

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

WHAT IS MEANT BY BELIEVING?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 29th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."—I. John 5:1.

Prayer before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, for this safe shelter beneath Thy wings, of which we have been singing. We come where the wings of the cherubim are outspread, to the Mercy Seat where the blood is sprinkled. We thank Thee for freedom to come, for the assurance that Thou dost receive us when we approach Thee in the name of Jesus.

Look upon this congregation. We thank Thee that Thou knowest our individual requirements, what is in us, our dispositions, our peculiar weaknesses, our besetting sins. Thou knowest our down-sitting and our uprising. Thou understandest our thought afar off, and art acquainted with all our ways. For there is not a word in our tongues, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. We bless Thee that, notwithstanding our varied circumstances, and the variety of our individual needs, Thou art able to satisfy the desire of every living thing. We would remind ourselves this evening that

We are coming to a King,
Large petitions we may bring;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much.

May we have, first of all, that enlightenment of the Spirit which will show us all our need of Christ! Therefore we look to Thee, that we may be lightened, and that our faces be not ashamed. Should there be any who have not seen in Jesus Christ the sinner's Saviour, may they do so now! Be pleased, O Lord, to give us the direction of Thy Spirit that in the exposition of Thy Word, the way of salvation may be made so plain that no one need err. Make this service a means of grace to any who are not Thine.

Many of Thy children have come here spiritually hungry. They have come seeking a portion of meat at Thy hands. May they hear not the preacher's voice this evening, but rather the voice of the Anointed One to Whom Thou hast given the tongue of the learned that He may know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary! A word spoken in due season, how good is it! May the voice of the divine Spirit be heard in every heart this evening, that so we may experience an hour of real communion, of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ!

We thank Thee that Thou hast given us such sure ground of hope, that Thou hast left them without excuse who believe not in Thee. We bless Thee that so many before Thee rejoice in the full assurance of faith, and are able to say

that they know Whom they have believed. Strengthen us, O Lord, this evening. Deepen in every heart the conviction of truth in which already, in some measure, we rest. Help us that we may have a fuller knowledge of Christ as a result of this service. Forbid that we should hear the truth, and not yield to its authority. May we be further sanctified this evening through belief of the truth; and by the washing of water by the Word may we more fully be prepared for the service to which Thou hast summoned us!

Look upon anyone in trouble in this assembly. Verily, the heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. If there be a heavy heart here, Thou God of all comfort, Thou infinitely merciful and tender Saviour, come near to such. Speak to us with such assurance that we may be enabled gladly to receive Thy Word.

We pray for this sad world, and the nations thereof. Scatter Thou the people who delight in war. Let Thy strong restraining hand be upon those who would disturb the world's peace. Thy Word abounds with instances in which Thou didst interpose in the affairs of nations. Let thine arm be made bare in China, in Spain, and in the affairs of all the nations who seem so bent upon conflict.

Strengthen Thou the forces of righteousness everywhere. Particularly, O Lord, wilt Thou be pleased to give divine wisdom to His Majesty the King, and his counsellors. In these days of ever-multiplying difficulties and crises, may their hearts be opened to the Voice from above, that the nations may be subject to Thy sovereign will!

For the interests of Thy church and the true servants of the kingdom of God throughout the earth we pray. Fortify the missionaries in these troubled places, in China, in Spain, and everywhere. Endue the heralds of the cross especially with power and with wisdom from on high! If it please Thee, let their lives be precious in Thy sight. Give Thine angels charge concerning them, to keep them in all their ways. May they find in Thee a safe refuge.

And now this evening as we open Thy Book, we invoke the ministry of Him by Whom it was inspired, and we pray that the Holy Spirit may reveal to us the thought of God. May our hearts thus be opened to heavenly communications; may we realise the vain dream of the Babel-builders, and by faith see the Tower set up upon earth, Whose top reaches to heaven, even the Ladder upon which the angels ascend and descend—the Son of Man, the Son of God, and God the Son, the One Mediator between God and man.

Lord help us! Glorify Thyself through this service for Thy name's sake, Amen.

Among all the words in the vocabulary of the gospel, the word faith, if it has not the preeminence, has at least a paramount place. We are told in many quarters to-day that it does not matter what we believe. That is so evident a fallacy that one marvels it should ever find acceptance with supposedly intelligent people. It does matter what we believe in all spheres of life. What we are, what we do, whither we go, are all the issues of our underlying belief. And it does matter, religiously, supremely, what, and Whom we believe. Even as I say that, many passages will immediately occur to your mind where faith, or its cognate, believe or believing, is set out apparently as a condition, or at least an accompaniment of salvation. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish and differentiate in this matter between effect and cause. In the well-worn and universally familiar Scripture that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son", we are told that He did so "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Again: "Therefore, being justified by faith"—to use the other word—"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; "The just shall live by faith"; "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith".

In the days of His flesh, repeatedly, our Lord, while varying the expression, laid down the principle: "According to your faith be it unto you".

Faith, then, is not only an important word, but it is a very big word. It does not always denote precisely the same thing. Faith, or believing, as an exercise of the soul, in some instances, may mean vastly more than in others. Our Lord spoke of faith as a grain of mustard seed, indicating that faith might be very small in its beginning. Then you will remember the disciples prayed: "Lord, increase our faith". So that faith is not a word of fixed dimensions; and its objective reality, that to which it is directed, does not always mean exactly the same thing. Faith in the spiritual infant may mean much less than faith as exemplified in the man of mature spiritual knowledge. Faith, therefore, is a big word that almost baffles us, and defies complete definition. And yet in the text which I have announced, this word of unknown quantity, and of such vast dimensions, is brought within definite and measurable scope. The content of it is specifically defined, and we are told just what it is to believe. From the large and immeasurable, therefore, let us come to that which by the blessing of God, may be brought within the comprehension of our finite minds.

"Whosoever believeth". "Believeth" what? or in Whom, or Who? Did you ever hear the story of the dying saint to whom another came, and for his comfort quoted the Scripture: "I know whom I have believed", but he misquoted it as I have heard some of you do: "I know *in* whom I have believed." "Stop", said the dying man, "I do not want even a preposition between me and my Lord. Not 'in whom': 'I know whom I have believed'."

I.

WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE ABOUT CHRIST? What is faith? "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ"! That is what we are to believe respecting Jesus Christ, that He is "the Christ".

Faith, then, is much more than a mere mental exercise, an acquiescence in a verbal proposition. How am I to force my mind to a mental acceptance of certain formal, verbal, statements of that which is alleged to be the

truth? Why is salvation conditioned upon our believing, or associated with believing rather than, fundamentally, with doing? We are here told that we are to believe something about Jesus. Who is He? *He may be historically identified.* Jesus is not a figment of the imagination. He is not only a Character in a book: He is an historic Person. The true historicity of Jesus, of His existence, and the record of His life, may easily be established. There can be no question as to the historic existence of one Jesus of Nazareth. Such a person did actually walk this earth. Even the skeptic will admit—while he would amend it to suit his predilection—the historical value of the gospel record that such an One as Jesus lived. And here the record of His life is preserved for our examination and understanding. It would be interesting to trace it, but that is unnecessary for my purpose this evening. I must rather throw you back upon your scriptural knowledge that your minds may very hastily survey your knowledge of the New Testament; of One Who was born in Bethlehem, Who lived an exemplary life, Who was never convicted of sin, or of wrong of any kind, whose teaching was unusual, Whose words were so unique that those who heard Him said, "Never man spake like this man"; and Whose works were as extraordinary as His words, manifesting the possession and exercise of a power that was more than human. The record of His death is beyond dispute, an historically factual record: that He died, and that He died in the way in which the gospels say He did, is entirely beyond question. If you accept the gospel record you must, of course, believe also that He rose again. The resurrection is, indeed, one of the most thoroughly attested facts of all human history. Here then, in the Bible, is the record of this unique Personality, Who was born as others are born into this world; Who lived and wrought as by a power that was more than human; Who, notwithstanding His admitted sinlessness, at last died as a criminal; Whose grave was found empty, as even His enemies attested, and whose friends declared that His grave was not only empty, but that He was alive.

That fact of history challenges every thoughtful man's interest. Whether you are a Christian or not, whether you have any religious interest or not, if you would be informed as to things which have been, you cannot ignore such a Personality as that of Jesus of Nazareth, Who indubitably has exercised a greater influence in human affairs than any other man who ever lived. The question which then emerges, of course, is the age-old question: Who is He? What think ye of Jesus? Whose Son is he?

What are we to believe about "the Christ"? When Jesus asked, "What think ye of Christ?" He did not, in the thought of His hearers, ask it in respect to Himself. When He asked, "What think ye of Christ?" He inquired as to what they thought of the Christ of the prophetic Scriptures, the Messiah Who was to come. Who was Christ? Say what you will of Him, in the beginning of the Book there is a promise of One Whom God will send. He is called there a "seed", and peculiarly a "seed" of the woman, not of the man; and it is promised of Him that He shall bruise the serpent's head. Later in Genesis He is spoken of as a "seed" in Whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

I very often wonder where our critical friends have found the idea that the Old Testament represents Jehovah as a tribal God. I have never been able to

discover it. God is revealed in terms of universality. The Seed Who was to come, Whoever He might be, was to be One in Whom, not the Jews only, but all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, an universal Character, a Person from Whose influence no nation in the world could wholly escape. Who was He?

I may remind you that Messiah is represented in the Old Testament—and you know that Christ and Messiah are identical terms—as a *vicarious Sufferer, as a Servant, Who suffered in the room and stead of others*: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth". Whoever He is to be, He is represented as a suffering Servant, and, great as He is, you will recall that in the twenty-second Psalm He utters that cry of anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Time would fail me to quote the Old Testament Scriptures in which Messiah is represented as a Revealer of truth. Let one quotation suffice: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

As a summary of the principle I refer you to the incident in the fourth chapter of John where the Samaritan woman said: "I know that Méssias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." When He comes—so the woman understood the Old Testament prophecies—when He comes we shall have the supreme Authority of Truth in the absolute, we shall have an authoritative Law, or Standard, by which everything can be measured. When He comes He will disclose the secrets of the Most High. He will be the utterance of eternal Wisdom, the very Incarnation and Embodiment of it: "He will tell us all things". To Him will be given "the tongue of the learned that he may know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary."

Not only so, Messias, is described, prophetically, as the Son of God—not a mere man. The Old Testament abounds with the promise that God will stoop to earth, that He will bring Himself within the range of human understanding in due course. We read it this evening: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom"; "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." That is the teaching of the Old Testament, that Messiah is to be an Incarnation of Deity, an Emanation of the divine. He is represented in the prophetic Scripture as being the Creator, even as we read this evening: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old

as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Messiah, the Author of all things that are, will be representative of, and embody in His Personality the power that spake the worlds from nought. He is, indeed, to be the ultimate Revelation of God, not alone the Alpha, but the Omega, the Beginning and the End, God's last word to the world. We read it this evening from the New Testament: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The Christ of the Old Testament, Messiah, is to appear among men as the Son of God, and the King of kings: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

What relation have the Jesus of history, and the Messiah of prophecy to each other? My text says that he is a true child of God who recognizes that they are One and the same: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." To identify the Jesus of history with the Messiah of prophecy, and to believe in Him, is to be saved.

II.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE RECOGNITION OF THE JESUS OF HISTORY AS THE MESSIAH OF PROPHECY? Of course, *it argues at once His divine nature*. The faith that thus recognizes Jesus will have no difficulty in believing the New Testament record of His virgin birth. Who is He? He is God, the Creator of all worlds, the Sum of all truth, the Light and Life of the world. How shall He come into human life? I submit, there is nothing more reasonable, and therefore, nothing more credible than the New Testament record of the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Said the angel: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." How beautifully reasonable it is! How preciously simple it is? I see no reason why anyone should stagger at the New Testament, if only he believes the Old Testament, because what is recorded of Jesus of Nazareth, at every point is exactly what we have reason to expect of the Messiah whose coming is promised.

So then, *true faith does really recognize in Jesus THE Christ*, and therefore, the Incarnate God.

Some of you will remember that a few years ago I quoted again and again in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, the saying of Dr. George Cross, a Baptist theological professor, formerly of McMaster University, to the effect that "now after the lapse of all the intervening centuries, it is still an open question whether after all it was not misleading to call Jesus the Christ." I should say to that man, "Sir, you are no Christian. You deny that which lies at the very basis of the Christian revelation, and which is indispensable to saving faith." Jesus, I affirm, is THE Christ, and therefore He is God manifest in the flesh. That may have been doubt which uttered itself through the lips of Thomas, "Except I

shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe". And I suppose he meant it. But Thomas was at that stage a doubter not an unbeliever, for when he found himself in the presence of the risen Lord, and He condescended to his doubtfulness and said: "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing," Thomas did not presume to touch Him: but rather exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." That is faith. That is what Jesus is, and nothing less than that. Thus to recognize Him is to be saved.

Well, my friends, that being so, when once we have been led to an acceptance of that fact, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Ultimate, the Climax and Consummation of the prophecies of the Old Testament, that He comes at last as the Promised One in Whom all promises are fulfilled, you see what value such faith attaches to the whole mystery of the Incarnation with all its accompaniments and implications. Why was He born? Why did He live? Why did He die? Why did He rise again? To execute the eternal counsels of God. That cross on the hill was no accident. That empty grave is no surprise. Hear them as they welcome His return to glory: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." The Scripture given as the title to one of our hymns which I read to you this evening represents Christ as a Conqueror: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive," a Conqueror, returning from His glorious victory over principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world's darkness, having "spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" at the cross and in the resurrection, and then ascended on high.

That parenthesis in the divine existence represented by the record of the historical Jesus, is the outworking of the plan of the God of all grace, Who willed that His banished should not be expelled from Him. When one comes to see Who Jesus was, and is, it is not hard to believe. When we see His wounds, and His stripes, it is not hard for faith to say: "By Thy stripes, O Son of God, I am healed."

Do you see it, my dear friends? Unitarianism has no gospel. The deletion of the supernatural from the Bible leaves you without any message from heaven. The taking of the crown of Deity from the brow of Jesus robs us of a Saviour. Because He is God, because He is the Christ, it is true that "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

And what value true faith places upon the Word of God. When once the Jesus of history is recognized as the Christ of prophecy, we cannot afford to make a sharp division between the Old and New Testaments. There is no division. His Personality, the promise of His cleansing blood, prophecy and history, promise and fulfilment, bind it all together, showing it to be one and indivisible, the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever. You cannot do away with the Bible without doing away with Christ. You cannot deny an infallible, authoritative, Scripture, without denying the

whole principle of the Incarnation, including His attestation to the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Believing that Jesus is the Christ gives us a Saviour, and an infallible Book that tells us all about Him. Is not that worth having? ("Hallelujah!")

III.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ"! WHAT FOLLOWS? Is born of God."

Perhaps you will ask me whether the birth precedes faith, or faith precedes the birth. I remember years ago that question being asked at an ordination council: "Does faith precede regeneration, or does regeneration precede faith?" "Logically," said the candidate very wisely and shrewdly, and discerningly, "logically, faith precedes regeneration; but chronologically, regeneration precedes faith." That is pretty high doctrine, is it not? Yes: it is "high"; but it is no higher than the Book. "Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God". Faith is really the first cry of the newborn soul. It is the evidence and proof that a man is born of God when he believes that Jesus is the Christ; for in order to an appreciation of that truth, there is required a capacity, a power of discernment, an illumination which can only come by a rebirth.

I have often seen men, and so have you, whom I have wished that I could make over again. I suppose some people would like to make us over again, so the desire is mutual, and we shall not quarrel about it. I have talked with a man about certain things, and have said: "Cannot you see that?" "No." There are some people who cannot hear music. I once knew a man who did not know the difference between the *Old Hundredth* and *God Save the King*. He can sing any hymn that is put before him the first time he sees it, because he has one tune for them all. You might send him to school as long as you like, he could never learn to sing. Why? He has not got it in him. The same is true of the aesthetic sense. I was riding with a friend once, a rich man—I used to have a few such friends. It was before the days of motor cars, and we were on the street car. We had three different kinds of tickets in those days, regular tickets, rush-hour tickets, and Sunday tickets. I was going home with this friend for dinner. He took out a little case with three kinds of tickets. He was an elderly man, and he said: "Can you see which are the red ones?" I said, "Yes; they are in the centre. Cannot you see them?" He said, "No; they are all the same to me. I am what they call 'colour blind'. I cannot distinguish between colours." He had eyes just like mine, but he could not see what I saw. That is why some people can see a sunset, and some cannot. Crossing the continent once on the Canadian Pacific Railway, I was sitting in the dining car at dinner time. I looked out the window, and I could see a glorious sunset over the prairies. There was another man across the table having his dinner. I had no one to share the glory of the sunset with me, and when I had endured it as long as I could, I said to him: "I am afraid my friend, you are missing something. Just turn your head, and look at that marvellous sunset." He held his knife and fork suspended in the air for a moment, looked over his shoulder for a second, and then went on eating, remarking, "It is going to be a fine day to-morrow." He did not see it at all, and I do not suppose anyone could teach him to see it. You would have to change the whole constitution of such an one to enable him to see.

As you parents study your children, you know that they have certain qualities that come to them by birth. One of the children likes to go to the piano, and without anyone's teaching him he plays by ear. Another boy has no interest at all in music. He wants to make a wagon, or do something with a machine, and cares nothing for music. He wants to see the wheels go around. He is of a mechanical bent of mind. He has something in him that needs to be developed. The boys are different types altogether, and no school on earth could make them alike. The secret of true education is to discover the aptitudes of young people and develop them. Sometimes a young fellow comes to the Seminary and says, "I want to be a preacher." We do not know what is in him, but we receive him on probation. To some, after the first year is over, we have said: "We believe you are wasting your time and ours. We do not feel that you have the natural capacities indispensable to a preacher."

What wonder, then, that these vast treasures of the spiritual world can be apprehended only as we are divinely born with a capacity for them! "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Do you believe it? ("Amen!") There was a dear friend of mine who used to be minister of this church along Gerrard Street when it was a Presbyterian Church. He was a great man of God. I refer to the late Dr. Robertson, Minister of the then St. James' Square Presbyterian Church. One time I was sitting with him in a meeting when one of the world's great preachers was preaching the gospel. We were sitting together on the platform, and as the preacher exalted Christ, I saw first one tear, then another run down Dr. Robertson's cheek. Presently he could restrain his emotion no longer. He was weeping copiously, tears of joy. Then he leaned over to me, and offered me his hand. I took it, not knowing the meaning of his action. And he said, "Brother, by the response of my soul to that truth, I know that I am a Christian."

Is that true of you my friend? Do you respond to the exaltation of Christ? Do you rejoice to know that your Saviour is Jesus Christ? Then, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Let that fact assure you. That is what this same chapter means when it says: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Of course! And his whole soul responds to that spiritual truth.

And if it means that every man or woman who has recognized Jesus Christ as a divine Saviour is born of God, *it must mean that such an one is admitted to the divine family, and is a child of God.* I wish we knew what that means! I wish we could appreciate the high and holy privilege which is ours, in being members of the household of faith! That is what we are, if we believe in Him: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

So then, so far as we are concerned, the future is just as bright as the promises of God. We have an eternal Saviour, and an everlasting salvation secured to us by the meritorious life and death and resurrection and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I wonder is there anyone here to-night who says, "Sir, I thought I had to believe something in the Book to be a Christian? I thought being-saved meant subscription to a verbal statement of some sort." You will have no difficulty in subscribing to what this Book says when you have met Him of Whom the Book speaks.

Some years ago a young man came to me and said, "I am a Modernist." I said, "What makes you think that?" "Well; I am an Evolutionist." I said, "Then I dare say you are a bit of a Modernist. Where did you get that notion?" He said, "I am an undergraduate at Toronto University, and I suppose I have just imbibed it." I said, "Shall we make an engagement that we may meet and talk that matter over?" The engagement was made, but somehow or another we did not meet. Some time later I met him, and I said, "Mr. So-and-So, we did not get together as arranged." He said, "No; but I do not think it necessary now." I said, "Why is that?" "Well I am not a Modernist now, nor am I an Evolutionist. I have met Christ, and I know He lives, and He is my Saviour."

What else? Here is the Book. I bring you its message. I do the best I can as a man to expound its truth, but all the time I am conscious that unless the divine Spirit shall touch you into newness of life, and quicken the soul that is dead, you will not understand what I say. Perhaps you say, "But I do understand, sir. I did not call myself a Christian, but when you speak of Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, my heart leaps within Me, and I say, 'I do believe that'." Then hear this for your assurance and comfort, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "Do you mean to say that because I respond to that truth I am saved?" Yes; that is the proof of it: "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish; but have everlasting life."

BAPTISTS IN PARIS

As the great city of Paris is thronged with visitors from all over the world, many of them attracted by the splendour of the much advertised International Exhibition, the Baptist Churches in that city are preparing to be hosts to the Biennial Conference of the French Bible Mission, or, to give it its French name, the Association Evangélique des Eglises Baptistes de Langue Française. This may perhaps surprise some of our readers who are not in the habit of associating a clear evangelical testimony with "gay" Paris, and the following account of blessing on the faithful preaching of the Word of the Gospel will agreeably surprise them. We quote the following paragraphs from a letter from Monsieur Emile Guédj, who, in addition to being the Mission's deputation secretary for Great Britain, is also pastor of two churches in Paris.

"Our youngest church in Paris—rue de Sèvres—has such a large congregation that we cry to God for a bigger place. In Paris it is, of course, a great problem for a small church, but our God delights in solving hard problems. Please remember us in prayer.

We had the joy of listening to seventeen friends confessing Christ before the church in order to be baptized. What a wonderful variety in the way that these dear ones came to Christ, and all within a few weeks!

Here in Colombes (a suburb of Paris) we are compelled to enlarge the seating capacity of our church as quickly as possible. There are no rich people among us, so we waited upon the Lord in prayer, and within three months raised the equivalent of three hundred pounds among ourselves.

Cheering news reaches us from our various fields. Nevertheless, do not imagine that we have no difficulty. We have many, and the Enemy is just the same here as in Britain. Often we have to carry to the Lord our saddened hearts loaded with problems. Just when one is solved another raises itself quite unexpectedly. Happily we are 'more than conquerors through Him'."

This is cheering news of the progress of a most worthy cause. Those who are interested in this work will be glad to know that Mr. F. M. Buhler, a native of France and a recent graduate of Toronto Baptist Seminary, is now going among the churches in Canada and the United States to make the needs of this work known. He may be addressed in care of this paper.

—W.S.W.

RELIGIOUS LUNACY

Readers of this paper know that the Editor works a little in his garden. He finds great delight in cultivating shrubs and plants, and doing his best to maintain a good lawn. But sometimes he wishes he could get the thing done, so that he might use what leisure he can command, in the enjoyment of the garden. But, alas, the weeds and the bugs give him no rest! In the lawn it is either a dandelion, or a plantain here or there, wild carrots, and, we know not what else, requiring constant supervision to prevent their multiplication. Various kinds of blight attack the shrubs and flowers, and one must needs be ever on the alert to prevent injury and possible destruction. So must it be, we suppose, to the end of the chapter, or until a regenerated earth shall have eliminated from it the last weed and the last pest. And the principle holds all through life. We agree with the evolutionists thus far, that life is a struggle for existence. Just now Toronto is suffering somewhat from the scourge of infantile paralysis. It threatens to grow almost to the proportions of an epidemic. Because of this, parents and others are being warned to take care of their children. The health authorities endeavoured to avoid anything like a panic, and, perhaps, erred on the side of withholding information as to the extent and spread of the disease. We sympathise with the health authorities in this. No one likes to be the bearer of bad news, or to say or do anything that would diminish the pleasures of others. But in some quarters the health authorities have been severely criticised for not issuing more strongly-worded warnings to the people.

We earnestly wish there were no religious weeds or pests. We find in ourselves a sufficient tendency toward cowardliness and indolence, sometimes to wish it were not necessary earnestly to contend for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The Editor of this paper would prefer always to speak "comfortably to Jerusalem", and to say unto her that "her warfare is accomplished". But in no sphere of life is constant diligence more necessary than in the sphere of religion. This paper has fought Modernism without mercy. We have never regretted doing so, but only mourned the necessity for it. But we believe there are forms of religion which are just as dangerous as Modernism. There are religious fads and follies put forth in the name of Evangelical orthodoxy that are worthy only to be classed with the output of lunatic asylums. There is a type of millennialism that is as certainly anti-biblical as the worst forms of Modernism. They are all the more dangerous because they profess to be the outcome of loyalty to the Bible, and, therefore, make their appeal to multitudes of people who are really regenerated, and being babes in Christ, have desired the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby. But being babes, also they have no defense against the religious poison that is served up in their milk rations.

We have before us a religious paper from the State of Ohio. We shall not mention the town or city, we do not know which, in which it is published, for we would not willingly increase its circulation by a single copy. It is not worthy of notice by any reputable journal for the intrinsic value of anything that is in it. We refer to it here only because it is symptomatic of a widespread religious disposition. Easily as people are duped by offers of something for nothing in business

and finance, we fear that in nothing are people quite so easily humbugged as in the matter of religion. Truly, the worst of all devils is a religious devil. The paper before us is called "THE POSTSCRIPT", and is said to be "The Official Organ of the Tabernacle, America's Leading Prophetic Religious Newspaper". On the left-hand top corner it is said that it is "a free lance religious newspaper". On the right-hand top corner are the words, "The Bible, nothing more, nothing less". We are amazed to find that this is issue number three, of volume seven, which is indubitable proof that there are somewhere to be found a considerable number of religious lunatics. The paper has four pages, and inside, what is called "Postscript Magazine Section—THE NEWS" with "Extra" marked in each corner. It is called "Tract No. 1", and "JERUSALEM is named as the place of publication. Before we deal with this "magazine" section, we shall quote a little of what is presumed to be the editorial section. It is headed, "Something new in this issue":

"With this issue of The Postscript comes an additional four-page magazine section, the first of similar sections which we are planning to issue from time to time.

"In this section we have attempted something that to our knowledge has never been attempted before. We have tried to visualize and anticipate the rapture of the church.

"We have not drawn upon the imagination for this presentation whatever. All we did was sit down and take the Bible at its word, then undertook to write events as they will appear the next day. The world may read these prophetic headlines to-morrow. They can read them here with profit.

"We designed this supplement for use as a tract intended for wholesale distribution. It will be available in any quantity which may be desired from single copies to thousands. The forms will be preserved for this purpose. Our readers may get all they desire at any time they wish them.

"Sit down and look over this four-page 'facsimile' newspaper tract. Notice that the statements conform to scripture, and the headlines carry the message without exaggeration—the headlines are the same we would write if the rapture happened to-night and we were left behind.

"Of course one cannot tell exactly the circumstances which will occur. We can only anticipate them from the implications of the Word. But the general idea is reliable. So reliable that we predict the paper to be prophecy some day.

"Such a message is needed now. For many years the Lord has laid it upon our heart to do this very thing. We always postponed it because of other pressing matters, but the call became so clear we have decided to present it.

"We suggest that ministers preach a sermon on the rapture and give out copies to their people as a souvenir, or hand them to their congregation and friends. It is designed to make men think and to save their souls."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the magazine entitled, "The News" is designed to represent such a paper as might be likely to appear the day following a secret rapture of all the saints.

Retracing our steps, we observe that the Editor says that in the production of "The News",

"We have not drawn upon the imagination for this presentation whatever. All we did was sit down and take the Bible at its word, then undertook to write events as they will appear the next day."

We are, therefore, assured that a proper understanding of the Bible would lead people to expect such things as are predicted in "The News", although this magazine

section is written as though it were history, and not prophecy.

Across the top of the front page in large letters are the words: "World Dazed by Great Tragedy", and then a sub-heading: "Many Persons Have Vanished Mysteriously". The heading at the left-hand column is "U.S.A. seems hardest hit; Traffic Tie-up on Principal Streets of New York; London also Tied up; Few Accidents of Serious Consequences Noted". Evidently the Editor thinks there are more saints ready for the rapture in the United States than anywhere else. We have great respect for vast numbers of United States citizens. Among them we have not the shadow of a doubt there are multitudes of the finest Christians to be found anywhere in the world. But as a Britisher, we suppose we ought to be grateful for the Editor's suggestion that poor old London has not been wholly neglected. A two-column boxed item headed: "May Solve Mystery" informs us that scientists are getting together to try to explain the mysterious disappearance of millions of people. "Some of the leading scientists," however, we are told, feel quite sure that the disappearance of these millions can be traced to "natural causes". Another double-column heading reads: "Police Baffled When Millions Disappear". This item is from "Los Angeles". Hollywood notwithstanding, it would appear there were still some saints in Los Angeles and thereabout. In this column there is a paragraph to this effect:

"A checkup to-day reveals the percentage of those missing as comparatively small but widely distributed. Reports from London, New York, San Francisco, Rome, Berlin, Paris, and other cities show a higher percentage than the cities of the Far East".

Another paragraph in this article reads:

"Dispatches from Jerusalem stated two men, who claimed to be Moses and Elijah, appeared on the streets last night a short time after the first reports were received, and began to preach to the people who were assembled in the public parks awaiting bulletins".

The right-hand column is headed: "Strangest Event in History; Thousands Suddenly Vanish from Sight and leave no clues; Holiday Proclaimed in Some Cities; Business Interrupted in Many Cities To-day." The news in this column purports to come from "Jerusalem". We quote as follows:

"At first believed to have been localized to the Christian quarter of the city, where it was first reported shortly after 11:30 o'clock last night, dispatches trickling in over disrupted communications, soon disclosed a world-wide catastrophe of the first magnitude.

"It soon became apparent some strange calamity had overtaken many people in widely separated sections.

"Some were asleep in their beds, others were at work in shops or the fields, housewives were preparing meals, in short the catastrophe occurred without warning and the victims simply vanished into the air, leaving those behind dazed and speechless at the sudden and unusual happening, of which there is no similar record in history.

"To quote one witness to the strange event, 'It was as if gravitation suddenly ceased so far as the victims were concerned, and in a twinkling of an eye they disappeared as if jerked upward out of sight, leaving us staring upward open-mouthed and with amazement, at a loss to comprehend the tragedy we were witnessing'.

"There was no accompanying disturbance except the sound as though the wind was blowing, but the leaves on the trees were motionless. It remains a mystery of all mysteries".

Another gem on the first page is headed: "New Gas Believed Reason; 'Vaporine' Used for First Time Yes-

terday May Be the Cause." This dispatch is supposed to come from London. We really hoped and believed that they had more sense in London, but this is what the Editor of "The News" imagines to have come from London:

"Many theories are advanced to explain the mystery of last evening.

"Perhaps the most plausible one is the suggestion the new gases recently developed and used for the first time in yesterday's battle in the Great War, had caused the dissolution of these people. It was pointed out the new gas called 'Vaporine' was designed to unite with the blood stream when it is breathed into the lungs, causing rapid and painless death. Since the new 'Vaporine' is tasteless and odorless the victim remains unmindful of its presence until death overtakes him. It was used for the first time yesterday in the front lines with surprising results which it is believed will soon end the war.

"It was advanced, however, this morning that this gas may be the cause of last night's tragedy. Some scientists are of the opinion it may affect persons differently. Under certain conditions it may be possible instead of death, the gas may have caused complete dissolution of the entire body turning it to gas due to chemical reaction in the blood, causing the whole to 'evaporate' or vanish from sight.

"The argument appears to be substantiated by observers who declare some of the bodies of those killed by the gas in yesterday's battle have since disappeared.

"Others point out the theory is untenable for the disappearances are too world-wide, and therefore could not be the result of such localized condition.

"The War Department has issued orders forbidding the use of the gas until further investigation is made."

Another column is headed: "Chicago Paper Issues Extra". This also we must quote entire:

"A Chicago newspaper appeared on the street with an extra edition a few minutes after the disappearance of thousands of citizens yesterday afternoon.

"In large headlines the public was informed the 'rapture' of the saints had occurred. Articles detailing the account of Biblical prophecies concerning the 'rapture' of the church were carried in the news column, and editorial comment stated the strange disappearances marked a first stage of the Second Advent of Christ.

"Except for the two-column leading article on the front page, the whole paper had been edited and 'made up' several years ago at the suggestion of a well-known minister in the city.

"Needless to say the paper 'scooped' all competitors and brought comfort to many of the city's sorrowing citizens. Of course, many readers were skeptical of such superstition."

This surely is an evidence of the clarity-of thinking of the Editor. This "Extra" in Chicago, "except for the two-column leading article on the front page * * * had been edited and 'made up' several years ago at the suggestion of a well-known minister in the city." Surely it had been made up by somebody who believed in the rapture. We wonder was this the selective rapture, and were some people, who believed in it, left to publish it, or how did this copy get into the hands of a Chicago newspaper "a few minutes after the disappearance of thousands of citizens". All this, the Editor tells us, is not the result of anyone's imagination, but is based on the plain teaching of Scripture.

We are still on the front page, and must not pass this by. In quite large letters a brief paragraph is headed: "LEG IS LEFT". The paragraph reads as follows:

"An undertaker here reported to police, he was called to care for the body of a man who had a wooden leg. While his back was turned the body disappeared, only the wooden leg remained, much to his surprise."

We do not want to be irreverent, but this strikes us as funnier than anything in *Punch*. According to the theory of these pre-tribulation secret rapturists we understand the Jews are to be left behind. What a harvest they would have! If artificial legs were dropped off, one would suppose that the raptured saints would leave their store teeth behind them, including the gold fillings, and what a harvest that would make for Brother Jacob! And yet we are not quite sure of that, for if it were true, apparently it had not been called to the attention of the Editor of "The News", for here is a paragraph on page three:

"Taos—Jake Valeski was the only person left in this little village of 50 inhabitants to-day, the others having vanished last night. Jake came here to open a junk yard Tuesday. He said, 'The town she no good anyhow, everybody crazy on religion'."

Another news item is alleged to come from Dallas, Texas, and is as follows:

"A cowboy was entertaining an audience here with a number of rope tricks and was in the act of throwing his lariat about a man when the man vanished much to the crowd's amusement."

Evidently down in Dallas it is believed there are some people ready for the rapture who are not above attending a circus performance of some sort.

Another news item is assumed to come from Salt Lake City. Here it is:

"A funeral service being conducted here at two o'clock yesterday afternoon was dismissed as the corpse suddenly disappeared from the open casket, as did the minister and several in the audience."

On the second page of "The News" there is an explanatory word addressed to the reader, of which we quote the first two paragraphs:

"While the material in this paper is purely fictional, it by no means follows that it is the result of 'vain imagination' nor is it the brain-child of some misguided person. It is a warning and a prophecy.

"This little paper is a sober, prayerful presentation of a great Bible truth, visualized to help people understand the facts which the scriptures imply."

It is quite evident from this that the Editor of "The News" is not only sincere, but serious, and is making no attempt whatever to be facetious.

Another column in the paper is headed: "None to Blame but Ourselves". In this article the people left behind by the raptured, while complaining that they had not been warned by their ministers, yet admit that they, themselves, alone are really to blame. We shall get an idea of the point of view of the Editor of this paper who claims to be teaching, "The Bible, nothing more, nothing less", in the last paragraph of the article, "None to Blame but Ourselves";

"Let us therefore bear no malice to those of the ministry who like we, have been deceived and share our fate. Rather let us help to bind up the wounded hearts of the bereaved, encourage the weak and assist the strong as we face the unhappy situation which confronts us, always keeping our hearts attuned to the Word of God as we await the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Could anything be more grotesque? The "light of the world" the Church is removed, for it must be remembered that the Church, as well as Christ, is called "the light of the world". Those who are the salt of the earth have been removed, and according to the

theory of these pre-tribulation rapturists, the special ministry of the Holy Ghost has terminated. But now people are represented as resolved to "keep our hearts attuned to the Word of God as we await the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ". We venture the statement that there is nothing in Christian Science, nor Russellism, nor Modernism more unscriptural than this position.

But we have not yet done. Here is a news item from Fort Worth, Texas:

"An evangelist addressing a radio audience here yesterday afternoon was explaining the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ when he suddenly vanished. He had just stated all Christians who were looking for the coming of the Lord would some day vanish in the rapture of the church, which was the first stage of the event."

On the third page, a two-column heading reads: "New York Pastor gives his Opinion". This New York Pastor was evidently a bit of a Modernist and was left behind. In his interview we are told:

"He declared in making a survey of his congregation this morning he noted only those who believed the Bible account of the literal coming of Christ were missing. None of the liberal element were classed among those missing."

Of course the implication of the whole matter is that the Editor of "The News" puts into the mouth of this preacher something of what he, himself, believes. Do our pre-tribulation rapture friends teach that belief in the Bible account of the literal coming of Christ is a *sine qua non* of salvation? We had always supposed that belief in Christ as the Saviour was the indispensable requirement of salvation, but apparently we are to believe all the vagaries of this brand of millennialism if we are to be saved. This Pastor who was left we are told:

"Pointed out the Bible clearly foretold the Lord's coming was in two aspects, the 'rapture' and the 'glorious appearing'. These are believed seven years apart."

This unprepared preacher was evidently versed in the ideas of Darbyism, whether he knew his Bible or not.

The alleged interview concludes with these words:

"Tell people to get their Bibles out and read them so they will not be deceived.

"He requested his name be not mentioned, but stated he would announce later a sermon on the subject for the coming Sunday."

We are sorry to find that this Pastor, notwithstanding the rapture, was still not courageous enough to give his name.

Another news item in this strange sheet is as follows: "LOST AT SEA":

"A large passenger liner reported by radio to-day eight missionaries returning from Africa had mysteriously disappeared at sea. After turning about to make a search, the vessel proceeded, since no trace of them could be found."

It would appear, therefore, that there is a bit of humanitarianism left on earth, or at least, at sea, after the rapture, for the vessel did turn about and try to find its lost passengers.

The last page of this sheet has a large heading as follows: "Two Strangers Prophecy". The sub-heading is "Appear Suddenly in Jerusalem Last Night", and the third, "Claim they are the 'Two Witnesses'." This

article is said to be written by a staff reporter. In the centre there is an editor's note as follows:

"Last night at about midnight, a few minutes after the mysterious disappearance of many citizens, two strangers appeared on the streets of Jerusalem and began addressing the crowd in front of the Post-office building. Police placed them under arrest and they were taken to jail for safekeeping. A reporter interviewing the men in their cells summarized their testimony as here given."

Among the things which the staff reporter reports as having been said by the two witnesses are:

"Not all Christians were ready for the Lord's coming. Some of them were like the Five Foolish Virgins, having no oil in their lamps. (Matt. 25: 1-13)."

So here you have a selective rapture. The two witnesses are represented as saying, among other things:

"The Great War that has been raging will end in a truce with the division of the European governments into two classes—the Communists and the Fascists, with Russia heading one and Italy the other. The defeat of the British yesterday gives the final power to Italy and the peace negotiations, which you may expect at once, will complete the Revived Roman Empire in its final League of Ten Nations form. (Daniel 2: 40-45)."

We cannot quote the whole article, It is enough to say that the two witnesses are made to teach what this wild man in Ohio evidently believes.

Yesterday afternoon we had a visit from our good friend, Mr. Frederic Buhler, who graduated from Toronto, Baptist Seminary last Spring, and will soon return to France. We read extracts from this paper to him, and make no apology for saying that we both laughed heartily at much of it. But having passed the paper to him, Mr. Buhler said: "According to the point of view of this Editor, there must be some pretty, sound theologians still left after the rapture, for 'The News' supposed to be edited and printed after all the saints have gone, has a two and one-half column article entitled: "What next?" And this article appearing the day after the rapture, contains an outline of the whole pre-millennial position.

Why This Article?

We have written thus only to show to what absurd extremes this pre-tribulation rapturism leads. We do not say, of course, that all such rapturists would go to such extreme as is here represented; but we say that these theories have the germ of just such absurdities at their heart. We may well heed the scriptural admonition to gird up the loins of our mind, and pray that the Lord may give us "the spirit . . . of power, and of love, and of a sound mind".

Let no one mistake our own attitude. We believe the Bible to be the inspired and infallible word of God. We believe in the Second personal, visible, audible coming of Christ. We do not believe that conditions of life generally associated with the idea of a millennial reign of Christ on earth will be gradually effected by any evolutionary process, working through educational, legislative, or social agencies. We believe the church will be raptured at the coming of Christ; but we do not believe such rapture will be secret, or seven or any number of years in advance of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. We believe such lunacy as is represented by "The News" must tend to discredit the whole doctrine of "The blessed hope." If others agree with us, write us.

PREMIER ABERHART

Premier Aberhart of Alberta has been front page "news" in Canadian papers for some time, and has not wholly escaped mention in the British press. We have long been minded to write a few words about him, and at length we essay the task while Mr. Aberhart is still "news".

We met the present Premier of Alberta some years ago in Calgary. No one, we think, who knows him, will doubt his sincerity, nor the benevolence of his purposes. Mr. Aberhart is, above everything else, a religious man. He was a high school teacher for many years in Calgary, but we do not believe Mr. Aberhart himself would object to our saying that his high school teaching was his avocation, while he conceived his vocation to consist in expounding the Bible according to his understanding of its teaching. Mr. Aberhart was formerly a Baptist, and for years, we believe, taught a Sunday afternoon Bible class, and broadcast his Bible class lesson. Then he built what he called the Prophetic Bible Institute, which is a fairly commodious building, seating, we should judge, perhaps from six to eight hundred people. Of this organization Mr. Aberhart was the chief, and we suppose is still.

The Premier of Alberta would generally be called, religiously, a dispensationalist. We have always admired Mr. Aberhart's devotion to what he believed to be the truth, and his fearlessness in proclaiming it. Furthermore, it would be impossible to come into any association with him without feeling that he was a man of very considerable personal force. But on hearing something of his religious views, we were inclined to think that any ordinary believer would feel a sense of amazement.

On the occasion of our first meeting with Mr. Aberhart in Calgary, by his invitation we spoke in his Institute auditorium. Later when he was in Toronto, we invited him to speak one Sunday morning in Jarvis St. That was the only time we ever heard him. His peculiar dispensationalism cropped out in nearly every sentence. We allowed it to pass, however, thinking that less harm would be done in that way than by calling attention to it by any attempt at correction.

From then until now Mr. Aberhart has been, to us, rather an interesting psychological study. Making full allowance for his religious zeal, his evident sincerity, and assuming his motives in all his religious work to be of the highest quality, one cannot help wondering how ever a man of such peculiar mentality obtained so large a following. Mr. Aberhart impressed us as a man who was mentally and religiously very short-sighted. His mind works in a very narrow sphere. His mental outlook reminds one of the remark of a farmer in the middle States, who meeting a man from New York, asked whence he came. Learning he was from New York, he asked, "And whar is that?" The stranger told him it was about fifteen hundred miles east. The countryman looked at him in amazement and remarked: "I shouldn't have thought you would want to live so fur." Mr. Aberhart's world is a very real one, and anyone who lives any distance away, by his estimation would live pretty "fur". To this Albertan's mental consciousness the things which he does not believe simply have no existence.

After hearing Mr. Aberhart, we looked upon him and his Institute as, together, constituting a sign of

the times. In point of numbers and influence, what would be called the success of Mr. Aberhart's venture, was only a proof that the crudest, most unreasonable, most unscriptural, ideas find ready reception and approval with many people, if only presented with dogmatic force. The amazing thing to us is that anyone would ever take Mr. Aberhart's religious views seriously. We know nothing of his political career beyond what we have read in the papers; but a mentality giving forth such religious teaching as Mr. Aberhart's, we should imagine might prove capable of almost anything. We imagine that whatever sane economists took the trouble to pay any attention to the Douglasism known as Social Credit, must have regarded it as the circuitous prattlings of a harmless lunatic. How anybody in the world outside of an asylum could accept the economic lunacy known as Social Credit passes all understanding. Mr. Aberhart's Bible teaches that "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread", and again: "If any would not work, neither should he eat".

A promise to pay twenty-five dollars a month dividends to every adult Albertan citizen, could be made only by a political adventurer, or else by a sincere man who was mentally incapable of understanding the implications of the multiplication table. The proposal to extract blood from a stone would not be more absurd than Mr. Aberhart's whole political programme. We are not in the least surprised at it, for such absurdly impossible proposals are quite appropriate to Mr. Aberhart's religious mentality.

But what shall be said of the mass psychology exemplified in this political phenomenon of Alberta? Notwithstanding our supposed superior intelligence, growing out of general education, it really does appear as though not one man in a thousand ever uses his brain to think. On the other hand it may have been a case of "any port in a storm". We have known people afflicted with cancer who were ready to try the remedies of any medical charlatan who comes along. They will set aside all honest medical practitioners to drink some nameless concoction brewed from weeds by an Indian squaw. Such sufferers act on the principle: "All that a man hath will he give for his life", and on the further maxim that a drowning man will grasp at a straw.

All Canadians will sympathize with the sad plight of some of the Western provinces, particularly Saskatchewan and Alberta. Perhaps in sheer desperation the people grasped at Mr. Aberhart's promise, which, perhaps, to many was all the more attractive because made by a man who was known as a religious leader.

But Mr. Aberhart goes from bad to worse. He has not a legal mind, and has recently passed legislation which the Dominion Government has been compelled to disallow on account of its unconstitutionality. Apparently Mr. Aberhart intended to compel the banks to pay his unearned dividends out of other people's money. Now he defies the Dominion Government, and declares he will enforce his legislation.

Elsewhere in this paper we have discussed the vagaries of dispensationalism. We would not suggest that all dispensationalists might prove capable of Mr. Aberhart's follies; but we do say there is a close kinship between Mr. Aberhart's religious and political concepts. If Mr. Aberhart had been a sound theologian he would have known that perpetual grace is a divine prerogative. The richest man, or government, on earth,

would inevitably be brought to want were he, or it, to attempt a programme of giving without receiving, such as Premier Aberhart proposes. There is an old Methodist saying which though not Scripture, is scriptural, to the effect that God is not impoverished by giving, nor enriched by withholding. But pure grace such as Mr. Aberhart proposed, would require infinite resources upon which to draw. In other words, grace argues infinity, and infinity argues God.

We do not know how long the Alberta fiasco will last, but sooner or later Mr. Aberhart will finish his course, and the people will be disillusioned, and when that day comes then will be brought to pass that which is written elsewhere than in the Bible:

"Humpty-Dumpty sat on the wall,
Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses, and all the king's men,
Could not put Humpty-Dumpty together again."

Being neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, we refrain from giving the exact date of the fulfilment of the above prophecy.

A FEW SUGGESTIVE LETTERS

Among many letters received recently we print the following. One is from a Toronto address, dated August 27th:

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"As a thank offering to God for your restoration to health and strength, I am enclosing herewith a postal money order for \$10.00, which please use for THE GOSPEL WITNESS Fund.

"May God's rich blessing rest upon you in your great work.

"Yours sincerely, _____"

This generous gift is all the more appreciated because the donor is not a member of Jarvis St. Church, but is, however, a subscriber to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and we suppose feels that the continuance of THE GOSPEL WITNESS was dependent upon the Editor's restoration to health. If it did not involve a personal element, we should be disposed earnestly to exhort our readers to follow this brother's example, for THE GOSPEL WITNESS Fund is always in need of help.

Another letter is from Ottawa. We suppress the name and street address:

August 26th, 1937

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"Just a line to let you know that we are pleased you are back in your pulpit again. We enclose \$15.00 for the Seminary.

From Mr. and Mrs. _____"

A third letter comes from the Province of Quebec, and addressed to THE GOSPEL WITNESS reads as follows:

"Dear Sirs:

"Please find enclosed \$10.15. \$2.00 for renewal of my subscription to THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The balance to help the work of the Seminary.

Mrs. _____"

Another letter from the same town in Quebec reads as follows:

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"I enclose a money order for \$5.00 for the Seminary from an old lady to whom I pass on my GOSPEL WITNESS. She had seen your appeal for help, and although not in good circumstances she feels she would like to help, so I offered to forward it to you. Will you please acknowledge receipt of it to Mrs. _____"

"I do thank God that He has restored you to health again, to take up your great work for Him.

"May He ever bless you,

Yours very sincerely,

Mrs. _____"

(Continued on page 12)

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 3rd Quarter Lesson 37 September 12th, 1937

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

TEACHING OF CHRIST ON PRAYER AND SINCERITY

Lesson Text: Luke 11.

Golden Text: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—Luke 11:9.

I. TEACHING THE DISCIPLES TO PRAY—verses 1-13.

The request of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray", was doubtless pleasing to the Saviour. He Himself had been praying, and His face shone with glory, while His life manifested such grace and truth (1 John 1:1, 2), that the disciples yearned to explore the path of prayer, with their Master as guide.

1. The Pattern of Prayer—verses 1-4. Compare Matt. 6:9-13.

Christ did not purpose to dictate the words which the disciples should use in prayer, but He gave them a representative prayer, one which would embody the main principles of prayer. Christian prayer should not be a formal exercise, but a spontaneous expression of the thoughts of the heart in fellowship with the Lord. It is not like the pagan prayers, magic charms, the spells of which would be broken if one word were added, omitted, or changed (Matt. 6:7).

Prayer is possible because God is our Father (John 1:12). He is not like a monarch without interest in the petitioner, or like a pagan deity who must be propitiated. He knows our need (Matt. 6:8), but bids us come and make our requests known (Phil. 4:6). He seeks the means of pouring blessing upon His children.

Prayer includes adoration, worship, thanksgiving and a desire for the increase of the glory of God (verse 2), and it also includes personal requests, arising from a sense of need (verses 3 and 4). He bids us come to Him, in full confidence that every need will be supplied (Phil. 4:19); for He is able and willing to give bountifully (Eph. 3:20). He promises forgiveness of sins to those who make confession to Him (1 John 1:9).

2. Persistency in Prayer—verses 5-10.

Parables are usually intended to convey a particular lesson, and the meaning should not be strained to cover all the details of the comparison. Our Lord is not reluctant to help, as was the host in the parable, who was unprepared to meet the sudden demand; He is more willing to give than we are to receive. The parable teaches the value of persistent, importunate, earnest, believing prayer (Jas. 5:16; Luke 18:1), a continued looking to the Lord for blessing, but always in a spirit of submission. Notice the figures used to denote the simplicity and directness of prayer-asking (Jas. 4:3), seeking (Jer. 29:13), and knocking (Luke 13:25). God hears the cry of those who take Him at His word (1 John 5:14, 15).

3. The Promise of Prayer—verses 11-13.

A human father, with all his faults, will yet give to his son the earthly provision he seeks, and not a harmful substitute. So surely will the heavenly Father give the Divine provision of the Holy Spirit to those who ask. At Pentecost, in answer to believing prayer (Acts 1:14), and in accordance with His promise (Luke 24:49; John 14:16, 17), the Holy Spirit was bestowed. Since that time He dwells in the heart of every believer (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 13:5).

II. ACCUSING THE CRITICS OF INSINCERITY—Verses 14-36.

1. The Critics Who Impugned His Motives—verses 14-28.

Compare Matt. 12:22-37, 43-45.

The miracles of Christ were beyond dispute. All that His critics could do was to charge Him with performing them by the power of Satan. Our Lord attempted to point out the unreasonableness of their charge, which amounted to attributing to Satan the destruction of his own kingdom. Again, if their accusation were correct, Satanic power would also account for the exorcisms practised by many sons of Israel who made money by driving out demons (Acts 19:13).

The fact that Satan's stronghold was being despoiled showed the superiority of the Saviour's power.

These exorcists were really enemies of Christ, even though they seemed to perform miracles, for they did not act under His authority. A sample of the incompleteness of their work is given in verses 24 to 26. They might expel the demons from the body of a man temporarily, but the evil spirits were not vanquished, and might return with disastrous results.

The people marvelled at the wisdom with which our Lord answered His enemies. His mother according to the flesh, Mary, was indeed "blessed among women" (Luke 1:28), but so are they who hear and obey the word of God (Luke 8:19-21).

2. The Critics Who Desired a Sign—verses 29-36.

Compare Matt. 12:38-42.

To those who demanded a sign from heaven (verse 16), our Saviour cited the sign of Jonah saying that as Jonah was a sign to his generation in his preaching and in his marvellous deliverance so would the Son of man be in His teaching, and in His resurrection (John 20:30). Christ disclosed their insincerity when He pointed out that, although the sign was sufficient for believing hearts, yet they would not be convinced by His words or by His works (John 14:11), nor even by His resurrection (Luke 16:31). The Queen of Sheba who accepted the wisdom of Solomon, and the heathen city of Nineveh which believed the message of Jonah and repented, would be witnesses against those who thus openly rejected the claims of Christ.

The true Light was shining, though they remained in darkness (verses 33-36). If the people in a house are to move in the light, the lamp must be placed where it can be seen, and each individual must have good sight. The eye is the organ of the body fitted to receive the rays of light from without, and when the eyes, focus properly, and are not diseased, one may take advantage of the light, and use arms, feet and the whole body to advantage. The heart is the eye of the soul (Matt. 6:21, 22), and when it exhibits singleness and sincerity of purpose, being focused upon Christ, the whole personality will be illumined (John 8:12). If the heart be insincere, and not ready to receive the light from above, darkness will reign. Christ Himself was the Light, shining clearly before them, but they saw not His beauty, for they loved darkness rather than light (John 1:5; 3:19), and their evil hearts were filled with unbelief.

III. ACCUSING THE PHARISEES OF INSINCERITY—verses 37-44.

Compare Matt. 23:13-35; Mark 12:38-40.

The Pharisees were a religious sect, the members of which were moral, zealous and self-denying. They observed scrupulously the ceremonies for outward cleansing (Mark 7:2-4; Matt. 15:1-3), but foolishly showed no desire for inward purity. They were full of "hypocrisy and iniquity". Although they obeyed the law in some matters, they omitted "the weightier matters of the law", the principles of justice, love and faith, on which the law was based. They coveted the honours of leadership, without having the ability to pay the price. They pretended to have influence, but that influence was not good; people became defiled through contact with these hypocrites ere they realized it, as one might unconsciously step on a grave, and be defiled through contact with a dead body.

IV.—ACCUSING THE LAWYERS OF INSINCERITY—verses 45-54.

The lawyers or scribes were the writers who made copies of the Scriptures, kept records of the decisions of the rabbis, the legends and traditional commentaries on the law, and who claimed to be the authoritative religious leaders.

Christ reproached them for enforcing the injunctions and the law and their own traditions, without sympathy for the people. Pretending to be the keepers of the law, they continued the fanatical work begun by their fathers, who had persecuted the prophets of God from Abel (Gen. 4:8), to Zacharias (Zechariah, 2 Chron. 24:20-22). Their guilt would be punished.

These learned men, who should have been teachers, knew not the wisdom of God themselves, and kept the people from receiving a knowledge of Him by obscuring the meaning of the law with their fanciful interpretations. The anger of the scribes and Pharisees proved that the charges Christ made against them were true.

A FEW SUGGESTIVE LETTERS

(Continued from page 10)

And This From Australia

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"Herewith my two dollars for another ten dollars' worth of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I wish I could pay what it is worth! Anyway, it is too good to miss.

"We have been sorry to know that the Lord has allowed you to be laid aside for a period. The news of you is good. He has His mysterious ways of preparing His people for farther fruitfulness. 'Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit'.

"May you soon be well to bring forth more fruit, and may the Divine, which is the only, blessing rest upon Jarvis St.

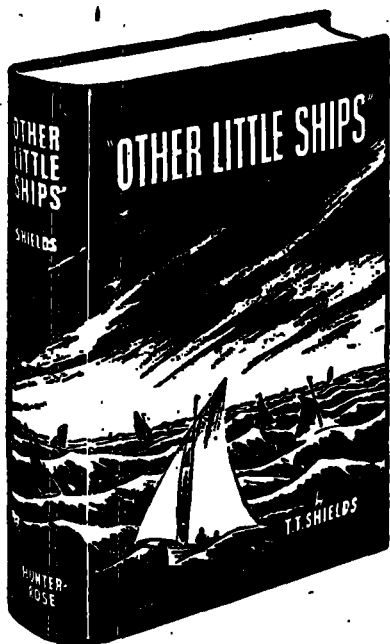
"Heartiest Christian greetings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

In addition to these letters, during the last few days the office received an undesignated gift from a lady in Toronto, of \$10.00, a gift from a friend in Chicago, who said Jarvis St. and its work was next on his list to share in the Lord's money. He sent \$5.00. Other gifts to the Seminary included one of 75c, one from Quebec of \$1.00, one from Montreal of \$5.00, another of \$10.00, one from a Seminary graduate in New York State, \$2.00 and from an out-of-town member a gift of \$2.00. A gift to THE GOSPEL WITNESS fund of \$10.00 came from a friend in England, and yet another from England, of \$1.00. Three other GOSPEL WITNESS gifts were as follows: From a Jarvis St. member, \$1.00, from a friend in Bothwell, Ont., \$5.00, and from a friend in Arrow Park, B.C., \$1.00. A lady in Toronto sent \$5.00 for the work in Geraldton, and an anonymous supporter sends \$1.00 for tent work in the North.

We note the receipt of these amounts in the heat of the summer time, to show that many of our friends do not forget the work. We hope also that the reading of these letters will be suggestive to a great many of our GOSPEL WITNESS friends.

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