily so far as the church itself was concerned. But there was a man who was President of the McMaster Alumni Association, who was a member of the church, and who had gathered a number of young boys about him to oppose the Pulpit Committee's recommendation. The man's reason was that he feared I should not be very sympathetic toward McMaster University. The only ground for that assumption that I know of might be found in the fact that some time before, by my invitation, Dr. Elmore Harris, the founder alike of Walmer Road Church and Toronto Bible College, had occupied my pulpit—and that at a time when Dr. Harris was engaged in a sharp controversy with the University over the appointment of Professor I. G. Matthews to the Chair of Old Testament. But the man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for my being called was the Chairman of the Board of Governors of McMaster University, and I was informed that, at the business meeting of the church, he replied to the objections of this Alumni President that Jarvis Street Church was then engaged in selecting a Pastor, and not a professor for the University; and that if McMaster was not able to take care of itself, then it was so much the worse for McMaster.

But this Alumni President really never ceased sniping. Not long after I became Pastor of the church, he asked for an interview. At that interview I distinctly recall one question, to this effect: "Am I correct in understanding you to have said last Sunday evening that Christ had to die in order to make God willing to save men?" That interview convinced me that this gentleman knew nothing of the gospel. To him, the language of the believer was a strange tongue, which he was manifestly incapable of understanding. I was convinced then—and his subsequent course but deepened the conviction—that had an apostle diagnosed his spiritual state he would have said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter . . . for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

This man remained in Jarvis Street Church for two or three years, and proved himself to be a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, until, by the advice of his father-in-law, a loyal deacon, he transferred his membership to another church, and left us in peace. But he continued his vendetta indirectly for years thereafter, and I was informed had vowed that he

would never rest until he had driven me from Jarvis Street Church.

It should be said that at the time his opposition was first registered, I had never seen him, and did not know that such a man existed. Through all the years he acted the part of a bitter enemy of Evangelical Christianity. His influence in one of the city papers by which he was employed, was out of all proportion to his personal weight. After a number of years his connection with the newspaper was severed, and he is no longer a resident of Toronto.

But even at that time utterly misleading reports appeared in the papers. So much so, that I came to Toronto to see Dr. D. E. Thomson, and told him that in the face of these reports I could not come to Jarvis Street. He simply smiled and said that if I knew this man for what he really was, I would pay no attention to him. I pointed out that the public generally would be ignorant of the inspiration of these reports, and that it would be a disadvantage both to the church and to myself to begin my ministry with the idea that there was an influential minority in opposition. He kindly insisted that I should pay no attention to it, and promised to issue a statement to the press. The following appeared in the *London Advertiser*, April 11th, 1910, and in other papers, as it was an *Associated Press* message:

"Toronto, April 11th: The following official statement was handed out this morning by D. E. Thomson, K.C., Chairman Pulpit Committee, Jarvis Street Church, regarding the call recently extended by the congregation to Mr. T. T. Shields, pastor of Adelaide Street Baptist Church, London:

"Some of the published reports of the recent meeting of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church held to consider the extending of a call to the pastorate are calculated to convey an impression of want of unanimity quite at variance with the facts. Few congregations set less

store by formal unanimity, but fewer still are so free from real divisions.

"The committee which recommended the name of Mr. Shields was thoroughly representative, embracing all the officials of the church. The adverse note was chiefly composed of some of the younger members, and was based on an impression of Mr. Shields' attitude toward young people's organizations, which turned out to have been ill-founded.

"Should the call be accepted, it is safe to predict that the incoming pastor will be as cordially received, and as loyally supported by those who opposed as by those who supported the committee's recommendation."

I have thought it wise to relate these matters lest any should suppose that I came to a divided church. What Dr. Thomson predicted, came to pass, and those who had followed the McMaster Alumni President in the church meeting, came to me one after another saying all the facts had been misrepresented to them, and that I could depend upon their loyal co-operation. The one substantial family, a man and wife, who voted adversely, was no exception; for the gentleman himself, one of the finest men I ever met, wrote me a letter in which he said that he and his wife had never been happier in their fellowship in Jarvis Street and with their Pastor than they were at that time. So that, so far as I was able to discern, with the exception of this Alumni President and his wife—and both were graduates of McMaster University—I began my ministry in Jarvis Street with the unanimous and hearty support of the church membership.

Following my first Sunday, there were two evenings of reception: one for the church itself on Monday night; and a public meeting in the auditorium on Tuesday, at which all denominational interests were represented, while the usual representatives of other denominations were included in the programme.

Next week we shall tell the story of the pre-war period, *The First Four Years*.

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