

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE HOPE LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 1st, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."—Colossians 1:5.

The Word of God is truth in the absolute. It contains the very essence of truth—let me rather say, it is the essence of truth. We are forbidden to take from it, or to add to it. Those of you who have studied it, must have marvelled often at its condensation. How much is often packed into a few words! Our text is composed of twenty-three words, most of them monosyllables.

When I was younger, I used to use words of several syllables—because I did not know any better. I once sent a package of manuscripts to my father, who was a minister, for his criticism. When I received them back, they were marked all over, and all my Latinized English was spoiled, and my polysyllabic sentences were mangled, for the reason that all the words of many syllables were crossed out and words of two or three letters, simple Saxon words, were written in the margin as substitutes for my "big" ones, with the simple enquiry, "Why not this?"

That is how the Bible speaks—twenty-three words, all but three or four of them monosyllables; and yet we have within this verse clearly stated the whole purpose and scope of the gospel of grace.

Paul tells us exactly what the gospel is. "Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." What had they heard? They had been informed of "the hope that was laid up for them in heaven." Whatever that may mean, that is what the gospel is for, to tell us of "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven".

That is scarcely consonant with the modern conception of the gospel. In the view of many, the gospel is a kind of curative, economic system which concerns itself with the reform of human circumstances rather than with the regeneration of human nature. So general indeed is that view, and that form of emphasis, that the modern pulpit has almost ceased to recognize that there

is a future life, either for weal or for woe. At all events little is said about either heaven or hell, or about a future at all.

I know of a denominational college which was founded, and still exists, to train men for the ministry, in which there is a professor who is called the Professor of Religious Knowledge, who by his own frank admission is agnostic in respect to the existence of a personal God, and of a future life. An agnostic is a man who does not know. Dr. Joseph Parker once defined agnosticism as being "know-nothingism". He does not positively deny: he says, "I do not know; I have no conviction on the subject, no knowledge of it." This Professor of Religious Knowledge says openly that he does not know whether there is a personal God or not. Nor does he know whether or not there is a future life. I will not tell you what college that is: it is enough to say that it is a good deal less than a hundred miles from where I now stand.

When young ministers are so taught, what wonder is it that the pulpit should lose its perspective, and, at the same time, its power? I do not wonder that churches should close during August under these conditions. I think churches whose pulpits give such a doubtful message might just as well be closed twelve months of the year.

But this word says that the purpose of the gospel is to inform us respecting a "hope which is laid up for (us) in heaven". What does that mean? Does it mean that the gospel is designed to give information to prospective travellers, to point the way to that "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns"? If that were the only function of the gospel, it would not be without usefulness certainly. Is the gospel designed to tell us how to set our minds upon another world than this? Does it teach us to sing:

"There is a land mine eyes have seen
In visions of enraptured thought,
So bright that all that spreads between
Is with its radiant glory fraught.

"A land upon whose blissful shore
There rests no shadow, falls no stain,
Where those who meet shall part no more,
And those long parted meet again.

"There sweeps no desolating wind
Across that calm, serene abode;
The wanderer there a home may find
Within the paradise of God."

It were worth while to be able to sing of a land like that. If that were the whole purpose of the gospel, it would not be in vain; for, after all, it must be self-evident that we have no continuing city here; and that we shall have to find a place to which we may go when perforce we put off this earthly house of our tabernacle.

But that is not what our text primarily speaks of. It is comprehended in it, of course; but the gospel is far bigger than that. The gospel is much more than news of a city where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain—although it includes such news. What is this "hope which is laid up for (us) in heaven"? Will you think with me as I ask two questions: *What is this hope here referred to? And, How is it "laid up for (us) in heaven"?*

I.

WHAT IS THE HOPE HERE REFERRED TO?

What do we mean by *hope*? Sometimes it is necessary to redeem a word from unfortunate associations; sometimes words change their meaning, even as people change their appearance and spirit, by the company they keep. The word "hope" upon our tongue has a much weaker significance than is intended in our text. The word "hope" is not obsolete, or even archaic. It is still in the dictionary, and still employed in current speech. But quite frequently we speak of it as though we intended to define something that is scarcely probable, but barely possible. We do not like to say that the thing is entirely beyond our reach, or the possibility of our experience. We *hope* that it is within range.

As for example, in the proverbial saying, "While there is life, there is hope"—not much perhaps, but just a little. That is not the sense in which the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle Paul, employs the term here. Paul said to his judges, "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." By which he did not mean that, "I have an idea there may be a resurrection of the dead." That word on his lips had in it an element of confidence, of expectation, of certainty. He said, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers." By which he did not mean that the promise of God was like someone's promissory note that is put away in a desk—not locked up in a safe, of which the man says, "I may as well keep this. I may get something out of it. I hope I shall." When Paul spoke of the "hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers", he did not mean that he was doubtful of its fulfilment: he meant the very opposite. As a matter of fact, hope, in this sense, and in this text, involves a summary of all that the gospel promises and proclaims.

When admonished to take unto ourselves the whole armor of God, we are told to put on for an helmet "the hope of salvation"—and that is better than a British soldier's "tin hat". It provides a great deal better pro-

tection. We are to wait, through the Spirit, for the "hope of righteousness". And when Paul speaks of the hope that is laid up for us in heaven, he means everything that God has promised us in the gospel, something that is secure.

Mr. Whitcombe read to us this evening a very striking passage in the sixth chapter of Hebrews, where this word, I think, is scripturally defined. Paul said to those to whom he wrote, "We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." "The full assurance of hope"! Elsewhere he speaks of God as "the God of hope", and prayed that we may "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost". The Christian is to be full of hope and confidence, abounding in hope. Paul says that he was an apostle who lived "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised." In this letter to the Hebrews the writer refers to the time when God made promise to Abraham: "Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

I have given you Scripture. It is very important that preachers should allow the Scripture to speak for itself. If people would only read the Word of God, and read it again, and read it again—and let the Bible speak for itself—what comfort of the Scriptures we should receive! "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." Which means that when a man makes an affirmation, and swears to the truth of it, it is looked upon as the nearest approximation to truth that the human mind can reach. Hence the witness in the witness-box is sworn to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". The evidence that is given under oath forms the basis of the court's judgment. It is assumed to be the truth. To swear to that which is false is one of the greatest of crimes. We call it perjury. Well, so much for the sworn testimony of men.

But "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." As though He would say, "I would not have you entertain my promises doubtfully. I would not have you to put a question-mark after anything I say. I condescend therefore to the limitations of your understanding, and to your natural, doubting disposition. Therefore I give to the heirs of promise my own immutable word."

That ought to be enough. There are men of whose moral integrity we have no question. There are men with whom you have been associated in various ways for years, whom you would not insult by asking to swear to anything. Save as it may be related to somebody else, you would not even ask for their signature. Talk about "a gentleman's agreement"! You say, "The man promised me; that is enough." "But," someone says, "people do not always keep their promises." You reply, "I know they do not, but he does. I believe him." It is a great tribute to any man when it can be said of him that his word is as good as his bond. God says, "I want you to see how unchangeable, how immutable, my word is; but that I may show it unto you more abundantly, I will confirm My word with an oath." You ought not to ask it of Him. No mortal man ought to ask God to swear. It ought to be enough for Him to speak. We ought to be able to rest our souls upon it, and stake all the interests of life, for time and for eternity, upon the un-

supported word of "God who cannot lie," Who, in the very nature of the case, is Himself *the* truth.

And yet He says, "I will leave them without excuse. I will the more abundantly show the immutability of my counsel, because I will interpose Myself, I will mediate this word through an oath. There is nobody greater than I, and because there is none greater, I will swear by Myself that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, they may have a strong consolation."

What are the "two immutable things"? First, the simple word of God that cannot lie; and, secondly, that simple word confirmed by the oath of the same God—"that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation." Hear, ye doubters! Men and women who question the word of God, hear it: "That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge."

Do you need a refuge, like a ship in a storm, when some mighty Euroclydon breaks upon it, and the wind sweeps over the deep, and the waves rise mountain-high? The mariner longs and looks for a harbour of refuge. He eagerly peers through the mist in hope of seeing a light which will guide him to a place of safety.

That is the figure. The Lord says, "I have provided a harbour for the storm-tossed souls of men, that they may have strong consolation, and may flee for refuge"—for refuge? Yes, hear it—"to lay hold upon the hope set before us." What is that hope? The hope of the gospel from which we are not to be moved is something that is assured to us—and secured to us—by the oath-bound promises of "God that cannot lie".

How I wish all the Lord's people could be sure of their salvation! May the Lord help me to speak a word that will burn its way into your hearts! "That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." That is another way of saying that God, designing that we should believe in Him, gave us a foundation for faith to stand upon, as though He had said, "I will make the man who doubts my words to stand absolutely without excuse in the day of judgment. I will show more abundantly to the heirs of promise that the one immutable, settled thing in the universe is the promise of the gospel.

II.

Very well then, what does it mean when it says that that hope is "laid up for (us) in heaven"? In what sense is that true? HOW WAS THAT HOPE LAID UP FOR US IN HEAVEN? Let me continue my quotation. You see the figure of the ship beating its way to the harbour-refuge to lay hold of the hope, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul". Did you ever see an anchor, a real anchor—not one of those little things you throw into the water to hold a row-boat, but one weighing tons, that holds a mighty vessel, one link of the chain of which is so great, so heavy, there never lived a man who could lift a single link? The ship lies there upon the water. Water is an unstable element; the tide ebbs and flows; the wind blows, and whatever is upon its surface drifts with the wind. There are many professing Christians who are drifters, who are driven about with every wind of doctrine. They are not anchored. They have neither stability of character, nor consistency of conduct.

The mighty ship comes into the harbour, and the

order is given, to lower the anchor; and you hear the rattle of the great chains as the anchor is let down. I love to see it as out of sight it goes, down, down, down into the depths. The chain continues to unwind until the anchor reaches bottom and lays hold of something firm, "lays hold" upon something that will not move. Now the wind may blow, but the ship keeps its place because the anchor holds. It eases about a little, but retains the same general position. That is the figure we have here: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." The believer is anchored. We are like the ship upon the sea: we live in an element of change. Everything is unstable about us. But the anchor lays hold of something that is of a different quality altogether, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." That ought to be enough, but that is not the whole gospel. Where does the anchor find anchorage? "And which entereth into that within the veil." The anchor drops, and sinks down into the depths where I cannot see it; it is veiled from my view—but it holds; my ship is secure. So this hope of the gospel, the oath-bound promise of God, enters as an anchor into that within the veil, anchoring Somewhere and in Something that does not change.

I wonder may we ask, What is within the veil that secures salvation beyond all possibility of doubt to this poor sinner? This is the answer: "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." The figure changes. What is there within the veil? Jesus! The Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus "who is our hope". What is the sum and substance of the gospel? Jesus Christ. What has He promised us in Christ? All there is of God. "In him all things consist." If you have Christ, "all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Salvation is more than heaven, vastly more. Heaven is incidental to the promise.

"Whither the forerunner is for us entered." Someone has run before. I am not sure the figure is wholly changed. Did you ever see, as a ship comes into dock, a man on the dock running along? A man on deck throws a line, and he catches it, and runs along with it until by and by he comes to the snubbing post, and then he pulls in his leading line and lifts the great hawser and drops it over. Thus the one on shore secures the ship. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered."

The greatest Discoverer the world has ever known was the Lord Jesus. He "devised means that his banished be not expelled from him"; He found a way whereby man could come back to God; and having taken upon Himself our nature He Himself became our Forerunner. John the Baptist was a forerunner, saying, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear—I am a voice crying in the wilderness, the forerunner telling of the coming of the Son of God from heaven to earth." The Lord Jesus reverses the order, as though He would say to John, "John, you told the world that the Son of God was coming to earth. I will go back and tell my Father that a multitude are coming to heaven. I will be their Forerunner, I will be there before them." He returned to the Father—"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Or this, "Blessed

be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

The Forerunner is entered. That is my assurance. Jesus Christ said, "Where I am, there ye shall be also"; "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." The Forerunner has entered, and He is our hope. The Word Who was made flesh, the Sum of all that God has ever promised, has entered into heaven as our Forerunner and Representative.

I take you now to another scripture which says that He is "not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others." He has carried His blood, the atoning blood, into heaven itself; and that is the assurance, the guarantee, that some day we shall be there, and be without fault before the throne of God. For our Forerunner is our High Priest for ever.

He is Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life", but abiding a Priest continually. Jesus Christ is in heaven itself. He is the Hope that is laid up for us in heaven.

What is salvation? "Christ in you the hope of glory." What is salvation? Christ in the glory, "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." That poor mad man in Germany is going to put an end to Christianity! He has imprisoned a number of preachers! That plan is an old one and has been tried from the beginning. They tried it in Peter's day, and in Paul's day. Said Paul, "For the hope of Israel I am bound with these chains." But the chains snapped, and the Hope remained. If it were possible to get the ear of such a mad-man, I would say to him, "You are too late." "Why am I too late?" "Because Jesus Christ is my hope." "But I will make an end of it." "No, you will not. You can not. My Hope is laid up in heaven for me. And that is far beyond your reach—beyond the reach of Satan himself."

Do you know you are saved? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you barely expecting to get to heaven "by the skin of your teeth", or are you sure of it? Can you feel the tug of that anchor that is both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil? No storm that can blow upon the human soul can break that cable, or loose that anchor. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Once again, Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee for the truth of Thy Word. We thank Thee that Thou hast delivered us from the bondage of fear, so that we no longer need fear the loss of our souls, help us by Thy grace that we may use that assurance of eternal security wisely. Being saved ourselves, help us to proclaim this everlasting gospel that others may share this everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

TALKING IN CHURCH

Some years ago, while on holiday, we found ourselves in an American city in the daylight hours of Sunday, and attended evening service in a certain widely-known Baptist church that was often linked with the name of one of America's richest men because he was a member of that church. We arrived early, perhaps nearly half an hour before service began, and from then until the service began people continued to come.

It was summer time, and even at the time of opening the congregation was not large; but as the people arrived before the time of service they "visited" from pew to pew, and for fifteen or twenty minutes before the service hour, the house resembled a cage of magpies. Talking was indulged in everywhere—sometimes in a hoarse whisper, and sometimes the people spoke quite loudly. As for instance, "Oh, there is Mrs. So-and-So, let's go over and see her." And so they "visited" from one side of the church to the other. There was no quiet, no repose, no reverence.

The service which followed was most helpful, and we listened to a fine sermon on Rahab who bound the scarlet cord in the window; but we should have enjoyed it very much more if we had been permitted to wait in quiet, with opportunity for prayer and meditation.

Unfortunately the habit of talking in church is not confined to the church to which we have referred. Nor is it peculiar to irreligious people. Nor does it always indicate an irreligious spirit. We have known some very devout people develop this very bad habit. We remember attending a church, as a boy, on the wall of which, behind the pulpit, this text was beautifully painted, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." In another church we remember to have seen the text, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." And in still another, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion." And praise should wait for the Lord, not idle chatter.

In August, 1915, we were in London, and received an invitation to attend the great service in St. Paul's Cathedral commemorating the first year of the war. (It was twenty-two years ago this very day—August fourth.) Countless multitudes assembled in the streets from before dawn, and all the approaches to St. Paul's Cathedral were lined with vast crowds of people. The Cathedral itself, of course, was filled in every part.

Ticket-holders were required to be in their place a considerable time in advance of the hour of service, so that the vast building was crowded long before the service began. The crowd included the British Cabinet, with probably nearly all the members of Parliament, as well as a great array of high officers both of the army and the navy, with representatives from all the Dominions, and all the Ambassadors of the Allied Powers. But there was no talking during that hour. Profound silence reigned in the great building. It was, indeed, as quiet as if it had been empty. Thus the people waited in expectation until a very few minutes before the service time, the approach of their Majesties the King and Queen was heard from without, and as they entered the great congregation stood in absolute silence. Ought it not to be so always in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the King of kings?

We pass this word on to all our readers, and particularly to all members of Jarvis Street Church. We

have not much of it—but we have too much. Let husbands and wives, and other friends, do their talking before they come to church. Come early, but sit in quiet, in reverent silence indeed, taking time prayerfully to prepare the mind for the service which is to follow. It should be regarded as just as ill-mannered for people to speak to each other in church before the service—and especially while the service is in progress—as for a man to enter the house of the Lord with head covered, or for a woman to come with her head uncovered. Let us be reverent in the place of worship, and let praise literally wait for God in Zion.

THE FRUITS OF THE VALLEY

There is no greater pleasure to the Christian than that experienced when he has gone "down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded". The fruits of the valley may not bring a larger return for time and labour expended than do other forms of investment, but there is a vital quality about the fruits of the garden that is entirely lacking in the operation of clipping coupons or cashing dividend cheques. It is one's self, not merely one's enemy, that is invested in the garden, and the products are not dead, inorganic things, but the increase of life, and hence arises the loving joy of the gardener when it is given to him to see the fruits of the valley. It is this joy that that great worker who worked in the garden of the Lord, the Apostle Paul, had in mind when he wrote to those who, through his Gospel, had turned from idols to serve the living and true God, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. For ye are our glory and joy." A little time spent in meditating upon the great things the Lord has done for us and through us, as a Union, will be in accordance with the principles of Scripture, and will encourage us to follow out another important rule of gardening laid down for us in the Manual: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Many of the regular readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS will experience something of the joy mentioned by the Apostle, in learning of blessing in the new causes in the North; for it was in response to an article appearing in these pages just about a year ago that the necessary money was obtained to open up the work at Kirkland Lake. Since that time, four new causes have been started in this Northern country, and we invite all who, through prayers and contributions, have had a share in preparing the soil and scattering the seed, to come down into the garden and rejoice in the fruits of the valley.

In Kirkland Lake a group of consecrated, praying people have been welded together under the able leadership of Pastor Cunningham, and the unsearchable riches of Christ have been faithfully proclaimed by every available means: through the regular Sunday evening services, which have been broadcast by the radio, through street-corner meetings, and in the Sunday School, and by means of the recent Tent meetings. In addition to this, the town has been canvassed twice from door to door—no inconsiderable task when one remembers that it has a population of over twenty thousand.

The workers with the gospel tent are now in Val d'Or assisting Pastor McGrath. The meeting place used for the regular Sunday evening service is at other times used as a beer-parlour and dance-hall combined, the dance beginning shortly after the close of the gospel service. On the Sunday evening when it was the writer's privilege to preach there, the Pastor was forced to request a number of men who were drinking beer to retire into the next room so that we could begin the service. That night the preacher slept in a bed-room separated from a beer-parlour by the thinnest of partitions and was obliged to listen from Midnight, Sunday, until 2 o'clock Monday morning, to the vile language and ribald songs of half-intoxicated men and women. And this in what is said to be the best boarding-house in town. The worst must be terrible! The total population of the combined towns of Val d'Or and Bourlamaque must be close to seven thousand and is rapidly increasing, but thus far there is only one small Protestant Church building. Here is a pioneer missionary field indeed, and Pastor McGrath, who is well acquainted with mines and mining towns, is most hopeful of the future.

From Val d'Or to Kapuskasing is 260 miles by bus and train, a journey of some twelve hours, and the contrast between the two towns is striking. The former is a mining town in the "gold rush" stage, a confusion of wooden shacks and buildings thrown up promiscuously in the greatest haste, with feverish activity on every hand. Kapuskasing, on the other hand, has a number of large, well built, public buildings, hospital, schools, hotels and magnificent homes, and the whole layout of the town is carefully planned to the minutest detail. The town is dominated by a huge \$40,000,000 paper mill, with its mountainous piles of spruce logs. But the Gospel of the grace of God is needed here, too. A year ago, Mr. Slade of Timmins found a Christian father and mother in this place, attending churches that preached nothing more than the humanistic gospel of respectability, yet longing for the sound of that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. A few weeks ago, the writer had the privilege of addressing a prayer meeting there in which a number of believers took part, some of whom have been converted during the past year through the ministries of Brothers Slade and Brackstone. This loyal group of people are now looking forward to the purchase of a lot, with a view to having their own buildings.

From Kapuskasing to Sudbury is slightly more than four hundred miles by railroad, and again the difference is amazing, for Sudbury is a well-built city of more than thirty thousand inhabitants. GOSPEL WITNESS readers are already acquainted with the story of how Mr. Boyd went into Sudbury some fourteen months ago with no more support than the promise of a room from a family formerly of Jarvis Street Church. In that short space of time, he has gathered together a number of well-taught Christian people who have become weary of the shallowness of the preaching they have been forced to listen to in churches that have lost their distinctively Scriptural message. Through his indefatigable efforts in house-to-house visitation and in preaching on the street corners, Mr. Boyd has sounded out the word of the Gospel in true Apostolic fashion, not only in Sudbury itself, but in Black Lake, a suburb of the town, where he has a second preaching service after the regular evening service; and in Copper Cliff also, another nearby town, where he has held an open-air

Sunday School for the large Italian community. In addition to all this, he recently commenced another Sunday School and preaching appointment at a mining town some forty miles away. This last school-year, Mr. Boyd managed to carry the Sudbury work and to attend some of the classes at the Seminary as well. This brother believes that the Lord gave him his broad shoulders and strong back for bearing burdens, and our readers will continue to pray that, both to him and to his summer assistant, Mr. Walter Thompkins of the Seminary, will be given grace upon grace for this glorious work. The number of young men, many of whom have been converted or restored during the last year, is especially encouraging in this place.

The latest field to be entered is situated at Geraldton in the centre of Ontario's most recently developed mining district, North of Lake Superior. THE GOSPEL WITNESS again made the first point of contact, this was followed up by several Seminary students, and now a graduate of last year is being partially supported by the Union. This work is not more than three months old, and much prayer is needed for Pastor George Hicks as he goes about the pioneer labour in this needy district.

Only a little has been said in this article about the possibilities of missionary work in the North, since this is intended to be a review of the fruit given us this year, though it is the great future of the work with which the writer finds his mind filled after a trip of some fifteen hundred miles in the North. Perhaps other occasions will call for more about the future, but in the meantime, permit three practical suggestions as to how all may help to further the Gospel in Northern Ontario and Quebec.

First, pray very earnestly that the blessing of the Lord may rest upon the Tent Campaign, by means of which these newly-established causes are being strengthened and other pioneer works initiated.

Second, pray that the Lord of the harvest will give us mighty men who are able and willing to bear the burden and the heat of the day in these difficult places. We need money very urgently, but, as always, our greatest need is for more men of the Lord's choosing.

Third, give liberally and sacrificially in order that these and similar works may not be hindered for lack of funds.

—W. S. W.

A WORD ABOUT CHATHAM

The Regular Baptist Church in Chatham is about nine years old. Rev. E. C. Wood, a graduate of the Seminary, is the Pastor. For nine years they have worshipped in a hall over some stores. The hall is seated with pews which were donated by Jarvis Street Church, from our Parliament Street building.

In these days it is very difficult to get people to go to an upstairs hall to church. There are many people who do not like the long climb, and some indeed who are unable to make it. But in addition to that, while a church has rented premises, there are certain people who look upon the work as being still in the experimental stage, and until there is some guarantee of permanence, they prefer to assume the attitude of interested and sympathetic onlookers.

The work at Chatham has prospered through the years. Souls have been saved, and there is now a very healthy cause. But they are greatly in need of a build-

ing of their own. They have taken the matter into consideration, and have about \$3,000.00 in sight, a good part of which is actually in the bank. They have prepared plans for a modest building, a very plain structure, but suited to their present need, which would cost about \$6,000.00. The outside dimensions of the building would be thirty feet by sixty feet, exclusive of the entrance porch.

The difficulty of the Chatham brethren is to find the other \$3,000.00. For nine years they have paid \$420.00 a year rent for their upstairs hall. A mortgage of \$3,000.00 at six per cent. would cost them \$180.00 a year. A payment of \$100.00 a year off the principal would make it \$280.00, and would leave them \$140.00 a year (of the \$420.00 they are now paying) for light and heat; so that without doing more than they have done for the last nine years, they could carry a mortgage of \$3,000.00.

We believe a permanent building of this character would greatly add to the influence of the church in Chatham. People would look upon it as an established cause, and we believe the rate of increase might reasonably be expected to be more rapid than it has been. But the ordinary mortgage companies do not like to lend money on a church. Nor are they willing to do so without nearly twice the amount of the loan in some form of collateral.

Brother Wood called to see us about the matter, but we were unable to introduce him to any person among the Lord's stewards who had \$3,000.00 to lend on a first mortgage; but it has since occurred to us that this little note might find someone who would be willing, for the sake of the cause, to lend the money. We are personally of the opinion that no great risk would be involved. We think it would be a sound investment. In any event, the style of the building proposed would readily lend itself to adaptation to other purposes, so that a first mortgage of \$3,000.00 would, we think, be reasonable security on such a building.

We publish the facts in the hope that it may reach the eye of some one of the Lord's people who will feel moved to come to the help of the brethren in Chatham. THE GOSPEL WITNESS will be glad to forward any information to Mr. Wood; or otherwise, anyone who could help in this matter may write to him direct. The address is: Rev. E. C. Wood, 46 Lansdowne Ave., Chatham, Ont.

JARVIS STREET NEWS—FOR MEMBERS PARTICULARLY

For a number of years the School conferences of all departments, followed by a general conference, have been held Monday evening. This workers' meeting has always been regarded by the Pastor as one of the most important services of the church, and it has always been very largely attended. It was decided this week to change the night of meeting from Monday to Tuesday. One reason for this suggestion is that holidays frequently are set for Monday, which necessitates the changing of the Monday meeting to Tuesday. As for example, Civic Holiday, and again the first Monday in September will be Labour Day. Few holidays fall on Tuesday. By vote of the workers, therefore, at the Tuesday Conference this week it was decided to experiment until the end of September by holding the con-

ference on Tuesday evening of each week instead of Monday.

This arrangement will have a further advantage. The Saturday evening prayer meeting is attended by large numbers of the Sunday School workers. Sunday in Jarvis Street is a fairly heavy day for everybody. The conference on Monday made three evenings in succession away from home as a regular duty. The new arrangement will leave the two evenings, Saturday and Sunday, together; but we shall have a rest from evening meetings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, leaving us with the Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, meetings. The usual Tuesday prayer meeting will be combined with the Adult Department prayer meeting.

We give this information for all interested, but especially to inform workers who are on holiday.

BE NOT FORGETFUL TO ENTERTAIN STRANGERS

The admonition to exercise the grace of hospitality has special application to one's entertaining people in his own home. But it should apply also to the welcoming of strangers who may come to church. In a large church it is not easy for the members to know each other. Some, of course, will know and be known; but there are always others of a retiring disposition who are slow to make new acquaintances. Because that is so, many members in a large church may be strangers to each other. While such members would be glad to welcome strangers, they are afraid to greet anyone for fear the unknown person beside them might turn out to be a member of the church. We suggest, however, that such fears need not be entertained.

If it be wise to greet the stranger and the visitor, it is still more necessary that church members should make each other's acquaintance. We believe every church member should feel it his or her duty, when attending church, to recognize that even in the pew, they occupy a representative position, and therefore should extend a hand of welcome to any person within reach. Try it next Sunday. Do a bit of personal work. If you see someone whom you do not know, approach him or her. Tell him you are glad to see him in the house of the Lord. Find out whether he is a Christian or not. If he says he is a member of the church, one might then say to him, "Perhaps we owe each other an apology for not having made each other's acquaintance before. I am glad to meet you." Should he turn out to be a stranger indeed, welcome him cordially, and ask him if he would like to meet your minister. Try to make yourself a go-between, and resolve that so far as you are concerned, in whatsoever condition a person may enter the church, it shall be impossible for him or her to leave it as a stranger.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

The Pastor resumed his ministry in Jarvis Street, after four months' absence, last Sunday. He preached at both services, and conducted the Communion Service in the evening. We have long regarded the first Sunday in August as one of the most difficult Sundays of the year, because it comes just before Civic Holiday. Notwithstanding, the congregations were large in Jarvis Street at both services.

We print below a very kind message which was read in

behalf of the Deacons and congregation, by Deacon J. E. Jennings, at both morning and evening services. The Pastor greatly appreciates this kind expression. The Jarvis Street people have for so long—and so often—said these kind things, that his—what shall we call it?—thanksgiving vocabulary has been almost exhausted.

So many enquiries have come from GOSPEL WITNESS readers, and so many assurances of prayerful interest, that for their information we report that the Pastor suffered no ill effect from his first Sunday in the pulpit, and so far as he is able now to judge, he is as fit as ever.

Following is the address read by Deacon Jennings:

Sunday, August 1st, 1937.

"Dear Pastor:

"It is with profound gratitude to God, and with deep joy, that the membership of this church welcomes you back to the pulpit after your long absence of four months. Much prayer has been made on your behalf by a great host of people who love the Word of God, both within this church and among those who have come under the influence of your ministry through the printed page, by radio, or through the labours of former students of the Seminary which you founded; and this morning we give thanks, together with you, to the Father of all mercies, Who has brought you back to health and strength to this place from which, in times past you have faithfully sounded out the Word of the Lord. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and we shall continue to pray that for many years you may be spared to preach the same gospel 'in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance', to the end that the people of God will be stirred up, and the fires of a heaven-sent revival be kindled anew.

"No greater tribute to the soundness of your ministry could be found than the way in which the work has been sustained during your long illness, and we know that you have rejoiced with us in this.

"As our Pastor, the entire membership of this great church esteems you highly in love for your work's sake, and as you have laboured among us in joy and in sorrow, over a long period of years, you have come to occupy a large place in our affections as a personal friend. Long may your bow abide in strength, and the arms of your hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, 'even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee.'

"On behalf of the Deacons and the Jarvis Street congregation,

(Signed) J. E. Jennings."

THE STORY OF "THE PLOT THAT FAILED"

Some weeks ago we announced that this story would be resumed in the issue of August 5th. Since that time we have considered the matter somewhat, and have decided it may be well to postpone the resumption of this story until the first week in September. Some other matters demand the Editor's attention, and he has to keep in mind that when a new car is to be broken in, or an old one has had new rings or pistons, it is wise not to drive too fast for the first five hundred miles. We think the engine will be properly broken in by the end of August, so that we can take on the Story of the Plot the first week in September.

A CORRECTION

Our attention has been called very kindly to two typographical errors occurring in our issue of July 22nd in the sermon entitled, "A Man Shall Be As A Hiding Place".

The first is on page 84, second column. At the bottom of the second paragraph a sentence reads, "But salvation is not in a creed *per se*, it is not in a church, it is not in a person." The last clause of this sentence should read, "it is in a Person."

The second is on page 85, the first column, second verse quoted

"But now that face of radiant grade" should read,

"But now that face of radiant grace—"

We are always grateful when attention is called to an error.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 3rd Quarter Lesson 33 August 15th, 1937

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

TEACHING OF CHRIST ON FAITH AND FORGIVENESS

Lesson Text: Luke 7.

Golden Text: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—
Luke 7:50.

I. The Faith of the Centurion—verses 1-10.

Compare Matt. 8:5-13.

A centurion is a Roman army officer commanding a division of approximately one hundred men. Several good centurions are mentioned in Scripture (Matt. 27:54; Acts 10:1, 22; Acts 22:25, 26; 27:43). This centurion seems unlike the ordinary stern Roman soldier; he is remarkable for his affection for his servant, really a bond-servant, or slave; for his forbearance, sympathy and generosity toward the Jews, their customs and religion; but, above all, he is remembered for his faith.

The Jewish leaders, acting as intercessors, besought Christ "instantly"; that is, earnestly, eagerly, diligently, to go to the house of the centurion. They held him in high honour, even though one of his duties as a military representative of Rome would probably be to keep order among the Jews. But, although these leaders thought the centurion worthy of Christ's consideration, he himself felt that he was unworthy to come into the Saviour's presence. This humility and its accompanying respect he showed the Master by desiring to spare Him trouble, and by sending friends and not servants as messengers, were additional tokens of his worth.

In performing former miracles, Christ had touched the afflicted one, or had been close to him (Luke 4:39, 40; 5:13, 24; 6:10), but this Roman officer showed a simplicity and directness of faith, believing that the mere word of Christ was sufficient (Heb. 4:12). "Speak the word only" (Matt. 8:8), "Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." His own word produced results in his sphere, so would the word of Christ in His sphere.

The centurion was himself "under authority", hence worthy to be in authority; obedience is the first qualification for leadership (Heb. 5: 8, 9).

Christ marvelled at the genuine faith displayed by the military leader, especially since he had not had the advantages such as the Jews had (Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5), of knowing the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Messiah. His faith was amply rewarded in the public tribute of the Saviour, as well as in the granting of his request.

II. The Power of the Saviour—verses 11-17.

The One in Whom we are to put our trust is all-powerful; He can even raise the dead, those dead spiritually, as well as those dead physically (Eph. 1:19, 20; John 5:25-29).

Christ stopped the sad funeral procession just outside the little village of Nain, situated about twelve miles from Capernaum. He had regard for the tender human ties; He remembered that the deceased young man was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow". He had been her sole earthly support. Christ had compassion upon her, and compassion is loving-kindness in action.

We may comfort the sorrowing only to a limited extent, but Christ could comfort by word, bidding her "Weep not", and by deed, removing the cause of her tears. He had pity, and also power. His word could not merely heal the sick, but could likewise raise the dead.

Death is an enemy, but he will be destroyed (I. Cor. 15:26), and in God's time, every tear will be dried (Rev. 21:4).

This miracle was performed by the unconditional sovereign power of Christ, the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

III. The Doubts of John the Baptist—verses 18-28.

Compare Matt. 11:2-15.

The disciples of John the Baptist conveyed to him the news of the miracle at Nain, and also the comment of the people that Christ was a prophet, and that God had visited His people. This perhaps reminded John of the record of his father's prophecy (Luke 1:68), and caused a questioning

in his mind as to the identity of Christ as the Messiah. Languishing in prison, seemingly forgotten, having no part in the Lord's ministry, John had become discouraged, and found himself in Doubting Castle. He had been looking for the Messiah to establish a reign of glory, but Jesus of Nazareth went about His work quietly, without ostentation.

John did the right thing. Instead of despairing, as Satan would have desired, he took his doubts to Christ. He is able to dissolve all such questionings, and bring His children back into the sunlight of perfect trust. Our Lord's answer to him through the disciples was to give evidence (compare John 20:25, 27) of the way in which He was fulfilling the Scriptures concerning the Messiah, Who would minister to the blind (Isa. 42:7), the lame (Isa. 35:6), the deaf (Isa. 29:18), the dead (Isa. 26:19) and the poor (Isa. 29:19). The Word of God will bring confidence.

Christ did not bluntly say, "Woe is he whosoever shall be offended in me", but, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me", or as in the Revised Version, "whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me". Our Lord dealt tenderly with His discouraged servant, as He did with Elijah under the juniper tree (I. Kings 19:5-18). Do not jump upon a man when he is down; cheer him, help him, pray for him.

Least people should censure John for lack of faith at this time, Christ re-iterates the position of John as a forerunner, and pays tribute to his greatness as a prophet. Men see only our faults, as a rule, and sometimes they see only our virtues, but Christ sees us as we are, and His judgment of us is true.

IV. The Unbelief of the Pharisees—verses 29-35.

Compare Matt. 11:16-19.

While some people accepted the baptism of John as preparatory to the Messiah's mission and "justified God", or acknowledged the righteousness and wisdom of His dealings, the Pharisees and lawyers, on the other hand, refused this baptism, with all its implications, and also rejected God's plan for them as set forth in the Saviour's teaching and work. In their obstinacy they refused to respond to the overtures of Christ; nothing He did suited them. They were like children who would not dance when the music was joyful, or weep when it was mournful. They slandered John the Baptist who practised fasting, and Christ also, Who was willing to eat with publicans and sinners (Luke 15:2). Their intended slur upon the character of Christ was in reality a tribute, for He is the Friend of sinners.

Time would tell who had followed the wiser course, those who believed Christ, or those who rejected Him.

V. Forgiveness in Answer to Faith—verses 36-50.

This incident is recorded by Luke alone, who emphasizes Christ's mercy to those who are despised of men.

The outward appearance or circumstances of a person did not concern our Lord, but the heart attitude (I. Sam. 16:7). There is no evidence in Scripture for the popular notion that this woman was Mary Magdalene. Mary was cured of demon possession (Luke 8:2), but was not a profligate. The unfortunate penitent came into the house with those who were observing the guests at their meal, and stood behind the feet of Christ as He reclined at the table. The alabaster vial of perfume she carried was probably costly (John 12:5).

The Saviour's host, Simon, misjudged His attitude of kindness to the woman, inferring that He did not know her character, and therefore could not be the prophet He claimed to be. It seems as though his motives in inviting Christ were not of the highest order (verse 49).

By means of the parable of the creditor and two debtors Christ sought to teach Simon several lessons: (1) All are in debt to God and unable to pay: Simon was guilty before God, as well as the one who realized her sin. (2) Forgiveness is a matter of grace: all can look to Him alone for forgiveness. (3) Love is in proportion to the extent of the guilt and the forgiveness: the sinner loved Him much, but Simon loved Him little.

In applying the parable, Christ praised this woman for her courtesy, and rebuked Simon. True hospitality is not a matter of etiquette, but consists in loving consideration for the guest. Simon and the other Pharisees had manifested a lack in this regard.

Turning directly to the one in need, Christ told her that her sins were forgiven. She was saved through faith by grace (Eph. 2:8), and being saved, could go forth in peace.