

# The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### ROOTS AND FRUITS

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

Preached in Jarvis St. Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 8th, 1911

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord,  
and unto us by the will of God."—II. Corinthians 8:5.

NOTE: *This sermon is printed from manuscript. The circumstances of Jarvis St. Church were somewhat different then, but the truth of the sermon is as applicable now as then and the sermon is, therefore, printed without alteration as written twenty-five years ago.*

Those of us who by grace have been placed among the blessed people "who know the joyful sound", "who have tasted that the Lord is gracious", are richer than we have ever dreamed as yet. At the girdle of faith there hang the golden keys of promise by which every door to the storehouses of grace may be opened, and all the inexhaustible treasures of redeeming love may be enjoyed. And yet it is not without some degree of fitness that we sing,

"Tell me the story often  
For I forget so soon,  
The early dew of morning,  
Has passed away at noon."

We are as waifs, who, faint and hungry, have been taken from the streets and brought to a royal house of feasting, and who, having voraciously devoured the first course, on the appearance of the second, complain of the menu! So soon do we forget His works, and the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged!

Is it not, therefore, wise frequently to survey our inheritance, and to remind ourselves of the greatness of that change which grace has wrought in us and in our circumstances, in our temporal and in our eternal relationships? The recollections of such infinite mercy may well inspire the prayer,

"Oh to grace, how great a debtor,  
Daily I'm constrained to be,  
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

We are here this morning in this hallowed place as the children of God. What a place this is! What holy memories gather about it! There are some here whose earliest recollections are associated with this house of prayer. Here parents, who long since have entered into

glory, were wont to worship. Here you learned to trust the Saviour; here you formed friendships which even death has no power to break. Some of the older members recall the messages of pastors who have been translated to higher realms of service, and many more remember the high and holy days of special inspiration which have characterized the ministry of the last thirty years. How often have you felt like exclaiming,

"Ah! whither should we flee for aid,  
When tempted, desolate, dismayed?  
Or how the hosts of hell defeat  
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?"

"There, there on eagle wings we soar,  
And sin and sense molest no more,  
And heaven comes down our souls to greet  
While glory crowns the mercy-seat."

Nor are these happy experiences wholly in the past. Many are growing old, and all are growing older. But the interest in the country of eternal summer does not grow less as we draw nearer. Like immigrants, who have long dreamed of this new and roomy land, and who at length catch sight of the citadel of Quebec, and gathering in the prow of the ship exclaim, "There is the land of our dreams"; so does the soul's interest in the Eternal City and the Lord thereof become deeper as we draw nearer the point where the strange Ferry Man is waiting. Hence, since God is the same, and the hope of the gospel is the same, the Christian's delight in the assemblies of the saints deepens and heightens with the years, and the aged saint longs for the voice of his youth to sing,

"O happy souls that pray  
Where God appoints to hear!  
O happy men that pay  
Their constant service there!  
They praise Thee still; and happy they  
That love the way to Zion's hill."

"To spend one sacred day  
Where God and saints abide,  
Affords diviner joy  
Than thousand days beside:  
Where God resorts, I love it more  
To keep the door, than shine in courts."

And it is of the future and the present rather than of the past, I am to speak this morning.

The Apostle Paul is a most inspiring companion. It is hard to take a long journey with a lame man, but how pleasant to walk with one whose spirits are buoyant, whose step is elastic, whose strength is exuberant, whose walk, whose labours, whose perseverance, whose triumphs over difficulties, whose quenchless enthusiasm, whose inextinguishable hopefulness, whose invariable equanimity, whose whole regenerated, devoted, healthy triple manhood of spirit, soul and body, proclaim the joy of being alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here Paul is seeking to stimulate the zeal of the Corinthian Christians by telling them of the willing service of the Macedonian churches; and he says that their devotion exceeded his expectation, that they did, "not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." He explains their splendid example by saying that they first gave themselves to the Lord of the church, and then, by the will of God, to the church of the Lord.

#### I.

Here, then, there is set forth for our emulation, the example of certain believers WHO GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD OF THE CHURCH.

You will observe this great teacher *did not expect to reap where there had been no sowing*, he never looked for fruits where there were no roots. The explanation of the Macedonians' unique conduct was found in their unique, or at least, their unusual consecration: "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." Paul never expected an effect without a cause, hence his exhortations to doing were always based upon God's gracious promises of being. He ever taught men first to *be* in order that they might *do*, and to continue to *be* that they might continue to *do*.

Let us, therefore, learn this first lesson. We shall be fruitful only as we are rooted and built up in Christ. Individually, and as a church, our spiritual life will be stronger only as our roots are deeper, our lives will be more abundant in beauty and fruitfulness only as faith's roots strike more deeply into "the truth as it is in Jesus", and by a firmer and more comprehensive grasp, draw up into ourselves a fuller measure of His life. So that for the inauguration of a life of righteousness, and peace and joy, for the development of a character that shall be Christlike; for any career of true distinction and reward; for a service that shall be large and permanent and lastingly honourable, there is no other place of beginning than this—no other "first" than this, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." Only then "shall the righteous flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing: to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

What then does it mean, in this large and comprehensive sense to give one's self to the Lord? I think the implication is that these Macedonian Christians had made of themselves a fuller, freer gift to God than some other

Christians were doing. What in this attitude, this relationship, that is so specially commended? Does it not mean, in a word, that spirit, soul, and body, were yielded to the Lord, that in these three realms of life His supreme authority was recognized and obeyed? Can it mean anything less than that the spirit, the highest part of our nature, should be surrendered to God,—to be His dwelling place, the place where divine communications are heard—that that is to be reserved for the Spirit of God alone, the capital of the kingdom, the citadel of the city of Mansoul where the King is seated on His throne? And the soul, the mind, that part of our immaterial nature which loves and feels and thinks and remembers and wills,—that, too, is to be given to God. That part of our nature which has power to plan, to create wealth, to bring good or evil devices to pass, that must be laid at His feet, surrendered to His will. And the body—the visible tabernacle of the immaterial and immortal, that which gives effect to the aspirations of the spirit, and the purposes of the mind, in speech, or other act—that, too, becomes the Lord's own exclusive property.

Nothing less than just such comprehensive proprietorship as this did the Macedonians rejoicingly recognize: "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." And that, I repeat, is the foundation of all that is of value in the Christian life, of all that is permanent in character and service.

As to how that surrender may be made, I have only this to say: it cannot be by any single resolution of the human will taken once and for all. It must be in faith, on the ground of His promises of grace, and that surrender, I believe, consists in endeavouring not once, but always, daily, hourly, to recognize the authority of the Lord Jesus in spiritual concerns—that is, by eliminating all controversy from the auditory where "the still small voice" is heard; by making the revealed and known will of God the supreme law of our lives. And that surrender consists further, not once, I say again, but always, in endeavouring to recognize the proprietorship of Jesus Christ in all the powers of the mind—of intellect, of sensibility, of will—the hourly recognition of the fact that these are divine instruments to be used for the divine glory, not on Sunday, but always and everywhere.

It follows that this surrender can be real only when there is the further recognition of the Lord's ownership of our bodies, to be inconvenienced for Him, to be put to great discomfort for Him, to become weary for Him and in His service—to be a footstool by which He may mount the throne to greater glory; above all to be kept clean for Him; to be always under the direction of the mind and of the spirit in which He rules supreme.

Oh, Jarvis Street! our future depends upon the measure in which this truth is translated into actual daily experience: "They first gave their own selves to the Lord."

#### II.

The next noteworthy thing about these Macedonians was this, that having given themselves wholly to the Lord of the church, they discovered it to be "the will of God that THEY SHOULD GIVE THEMSELVES TO THE CHURCH OF THE LORD. And unto us by the will of God."

Observe then, *surrender to Jesus Christ is never accompanied by selfish isolation*—the Macedonian Christians as soon as they had given their own selves to the Lord saw it to be "the will of God" that they should bear their share in the apostolic labour. Their world was extended, and

their souls were enlarged to fit their larger world. They no longer lived unto themselves but gave themselves in willing service to the servants of Christ and the church.

And brethren, whatever a man's profession may be, if he live unto himself, if he refuses responsibility, if he lift no hand to lighten the burdens of the oppressed, if he take no part in the work of the Christian churches in the world, that man has not given himself in any true sense to the Lord. So then I would carry my first observation through and parallel with the second: If you have not given yourselves to us, to the church, to the work of the Lord—I do not urge you to do so but rather exhort you to give yourselves first to the Lord, and then you cannot help giving yourselves unto us.

You see then *the responsibilities of the church belong to those who have given themselves to the Lord*. Are you His—really, truly, wholly His? Then what is the will of God? Is it not that you give yourself to the work of God?

Well, then, among other things I am sure this involved *observance of the ordinances of the church*. Of the first I have only this to say, that in apostolic times believers invariably confessed their faith in Christ by baptism. And that obligation is as binding upon the children of God to-day as ever.

But I speak just a word about the other ordinance. I am sure that ordinance cannot be neglected with impunity. No command of Christ can be disobeyed without loss of spiritual joy and peace. Are not some members rather delinquent in this matter? I believe there is nothing in Scripture to make the weekly observance of the ordinance a binding obligation. I believe it is a very precious privilege of which, if we are wise, we shall avail ourselves. And if we observe it weekly I could wish that we might give it the first place in the day. Why not at ten-thirty, why not begin the day and the week with such a holy exercise?

But whether or no, surely there should be a frequent observance. Will you not lay this matter to heart, and in this matter give yourselves first to the Lord and then to the church.

I call your attention to still another matter of importance. I would admonish you to give yourselves to the Lord and then to the *church's ministry of intercession*. Will you not first give yourselves to the Lord and then to this ministry of prayer and to the prayer meeting, too?

We may give ourselves also to the *church's evangelistic ministry*. Give yourselves to the Lord until your interest in this is deepened. But what can you do? First, again, your prayers; secondly, your presence; thirdly, your word of welcome to the stranger; and always and everywhere your personal witness. I don't mean that you should worry anyone. But no one will object to being loved. They will come to the hearing of the gospel if they are sure you want them to come. Oh, this giving of one's self to the Lord is contagious; others will do so if you do.

But very especially this morning I ask you to observe *the specific application of this principle which the text implies*. The apostle is here commending the example of the Macedonians to the Corinthians, and he praises them for their great liberality, and says that that was an evidence of the grace of God—the fruit of their giving themselves to the Lord. They were poor—very poor. Their offering was perfectly spontaneous without anyone's solicitation. They even prayed Paul "with much entreaty

that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." And this he says was because they first gave themselves to the Lord. The teaching of this verse is that if I give myself to the Lord, all that I have belongs to Him. Now again I fall back on my first principle: I do not exhort you to give of your substance to the work of the Lord, but first give yourselves to the Lord of the work. I am sure it would be impossible for me to hold any fellowship with Christ, while living in perpetual neglect of my obligation to give of my substance to the Lord. I believe it is impossible for anyone to do so. When the cry of the world is so loud and long, no one can live in enjoyment of the peace of God who makes no effort to give the bread of life to others. And, on the other hand, it is impossible that we should give ourselves to the Lord, without feeling the necessity of giving of our substance to make Him known. Put that down as axiomatic, that giving ourselves involves the giving of our substance to the Lord.

But in the next place *we are asked to follow the example of very poor people*: "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." I am not pleading for money. If it were only money God wanted He would not ask the poor to give—indeed He would not ask it of the rich. It is because He wants ourselves, and because no man can give himself without his money. Paul says distinctly that this was a "grace"—they grew by giving as they could not grow without it. And none of us is exempt from this obligation. Our Lord did not forbid the widow to put in all the living that she had. I am glad that there are those among us whom God has greatly prospered, and who have not forgotten Him in their prosperity. But I do not think their large gifts go any farther than others' small gifts. I feel sure there is not a man here who, because he gives a thousand dollars, thinks he is any better than the man who, out of deep poverty, gives all he can to his Lord. We are all equal here. My brethren, you who are able to give largely, will say "Amen" most heartily to what I am about to say. If you count for anything in the kingdom of God, it is not because of your financial ability; and on the other hand, I say to the poorest member of the church, if you count for nothing it is not because of your poverty. You have it in your power to do just as much for the spread of the gospel as the richest man here. That is not arithmetic I know. But it is true. God sent Elijah to lodge with a widow in the time of famine. "I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee." So that we see, Paul's appeal was not grounded on objective need, but on subjective grace; not on any consideration of material wealth, but on the abundance of spiritual supplies. Here rich and poor meet together; let neither judge the other, but first give their own selves to the Lord, then let the life within have free course in streams of Christian liberality.

But observe Paul cites the example of the Macedonian Christian *for the benefit of those who were in this matter in arrears*. He reminds them of a promise made a year ago which had not been fulfilled. And I am sure that such neglect, where it is caused by indifference, is injurious to the soul.

Observe again. *The Corinthians had fallen behind because they had not adopted Paul's weekly offering plan which he had submitted to them before*. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store,

as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." How very simple it all is! Just to give ourselves to the Lord; to recognize Him in my business and then week by week as He prospers me, put my offering by.

But *what has all this to do with Jarvis Street?* Jarvis St. Church is not poor. No, not in worldly goods. I am only fearful lest we should be found saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing", and "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." But if our treasury were overflowing, and there were one man, and he the poorest of the flock giving nothing to God, he would constitute a weakness in the life of the church.

*Paul's weekly offering plan was for Missions*—for Home Mission work in Jerusalem. And for that I plead. But he scattered the gospel abroad, judging himself to be every man's debtor: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Brethren, we must not live unto ourselves. You cannot give to missions without praying for missions.

Our Lord had much to say about giving; and the Bible, from beginning to end, is full of teaching in this matter. We are told that the Lord actually watched the people giving, and noted what each gave, and openly commended the widow who gave her all. It was of the woman who gave her alabaster box of ointment "very precious", that He said, "She hath done what she could". He always observes how we give, and specially loves a cheerful giver. Therefore let us give ourselves without reserve to the Lord of the church, and then to the church of the Lord.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!"

### GREEN FINGERS

Last week I promised that I would write an article for THE GOSPEL WITNESS, but as I essay the task I find the labour of writing rather irksome after being out of practice for so long. For many years now I have been a *dictator*, and have often found my tongue the pen of a ready writer; but truth to tell, after years of rapid dictating, "taking my pen in hand" seems rather like exchanging an aeroplane for an ox-cart. It may be, however, that my pen may run as rapidly as my mind, since both have been rather inactive for some time.

Once, when commiserating a lady who had expressed a dislike for cooking—she had remarked that it was not the actual getting of a meal that troubled her, but the burden of deciding what to get so as to insure some variety in the menu—I told her that at that point I understood her perfectly; that that was ever the preacher's and the writer's difficulty—to get an idea, to decide what to write about. And that is now my problem.

I must not write a sermon—my wise and considerate physician has forbidden me to preach for some weeks yet! When I got out of bed some weeks ago, after six weeks of lying on my back, I was rather humbled by my experience. I was sure—or had been sure—that doctor and nurse were unnecessarily cautious. I was certain I should break ordinary records, for until I made the attempt, and in contemplation of it, I rejoiced as a

strong man to run a race. When I got on my feet, I discovered I was not just then a strong man, and felt no desire to run a race, but I did greatly rejoice—in my walking stick!

I may be driven to a like expedient in this attempt at writing, and instead of writing, as was promised last week, a large letter with my own hand, I may write only a short one.

Opportunities for observation have been limited. I have read much, and thought more, and I have made an attempt to do a little work—in my garden. Therefore, my readers may perhaps indulge me by walking with me for a little while in my garden.

While I was still in bed my good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Brown brought me a book entitled, "Green Fingers". But my fingers were at that time anything but green. It was, however, a wise selection. Had they been less wise, they might have brought me a ponderous volume that would have given me a headache. But people of keen minds are always simple. They were not like a lady who "once upon a time" in years ago—before there were good roads outside, and round about Toronto, kindly invited my wife and me to motor into the country to tea. Cars were not common in those days. The chauffeur carried a heavy rope in his car to wrap around the wheels in the event of getting stuck in the deep sand. And he had to use the rope, too, several times before we got home. But his mistress, our hostess, brought along a volume of poems to read in the car! But my more sensible friends brought me "Green Fingers", and another wise man brought me copies of Mr. Punch from January to April.

But about "Green Fingers". My wife is fond of painting and sometimes gets green fingers—when the rubber gloves break. The book, however, refers to another kind of "Green Fingers". This is how it begins:

"This book is meant for people who  
Can always make their gardens do  
Exactly what they want them to;  
Who search their borders every night,  
And catch their slugs by candle-light;  
Who always start at crack of dawn  
To dig their plantains from the lawn;  
Whose paths are *always* free from weeds;  
Whose plants are *always* grown from seeds;  
Who are most careful not to prune  
The standard rose a day too soon;  
Who are quite rude to men who sell  
Tobacco plants that have no smell;  
In fact, to all of you, I mean,  
Whose fingers are reputed green,  
Because you keep your borders clean."

My readers will at once perceive that this gift proclaims its recipient a gardener of reputation. That is to say one "whose fingers are reputed green." Whether the reputation is deserved is another matter.

I must write about my garden for I have been nowhere else since I was last at my study at the church, March 31st.

Yes; I am a pastor, and I know why the church is so often in the Bible, likened to a garden. For one thing, there is no end of work in a garden. In fact, a gardener's work, like a woman's, is never done. The same is true of a church. No pastor need ever complain of want of exercise. A garden will soon lose its charm for a lazy man. So will a church for a lazy minister: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by

the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stonewall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travel-leth; and thy want as an armed man."

There is always something to do, plants to set out, others to tie up, shrubs to prune, everything to spray, weeds to pull, climbers to guide, hedges to clip, lawns to water—and to-morrow or the day after it must be done all over again. So also is the garden of the Lord, and since He comes into His garden, and is in reality as Mary only supposed Him to be, the Gardener; and since He comes into His garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies, how ought our fingers to be green "because we keep our borders clean"!

My garden has its dark and gloomy days. Sometimes the sun is hidden, the sky is grey and inhospitable. Again the rain falls and brings a strange and uncomfortable chill into the atmosphere. Even in summer time the wind sometimes blows strongly and unpleasantly to the accompaniment of the rain. Then dead twigs fall from the trees, and where the squirrels have narrowly escaped disaster, small leafy branches are brought down to add to the litter on the lawn. The shrubs are literally depressed, the weight of moisture bows them to the ground, and here and there a plant, or a flower we had watched and affectionately tended, is broken down—and will not bloom again this summer!

On some such days the birds are silent, and the garden at first glance appears to be somewhat of a wreck, and the gardener feels the gloom entering his own spirit and wonders whether his labour is worth while.

Such, too, occasionally, not infrequently alas, is a pastor's experience. In the greenhouses they force their plants, they even drug them to give colour and a profusion of bloom, and the temperature is maintained artificially. But such gorgeous blooms perish in a few days after leaving the greenhouse. Some churches—so-called—are greenhouses, not gardens, everything is forced. The plants are stimulated not fed, their blooms are used for advertising purposes. But religious jazz never inspires a song in the night, the hallelujahs die away in the market-place.

Better the cloudy and dark day in a real garden, than the uniform temperature and temporary splendour of the ecclesiastical greenhouse.

Every true church has its dull days, occasionally even songless days. We have seen the garden of the Lord when it looked like a playground for squirrels, and a sphere of destruction for the north wind.

Invariably, however, sunny days succeed, and then we learn that Nature, which is another name for God—no, that might be misunderstood, let me rather say, another name for the work of God—has been doing what we could not do. The wind has saved us much pruning; the rain has done more good than a week's artificial watering—even by gardener Apollos—and every growing thing in the garden responds to heaven's call, and lifts its-head gratefully to the returning sun.

Nor is it different in the garden of the Lord: therein the law of progress and development is a law of revival, and not of continuous, uninterrupted, perennial beauty and fruitfulness. It is enough that it be said of the blessed man who meditates in God's law day and night that "he bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"—"Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." It will not be long thereafter until we shall say, "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

"But as flowers need night's cool darkness,  
The moonlight and the dew;  
So Christ, from one who loved it,  
His shining oft withdrew;  
And then for cause of absence  
My troubled soul I scanned,  
But glory, shadeless, shineth  
In Immanuel's land."

A gardener may easily mar the beauty of his garden through ignorance of the nature of his plants. Comparatively few grow as well in the shade as in the sun. Some, like pansies, show to advantage when massed in beds, others need plenty of room. They may grow together when they are young, but soon require thinning out and transplanting. I have known some of the Lord's flowers who are superbly beautiful in association with others—they seem to borrow beauty from and lend beauty to each other. They are made to dwell together in unity.

Others grow better alone. I had a shrub in my shrubbery. It lived at a poor dying rate. I nursed it for a year or two without noticeable improvement. Then I transplanted it to fill in a gap—I thought it could not fare worse. But soon it took on new life and became more than a stop-gap: a healthy and expanding bush. Some people are like that. They are made to fill hard places. They flourish under heavy responsibility. They were never made to add colour and variety to a pansy-bed, but to contribute strength and beauty to the house of the Lord as they grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Much may be learned from climbers. One is always interested in their aspirations. Their delicate tendrils appeal for something to help them climb. Until I learned otherwise, I feared the breaking of a tendril might kill the plant. Therefore I encouraged the ambitious climber by every means available. I found they kept on climbing—some of them becoming but a single sickly stalk.

I later learned that the climber's ambitions need curbing. Now I pinch the tendrils off! I do it again and again. My wife says I am cruel. Poor things, when they are so ambitious to get on and up in the world, to find all their worthiest efforts rewarded with a pinch! Ah, but they are thus strengthened in their roots, and they spread out and multiply their aspirations.

This has its analogy even among plants of the heavenly Father's planting. Some of them show a tendency

to climb in other than a spiritual sense. I have known ministerial climbers. They were ambitious to get up where they could be seen. Some I have seen spring up like Jonah's gourd. Some of them become all stalk, or, rather, all talk. No depth of earth, no breadth of covering—neither useful nor ornamental. Such climbers need *pinching*. It may seem cruel to cut him down, but only thus can he ever make full proof of his ministry.

There is a theology which assumes the garden of the Lord should be planted exclusively with climbers. They are ambitious to be sky-scrapers, or sky-gazers at any rate. They climb on a trellis of dispensations. The solid doctrines of grace with all their implications of duty in holy living, and Christian service, they appraise as of lesser value. The main thing is to climb! And while they climb the ground is without flowers, and the tender grass has withered for want of care.

The true pastor must exercise a pinching ministry. He must so teach that men will learn that the heirs of glory know how to sublime the common things of life to holy uses. I have in my garden some legitimate climbers. They were rather of the earth, earthy, for three or four years. During that time they became established, rooted, and grounded—then they began to climb in earnest. But they created a problem. That was to provide them something to climb on. They climbed so rapidly that they twined themselves around the wrong supports. Then—tardy in my ministry, I tried to give them the proper ladder to climb. I gently and tenderly untwined them, and thus endeavoured to transfer their affections. But they did not like it. Some of them refused to climb at all. They had been bruised by the untwining! I hope I was not in this matter "void of understanding." I am now trying to anticipate the direction of their ambitions and to provide them worthy standards.

That is the principle of the first psalm. There is a negative element in spiritual blessedness: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor"—? It is always hazardous to attempt to transfer the affections of men. Hence Christians should not be "unequally yoked with unbelievers." "Set not your affections on things on the earth, but"—. "Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness." The Divine Gardener is never behindhand with His trellis.

But the voices of my garden call, and every plant and shrub and flower wants to preach me a sermon. What shall I do? "Behold how large a letter I have written with my own hand", after all. I am afraid I have disobeyed orders. But please don't tell my doctor—but Green Fingers has this to say of "Flowers of the Mind":

*"Last winter when I was in bed with the 'Flu  
And a temperature of a hundred and two,  
I was telling the gardener what he should do.*

"You must keep the *Neurosis* well watered, I said. Be certain to weed the *Anaemia* bed. That yellow *Myopia* is getting too tall, Tie up the *Lumbago* that grows on the wall. Those scarlet *Convulsions* are quite a disgrace, They're like the *Deliriums*—all over the place. The pink *Pyorrhoea* is covered with blight, That golden *Arthritis* has died in the night. Those little dwarf *Asthmas* are nearly in bloom—

*But just then the doctor came into the room."*

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

**AVOCA**—Student-pastor E. A. MacAsh. This is a summer field, and it takes a little time each year to get things in full swing. "Last Wednesday" (June 2nd), writes Mr. MacAsh, "I started a weekly meeting across the river among some neglected folk. We held the first service in one home, and next Wednesday it will be in another house. Last Wednesday there were about eighteen present, and I spoke on the love of God. One young chap was there who interested me. I had talked to him on the roadside one day about the things of Christ, and he turned up at this meeting. I asked him why he came. He replied that he just wanted to, although he denies that he is a Christian.

"I have asked the trustees across the river if I may hold Sunday school for the children in the morning. Last week I obtained permission from the owner of the dance hall in Belle Falls to hold a Tuesday night meeting in that place. They tell me both Mr. Dinnick and Mr. Carson held services on Sunday afternoon when they were here. I am hoping that a mid-week gospel service may be better." The building where services have been held in Avoca each previous year has now been converted into a house and is occupied, so they are endeavouring to secure the school house which is in a good location, and to which people will more readily come.

**GERALDTON**—Pastor G. B. Hicks. "We greatly need the prayer help of God's saints in the laying of the foundation here," writes Mr. Hicks, and for the information of all interested, we publish further news of the work there.

"Thursday afternoon I cycled out to Hard Rock Mine, passing McLeod C. Mine on the journey. There are no homes about the McLeod mine, and only five or six at Hard Rock. These I visited and gave an invitation to our services and left a word and a tract with them. I think it will be possible to hold a meeting in the bunk house or cookery at some of these mines where there are no homes. Mr. Slade called at most of the homes in town, at Little Long Lac, a mile south of here, and at Bankfield, eleven miles distant. I am going to call at the other places first and then cover the ground Mr. Slade did later.

"Only two mines are producing as yet, Little Long Lac, and Bankfield. The latter is pouring the first gold next Saturday, when one hundred and fifty guests from Toronto and other places will be present to 'worship the golden calf'. Geraldton is the centre for all these mines and is growing fast. Last year there was hardly a building south of the track. I am told that it is about twice as large now as it was a year ago. New buildings are being erected constantly.

"Our services in town are held in the Presbyterian Church, but I feel the sooner we can get another meeting place the better it will be for the work. Where to go is the problem. Join us in prayer about this. Mr. Campbell says he believes a number of the men would help build if we put up a building and provided the material. It seems early to consider building, but by God's blessing it will come to that.

"Friday we had our children's meeting, my first, and the second held. We had good singing, scripture memorizing, and a lantern lecture. Saturday evening the second open air service was held near the station. The train was late, and so the people were there in full force doing nothing but wait for it. Last week Mr. Slade and I started these services, but this week I was alone." Though somewhat nervous, Mr. Hicks says the Lord gave him a "glorious time". "After the service I passed out tracts to all those standing about. Most of them took them, many thanked me for them, and one man said, 'That's what we need'. I handed a tract to one young man, asking, 'Would you like some good reading material?' He said with a discouraged tone and look, 'I want something good.' He had looked in vain for a job and was blue. I was able to give a good word to him, and the tract, 'What is Good News to the man who feels himself lost?' May God bless it to the salvation of his soul.

"Satan provides opposition here as everywhere. They have started Sunday afternoon ball games at the mines, and here. They had a Sunday night concert to raise money for fire fighting equipment. The theatre gave their show house for the concert, and then held a midnight show. Sunday work is a common thing here."

(Continued on page 8)



## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1      2nd Quarter      Lesson 26      June 27, 1937

DR. OLIVE L. CLARK

### THE GIFT OF GRACE AND THE REWARD OF WORKS

Lesson Text: I. Cor. 3:9-15; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3.

Golden Text: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—Eph. 2: 10.

#### I. Saved by Grace but Reward Lost.—I. Cor. 3:9-15.

Since the illustration of the lesson is that of a building, teachers might discuss with the scholars the erection of a house, office, or public building, which they have seen in the course of construction. Bring out the essential qualities of strength and endurance. Instances of the destruction of buildings by fire would serve also as a point of contact.

The commencement and progress of the Christian life are here compared to the foundation and superstructure of a building.

As to the foundation, the only building which will stand the storm and flood is that which is founded on a rock (Matt. 7: 24-27). The only life which can endure the strain and stress of this world, and the judgment of the next world, is that which is founded on Christ, the Rock of Ages (v. 11). That foundation is laid by God Himself by sovereign grace (Isa. 28:16) on the basis of faith. His servants, as "labourers together with God" may be the human instruments, they may be master-builders, but God alone is the Creator of new life. The beginning of the Christian life is by regeneration, solely a Divine work, not by reformation which man might accomplish. Salvation is the free gift of God to all who put their trust in Christ (John 4:10; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 3:24); it is not of works (2 Tim. 1:9). To believe on Christ is the only "work" on the part of the unsaved which will be acceptable (John 6:29), and this cannot be done apart from the Holy Spirit.

"The church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word:  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died."

Once the foundation is "well and truly laid", the superstructure must be built to stand the test of fire. The advertising slogan of a building company, "Do not build to burn", should be the motto of every Christian. Each individual must take heed how he builds; that is, the methods he uses, and the materials—whether gold, silver and precious stones, which are refined by fire; or wood, hay and stubble, which are consumed by flames. "The image becomes much more vivid, if we remember the contrasted buildings of an ancient city—the sumptuous edifices of granite and marble, with ornaments of gold and silver, on the one hand, and the hovels of the poor on the other, with walls of wood and roof of thatch, and interstices stuffed with straw."—(Conybeare and Howson in "Life and Epistles of St. Paul").

Note that it is the building itself which is subjected to the test of fire, not the foundation, the implication being that the believer will not be judged for his sins once they have been laid on Christ (John 5:24), but he will be judged for his Christian service from the day he was saved (2 Cor. 5:9, 10; Rom. 14:10-12).

"The day" (verse 13), when the deeds, words and thoughts of the believer will be made manifest, will be when the Lord comes (1. Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12; Matt. 16:27; 2 Tim. 4:8). The Master will call His servants to give an account of their stewardship (Matt. 25:19).

Our safety depends on the work of Christ, our reward upon our own service (verses 14 and 15). The works which will abide (John 15:16), which will remain firm in the great test, are those performed through the Holy Spirit by the one abiding in Christ and obeying His commandments, whether they be simple tasks like giving a cup of cold water to a disciple (Matt. 10:42), or whether they be greater in the

eyes of the world. Whatever is done to the glory of God will be rewarded. How encouraging to think that God will find something to praise in every life yielded to Him (I. Cor. 4:5)!

Crowns will be given to those who attain in the Christian race (1 Cor. 9:24, 25), to those who feed the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:4), to those who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:7, 8), to those enduring temptation (Jas. 1:12), and to those who are faithful to the end (Rev. 2:10). The promise of reward encourages the saints, but the greatest recompense will be to hear the Saviour say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21). We serve Him because we love Him.

The solemn warning is given that there may be some who shall suffer loss, instead of gaining a reward. This is not the loss of salvation, for the Word distinctly states that "he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire".

#### II. Saved by Grace Unto Good Works.—Eph. 2:8-10.

Since all men were under condemnation through sin, it was by the grace of God alone that the plan of redemption was prepared and executed. Though they be undeserving, He extends mercy to those who will trust Him (verses 4, 5, 7, 8), and grants them pardon as a free gift (Rom. 4: 4, 5; 11:6). Since all men are guilty before God (Gal. 3:22; Rom. 11:32; Rom. 3: 22, 23), all men are on the same plane, and there is no room for boasting (Rom. 3:27). Had we been saved by works, some would have claimed superiority, but now, no one has anything to show as ground for boasting. God must have all the glory. He alone can perform the work of regeneration (2 Cor. 5:17); all alike have been "created in Christ Jesus" on the basis of faith (Rom. 4:16) in His shed blood.

While not saved by good works, we have been saved unto good works. The doctrines of salvation by the gift of God and rewards according to the merit of man are not contradictory, but complementary. Works have their proper place. Though justified before God by faith, apart from works (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16), a man is justified before men by the works which prove his faith (James 2:14-26). These truths are illustrated in the New Testament by references to two events in the life of Abraham (Gen. 15: 5, 6; Rom. 4: 1-4, 13-22; Gen. 22:1-14; Jas. 2:21-26). See also the sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields, *The Perils of Orthodoxy*, in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, of June 10, 1937.

#### III. Saved by Grace and Maintaining Good Works.—Titus 3.

Faith and works go hand in hand; what a man believes determines, in large measure, what he does. The one without trust in God lives selfishly and sinfully (verses 2, 3), while the one who believes in God is exhorted to manifest his faith by being ready to perform every good work (verse 1).

"The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man" appeared when Christ came on earth (John 1:18), but especially when He died on behalf of sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8). The debt being paid, God saves men, not on the ground of their own righteousness, but on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. It is possible now for God to be just, and also merciful.

Washing with water is a means of purification, and the "washing of regeneration" is a figure used to denote the fact that when God pardons sin, he also removes it from the sinner, cleansing him from all defilement (1 John 1: 7, 9). All this takes place when one is born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5), spoken of here as "the renewal of the Holy Ghost". Salvation, justification, and sanctification, are all due to the grace of God.

But those who have believed must not "continue in sin that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1); they must be careful to maintain good works (v. 8; Titus 2:11-14), for the sake of their testimony before men.

Are you making memos of things to be attended to before you go on vacation? Please add this one: "Remember to send a gift to the Seminary and Gospel Witness Funds."

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

(Continued from page 6)

**OTTAWA-MONTREAL ASSOCIATION.** The Association of the Ottawa-Montreal district had two days of rich fellowship together in the Sawyerville Baptist Church. The people made ample provision for all our needs in their homes, the dining room, and church. The reports of Sunday schools and Young People's Societies all show improvement, and the various churches report a healthy growth and salvation of souls in many cases. Rev. T. J. Mitchell of Verdun was our guest speaker and brought us splendid messages of inspiration and blessing. The meetings were all of a prayerful nature, the burden being for revival. The conviction of all was that the churches are ripe for a special effort. I believe the greatest step was taken to that end when it was decided to purchase a tent and use it in many places where lack of a building is a great drawback. Many pastors expressed their ability to use such a tent during the summer months, and our laymen were whole-heartedly behind the plan. To this end we have established a fund for the Gospel Tent, and trust that interested friends will help us in this enterprise for the Lord Jesus Christ, that up and down the Ottawa Valley a strong evangelical programme may be pushed to the fore this summer.

At the election of officers, Rev. W. L. Hisey was elected Moderator, and Mr. S. Goldsworthy, Vice-Moderator.

**MEDINA**—Rev. M. Henry. On Sunday, May 30th, ten followed in obedience to the Lord's command to be baptized. The regular service followed the baptismal service, and one, a daughter of a lady who was baptized, came forward in response to the invitation.

Sunday, June 6th, the church held the tenth anniversary of Mr. Henry's ministry in Medina. The building was too small to accommodate those gathered. Many friends came from U.S.A. and brought greetings from their church. It was a day of happy fellowship, and stirring messages came from the guest speakers. An Indian Choir from Tonawanda Indian Reservation, situated thirty miles east of Buffalo, N.Y., was one of the main features of the afternoon.

## PAYNIGHT IN A MINING TOWN

Paynight in a mining town is a sight long to be remembered by visitors from the more staid parts of Southern Ontario. And one night last week it was paynight in Kirkland Lake. Up and down the main street there was scarcely space to walk, and the roadways were choked with cars parked in every conceivable inch of space, or slowly making their way along the busy thoroughfare. And they were not cheap cars, nor of ancient models, but the newest and the smartest that money can buy. The streets were filled with young men and young women, for this is a young man's country, all dressed in the latest styles that gave the long procession the air of a fashion parade on the boardwalk. All were gay and laughing, all of them going to spend their paycheck, some in the hotels—alas too many—many of them searching for amusement in the palatial "movie" theatres, many others were doing the week's shopping for their family. One notices here that many of the faces are foreign in appearance: Polish, Ukrainian, and other Slavic races, are numerous, together with men and women from almost every quarter of the globe. Occasionally one sees a sign written in French, and that language is commonly heard on the street. Altogether this is a cosmopolitan city, and the one common attraction is the gold that is hidden deep down in the rock, thousands of feet below these busy sidewalks and roadways.

But at the other end of this splendid main street, a street comparable to the best sections of Danforth Avenue or St. Clair Avenue in Toronto, a large tent was erected between the band stand and the Arena, and it was open for business for the first time on paynight. "Is this where you see the monkeys", more than one boy had come asking through the day, for apparently a Gospel Tent is more than a rarity in Kirkland Lake: it is a down-right curiosity for young and old alike. We began with a handful of the faithful, but as the interest in shopping waned, others came in to see and to hear, attracted by the sound of the portable organ and our singing. The next night almost doubled our attendance. We have found that the best way of filling the tent is to stand at the sidewalk with an invitation card ready for all who pause to ask of themselves or of whomever can answer their ques-

tion, "Who is next? What are they doing?" A cordial smile, a word of explanation, the invitation card, and one is almost certain that they will enter. And as more come into the tent so the preacher inside waxes louder and longer, somewhat to the enjoyment of the official "glad-hand" committee on the outside. One night so many came in that the sermon was doubled in length by means of several new texts and one or two "universal couplers". There is no greater inspiration for a preacher of the Gospel than to see these fine looking young men come into the tent to hear the message, some of them for the first time, some, perhaps, for the last; but others, we pray, will come again and by the grace of the Spirit of the living God be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of us are now engaged in going from door to door with a personal invitation to every home in this city with its population of 22,000 and, where the opportunity presents itself, a testimony to the Gospel. We had a great meeting on the street-corner the first night we came to town. Many stopped just long enough to ascertain whether we were "Reds" or not, and then went on disappointed that we were not proclaiming some new political panacea that promised to cure all the ills of the world overnight, without touching men's hearts. Others passed by as soon as they had heard enough to know that it was a religious meeting. But even in Kirkland Lake there are those who love the sound of the Gospel and together with the curious and the enquiring we had a good street corner gathering. Many attended the church services on Sunday through this meeting.

Pastor Cunningham has accomplished much in his short stay here, and there is a good nucleus of believers who have gathered around the standard set up for the proclamation of the Good News of Salvation. One of the most effective instruments in this work is the radio station that broadcasts the Sunday evening service. Almost everyone listens to this weekly service. We who have gone from door to door, estimate that seventy-five per cent. of the people to whom we have spoken hear the service more or less regularly, many of them Catholics or non-church goers. The friends in Southern Ontario who have undertaken to pay for these broadcasts are making an investment of their funds for the Kingdom of God that is one of the most profitable and far-reaching in this pioneer work in the North.

The men who have undertaken the work of the tent campaign are confident that they have many faithful helpers throughout the churches of our Union and elsewhere, who are striving together with us in prayer; for difficulties, obstacles, barriers, and hindrances of all sorts have abounded in the matter of getting a suitable location for the tent on the main street, on getting benches for seating, in obtaining electric power and so on without number. But "the Lord hath delivered us out of them all" and we are confident that in a special way His hand has been in all these things. "Brethren pray for us!"—W. S. W.

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