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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 CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRESENT WORLD CONFUSION

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, September 12th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?"

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,

"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

"Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."—Psalm II.

Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that in the long history of the world there has never been quite the same international confusion as that which obtains to-day. I think it would be within the truth to remark that never from the beginning have such inestimable potentialities of destruction been placed in human hands as are subject to the caprice of human wills to-day. There was a time not so very long ago when the apostles of the evolutionary *delusion*, as I prefer to call it, told us that the human race was everywhere emerging from its primitive savagery, and by educational and legislative governmental processes the day of reason and of universal understanding was about to dawn.

I remember being told by a man of great prominence in this country, a former Speaker of the House of Commons, only a few months before the outbreak of the Great War, that war on a large scale had become an impossibility. Men imagined that the veneer of civilization indicated a radical change in human nature itself. Then a pistol shot at Sarajevo split the veneer, and it

began to peel off. The Great War followed, and we learned that human nature universally was just as savage as it ever had been.

President Wilson conceived a great idea, but his ideal was predicated upon a false conception. The League of Nations was built upon a foundation that was unreal. It failed to take account of the inherent selfishness—indeed, wickedness—of human nature. Almost immediately his own country illustrated the principle by refusing to be a party to the League which its own President had created. It was not very many years—I have not time to trace all the steps—until Japan, when finding the League would not serve her purpose, withdrew from it, that she might, without restraint, pursue her own course. Mussolini and Hitler and Stalin were all prepared to use the League, if they could, for their own purposes. The League of Nations was about as useful as a Convention committee, or a Royal Commission, to whose conclusions and reports nobody pays any attention. It has proved to be a convenient way of shelving difficulty. It may temporarily

have served the purpose of postponing conflict, but as soon as any major issue arose between the nations, it appeared that each nation was determined to have its own way at all costs. Thus the League and its ideal of collective security have together proved to be but a *will-o-the-wisp*.

What shall we do now? There was a time when England depended upon the English Channel as her major defense; and her mighty navy was the sign and symbol of her security and her liberty. We justly are proud—or perhaps I ought rather to say, grateful—for the fact that the long boundary line between us and our neighbours to the south requires no fortification. Why should it, as between peoples of the same language, and largely of the same cultural development? But England is different. There is no analogy between conditions obtaining on this Continent, between Canada and the United States, and conditions obtaining in Europe, where different races and different nations, with the roots of bitterness embedded deeply in the history of the past, make permanent international amity almost impossible. We are proud that there has been no armed conflict as between nations on the North American Continent for so long, but armed conflict has been unknown in the British Isles for a still longer period than in America, thanks chiefly to her geographical situation, although the Channel is a comparatively narrow water. Napoleon was once asked if he had ever elaborated a plan to land an army in England; to which he replied that he had conceived many of them, but that he had been unable to evolve a plan to get them out again.

But those conditions are past. Only a few days ago a big aeroplane went over Toronto. It had crossed the Atlantic from land to land in a little over twelve hours. Not long ago twenty-five or thirty aeroplanes roared their way over this city toward Chicago, whither they were bound from Rome. I am a Canadian, loyal to all things Canadian; but I think we have a very selfish outlook. In times of crises, I believe every part of the Empire, and every one of the self-governing Dominions, ought to be in haste to place itself at the side of the Mother-country. We may well rest in the assurance that her forces will never be used in aggressive warfare, but only in such conflicts as are indispensable to human happiness and liberty. But we fancy that because we are on this side of the Atlantic, we are very safe. So does the United States. We may both be wrong.

As one looks out over the world to-day, surely he would be a bold man who would dare to make a prediction of what a day or an hour may bring forth. There was a time when we imagined our statesmen, conversant with all the inner workings of foreign governments, through the agency of secret service, were capable of disentangling the international skein; but we have lived to see that statesmen do not know much more about it than we do. They have had to withdraw from their positions. They have had to admit they were mistaken. And now it looks as though the rulers of the world were groping in the dark, scarcely knowing what to do, while Europe—I do not know to what it might accurately be likened. I was going to say it is like a collection of snarling dogs; but I have a dog, and were I to employ such a comparison I should have to apologize to him when I go home. But every nation

is snarling at other nations, like wild beasts of the jungle. All the usual restraints of diplomacy are laid aside.

I heard the wife of the generalissimo of China, speaking over the radio last evening, describe Japan as a lying nation, who could not tell the truth. Nations are beginning to call each other names like that—and perhaps they are telling the truth in doing so—robbers, plunderers, pirates, and I know not what. Such epithets are hurled back and forth between nations that are supposed to be on terms of amity with each other!

Who can find a solvent for these problems? How can we find a way out of the universal confusion? Is there a distinctively Christian point of view? Has the religion of the Lord Jesus any communication to make to us in circumstances like these? Are they correct who assume that the Bible has to do only with our individual, personal, salvation, and with our individual conduct? That it has nothing to say about methods of government, and no message to the rulers of the world? Is it silent respecting national and international relationships and world-affairs?

The Bible is the biggest book in the world. It is the word of the Infinite. It is unlike any other book: there is not a chapter in it that needs deletion, not a passage that is obsolete. Nor is it at any point inadequate to meet the present situation—or any situation. It is the Word of God; and “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” A friend told me that he once heard Mr. Spurgeon pray something after this fashion, “Lord, teach us to wear Jesus Christ upon our eyeballs.” What he doubtless meant was, Teach us to look upon life from the divine standpoint—not to take a bird’s eye view of history past and present, not merely to use our imagination in our attempt to forecast the future, but, through the medium of the Word of God to look down upon a world of confusion, and yet see the hand of God in it all.

At this late date, folly is written upon all those philosophies which would teach us that a time would come when we should have no need of the saving grace of God. Here it is, up-to-the-minute: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?”

I.

OBSERVE THE WORLD’S ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD—One of insensate rage.

I do not suppose the psychiatrists would agree with me when I say that no man or woman can be perfectly sane until Christ is established as the standard of all his judgments. The great Apostle Paul spoke of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”. We can wisely and truly think only when we think in the light of the Book.

This psalm is not prophecy only. Mr. Whitcombe read to you of its partial fulfilment in the days of the apostles, for when they had been let go, and had gone to their own company, having just been released from those who had been in opposition to their gospel, they turned to the Word for comfort, and found in this prophetic psalm a description of the experience through which they had passed. The heathen raged, and the people imagined vain things, for, said they, “Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together”—what for?—“to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Poor fools they were!

I received a letter last week from someone in England, someone who had read something of mine, who was kind enough to want more. But he said, "I suppose you will not agree with me doctrinally: I am a Calvinist." He was mistaken. For Calvinism is only another name for the gospel, the cardinal, central principle of which is that God is absolutely sovereign. But hear the people rage—against whom? Against such disclosure of God as is found in the person of Jesus Christ. That is the religion which men, in their natural state, hate. I know it can be diluted and modified, weakened to suit the natural palate, but the Christ of God is still unwelcome in His own world; and it is true that the rulers of our day "take counsel together" against Him.

Perhaps, such rage in our day finds a new and wider expression. Our improved methods of transportation have made neighbours of those who live remote from each other, and the radio has made the world a vast whispering gallery. International boundaries no longer restrict communication. We can listen to China, Germany, France, Spain, or Russia, and if we know their language, hear what they have to say. Such special opposition to God as is here described is noted in Russia, where Communism declares that, having destroyed the earthly Czar, its next business is to destroy the heavenly Czar. You have heard of their famous cartoon of a ladder reaching to heaven, and a Communist climbing up with a hammer in hand to destroy God. Ludendorf, in Germany, with his religion of paganism is no better. Nor is it new there, for they have taken counsel together "against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." We are seeing now, in these nations, only the harvest of what has long been sown.

The native human rage against God described in this psalm, lies at the base of all opposition to the Bible, and to the super-naturalism of the Christian religion. It is a naked antagonism to God as He is, and as He reveals Himself, in Christ. Nor need we go to Russia or Germany to find it. You will meet it in the office and the workshop to-morrow, in your social circle; it may be you will find it in your own home. If you propound the great principles of the Bible as rules of conduct, as a philosophy of life, someone will say, "Nonsense"—I was going to use a common word—"That is all bunk. We have outgrown that. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. We will not be ruled by that."

You will meet it in domestic life, in business life, in educational affairs, and more is the pity, in religious life. Much of the religion of to-day is not only divorced from the person of Christ, but is divorced from His Book—"Let us cast away their cords from us." I think many will agree that that principle and spirit are illustrated to an extraordinary degree, over a very wide area of the world's surface to-day.

II.

WHAT MUST FOLLOW? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." We have been laughed at for believing the Book, but our day is coming. I fear I have erred in not more frequently dealing with the philosophical pygmies who call themselves scholars, who set aside the testimony of all the ages. But I have used their own weapons against them, and would do so to-night.

What fools they are! I think it was Spurgeon who used to say that "philosopher" might be spelled with four letters—two of them alike! Not always, of course. But in the present situation, I submit that the Word of God is the regnant Book. It is the truth that needs no amendment. It is the Voice that says, "You are catching up with me, are you? I told you so"—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

That is a terrible word. When Jesus Christ was upon earth, and He went into the ruler's house and said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth", "they laughed him to scorn." But it is proverbially true that he laughs best who laughs last. We have forgotten this aspect of the gospel. The modern preacher—I would not be irreverent, or exaggerate his mis-representation of God, but I am within the mark when I say that many a modern preacher preaches a god who is a kind of benevolent grandmother, with no element of justice, or righteousness, or truth in his character; with no arm to govern, and no sword in his hand to punish. It is an untrue picture of God. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Sooner or later He will laugh at His enemies. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Some years ago I was in Indiana, and narrowly escaped a cyclone—or it escaped me! It covered the suburbs of the city where I was preaching, Evansville, I think it was, in the southern part of Indiana. When I came out by train that night I saw something of the fearful havoc it had wrought, when many lives were lost and property destroyed. I have never seen such destruction anywhere, although I went over the battlefields in France and Belgium. Subsequently I preached on the subject, "Does God control earthquakes and tornadoes?" Following the publication of the sermon, someone sent me a copy of *The Christian World* in which the sermon was reviewed. The preacher was held up to scorn, under an editorial, entitled something like this, "The madness of Fundamentalists". The idea of a personal God controlling the forces of nature! But so the Bible teaches; and we wonder sometimes that the Lord does not let His artillery loose. Here it is said that in His own time He will visit men for their opposition.

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." If now the world should be visited with appalling disaster in Europe or elsewhere—I am no pessimist as I shall show you presently—no living man could justly complain to Heaven against it. A godless world has asked for it. Even in so-called Christian nations, there has been an all but universal rejection of the authority of God's Word and of His Christ. But He will laugh at the vain imaginings of men, and answer in due time. Do not let us forget that that day is coming.

If there is a man here who is not a Christian, let me say in all kindness, that He Whom we know as "the Man of Nazareth", from Whose lips gracious words proceeded, Who Himself said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest", Who wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes", He Who is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world", is yet to become the Warrior—Lamb: the Bible speaks of "the wrath of the

Lamb". Let us never forget that the manifestation of Deity in the person of Christ is a revelation of God in His gracious attitude toward sinful men, but be it remembered also that behind it all are all the qualities of Deity, and He shall yet speak in His wrath, and vex this old earth in His sore displeasure.

Then the Son speaks. Where did you meet Jesus Christ, in the New Testament? You have not met Him if you think of Him as beginning there. The Son speaks. Messiah speaks. We hear much about the breaking of agreements, tearing up of treaties, the violation of covenants, the nations' disregard for their pledged word. Here is One Who says, almost as though He opened the book of the decrees of the Eternal saying, "I will read it: 'The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee'."

In these days of democracy, Fascism, Nazi-ism, and all other political isms of Europe and elsewhere, men are inclined to laugh at the doctrine of the divine right of kings. I do not blame them, so far as mere men are concerned. But here is a King Who is King by divine right, and He says, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The earth is His. He was born to it, divinely begotten, "the firstborn from the dead", says the New Testament, "that in all things he might have the preeminence."

You remember how the writer in the epistle of the Hebrews argues the superiority of Jesus Christ to all others—to priests and even to angels? "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee . . . I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." When we view them in the light of God's Word, what pygmies the world's rulers become! How little the Mussolinis and the Hitlers know! They are mere nobodies. The inhabitants of the earth, to Him, are counted as grasshoppers—and how they talk about the millions they can assemble, of their aeroplanes and navies! "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels"—and one of His chariots could destroy all the tanks of earth.

And He has ascended up where He was before. Do you know what He is doing? He is exercising an intercessory ministry, praying, "Give me the heathen for My inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for My possession." What is the meaning of conditions in Italy, and China, and Spain, and Japan, and Britain, and America? Can it be other than that a divine, sovereign, overruling hand is bringing to pass in His own way the answer to this great petition which cannot fail of fulfilment? The heathen are His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be His possessions.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." You say, "Surely! surely! that has no application to Jesus Christ? A rod of iron?" Occasionally during the days of His flesh He revealed that side of His character, as when He took the scourge of small cords and cleansed the temple, driving the money-changers out; as when on another occasion they watched to see if He would heal on the Sabbath day, and the Scripture says, "When

he had looked round about on them with anger", He healed the man. Oh, how terrible will it be when Jesus Christ becomes angry! When men shall taste of the wrath of the Lamb! When He shall lay His golden sceptre by; when He shall arise to execute judgment, what a day that will be! How indescribably terrible must be that day! How easily He can break men in pieces like a potter's vessel!

When you sit down with your newspaper before you, and read an estimate of the tonnage—I do not know whether I can find it in the dictionary, but I was going to say of the tonnage and the gunnage of the navies of the world, of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and all the rest of them, think of this Psalm. If conflict should break out, and you read of many experts estimating the probability of victory in this or that event, say to yourself, There is one Power you have not reckoned with here. You have forgotten Someone in this estimate.

You cannot eliminate God from world-affairs. That must have been a striking experience when the Romans came with staves and swords to arrest an unarmed Man, expecting to find Him, as they did, praying in the garden; and, as they, armed as though He would resist, approached Him, He looked at them and said, "Whom seek ye"—and they all fell backward. That was all He had to do, only to look at them. When proud Pharaoh of Egypt boasted that he knew not the Lord, neither would he let Israel go, and having mobilized his armies went in pursuit of the unarmed Israelites, they plunged into the watery valley which God had made through the sea, and when at last they were clear of the near shore and had not reached the other, the Bible says, "The Lord looked upon the Egyptians." He only looked—and the wheels of the chariots came off, and the horses got out of control. Moses bade the waters return, and "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore." Those supernatural powers are in reserve, and in God's good time will be called into exercise, and our glorious Lord will have His way.

But mark. In the midst of this—I deliberately passed it over—in spite of the heathen's raging, God says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." When God makes one king, he is King; and He has made the God-man King, and has set Him upon His holy hill of Zion.

I shall not argue with the dispensationalists. The New Testament says, "Ye are come unto mount Zion"—the present tense—whatever that may mean. The principle I proclaim is that in the midst of the world's confusion, and the federation of all rulers in opposition to Christ, Jesus Christ remains King. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Do not tell me He is not yet King: He is King. "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."

Men laugh at our religion, but God pity them! God have mercy upon them before it is too late! "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." He made this universe for His own glory. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain

together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." When He shall come at last, He shall take to Himself His great power and reign.

III.

WHAT IS THE CONCLUSION? "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth." Did you hear the coronation service in London? I did; every word of it, and I expect most of you did. Did you notice, in spite of all our defects, and for that at least we ought to be thankful, that in that service Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, was exalted? The King, when his obligations were presented to him in His name, said, "All this I solemnly promise to do". The Archbishop presented to him the Bible, that the King might put his hand upon it and before God swear to uphold it. I would not exaggerate the importance of that. Well do I know that some people can take solemn obligations, and they mean very little; but I do not believe it to be true of our King. However, let us hope that he has heeded this admonition, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings." We know that Queen Mary is a Christian in the evangelical sense, in the sense of being born again; and is not afraid to testify to that fact.

But it is not for kings and judges only, but for all people. In view of the absolute certainty of the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, and of the effectual out-working of all the principles of God's Word, and the fulfilment of every word of its prophecies—in view of the further fact that there is no power on earth or in hell to stay the hand of Him Who sits upon the throne—"Be wise now herefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth."

I am glad I am a Christian in these days. Sometimes when we go to the graveside, we read the Scripture for the comfort of mourning hearts, bidding them "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope". But very often I say to myself, I am not in perplexity as to the ultimate issue of this, as some who have no spiritual sight. I know that in the end of the day, be it short or long—and time is little with Him, and it shall be little to us some day—"He shall reign until all enemies be put under his feet."

Therefore, the proper attitude for the believer is to "serve the Lord with fear", to marvel at His matchless grace, never presuming upon His mercy. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." We are admonished to "rejoice with trembling". "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Looking out from our safe Refuge where the storm in its fury can never touch us, upon a troubled world, let us rejoice, but rejoice "with trembling". How wonderful that we should be saved! We are no better than others, but "where sin has abounded" He has made grace to abound, and has given us the light of His truth.

As for others, will you heed this admonition, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." I beg of you, do not longer persist in your antagonism toward Him. Let there be the kiss of reconciliation as between Jacob

and Esau. "Kiss the Son." Judas kissed Him—but kissed the Son of God to death. Let us be sincere, and kiss the Son with all that that implies. We are to take up an attitude of reverent adoration, of loving worship of the Son.

"Lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." When you might so easily take the way that leads to heaven, do not perish from the way where He meets you. Do not plunge from the place of privilege into perdition. Be afraid lest ye perish from the way. Be diligent to "make your calling and election sure"—"Kiss the Son." Oh, kiss the Son! Make sure that He is the Beloved of your soul, that you love Him above everything on earth; for if His wrath were kindled but a little, it would be the end of us; a spark of that fire—for God is a consuming fire—would utterly destroy us.

Receiving Him, we enter into the meaning of the concluding word, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!" Happy, thrice happy, are they whose God is the Lord. Do not ask me what the newspapers mean. Do not ask me for a solution of the world's problems, or a way out of the present confusion. I would rather say to you, as I say to my own soul, "Hide in this Refuge till the storm be over. Make sure that Jesus Christ is your Friend, and not your Judge; and you shall find that abundant blessedness which is the portion of those who put their trust in Him. To believe in Him is to receive Him for what this Psalm proclaims Him to be, the Anointed of the Lord, the Son of God, and God the Son, the Redeemer, Who shall some day be the Judge of all the earth. Let Him be your Saviour now, and some day there will be a wedding. Yes, some day there must be a wedding. Some day this glorious anointed One will come for His bride. Do not quarrel with me because I do not believe it will be secret. I do not like secret marriages. I cannot tolerate the idea of a divine elopement. I like to think of my glorious Lord coming down the skies to claim His blood-washed bride, and in the view of all the universe, saying, "She is mine"! So will He beyond peradventure when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all of them that believe."

Let us look for His coming, and rejoice in the prospect of His glory! So shall we at last be for ever with the Lord.

TENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Union of Regular Baptist Churches of
Ontario and Quebec

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO

October 19th to 21st

Special Speaker:

DR. HARRY HAMILTON, BUFFALO, N.Y.

THE STORY OF THE PLOT THAT FAILED

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

By T. T. SHIELDS

CHAPTER XXIII.

In my last chapter I brought my story nearly up to the meeting of June 29th, 1921, adjourned from April 29th, the adjournment having been twice extended on account of the Pastor's illness.

I knew that already a large number of people had gone on vacation, while those who transferred their summer residence from town to country had gone to the country, and, though coming in for business daily, hurried away for home as soon as business hours permitted. I knew that it would be extremely difficult to reassemble so large a number for a business meeting as gathered on April 29th. The people generally, of course, would assume that the major question had been settled, and that the adjourned Annual Meeting would deal with the election of officers and routine matters. I therefore sent out the following letter to the members of the church:

"A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR.

15 Surrey Place, Toronto, June 23, 1921.

"To the Members of Jarvis St. Baptist Church.

"My dear Friends:

"The adjourned Annual Meeting of the Church will be held next Wednesday, June 29th at eight p.m. On April 29th, by a vote of 284 to 199 the church expressed its desire that I continue in the pastorate of the church.

"It is known to all the members of the church that several of the Deacons have resigned. I am sure everyone will appreciate the necessity of electing officers and committees who are in agreement with the expressed will of the church, that the Pastor continue his work in Jarvis St.

"Personally, I believe there is no greater opportunity on the continent to build up a great church which will stand out boldly before the world as a witness for Christ and for New Testament Christianity, than in Jarvis St. To do this, however, we must put an end to contention; and this can be done only by electing to office men and women who agree with the will of the majority in the church as expressed by the vote of April 29th, and who may be relied upon to cooperate with the Pastor's ministry.

"This letter is written to urge every member who voted "yes" at the meeting on April 29th to attend next Wednesday to elect officers and committees who will make it possible for the Pastor to exercise his ministry in peace. *Please remember that every "yes" vote is as necessary next Wednesday as it was on April 29th, if the Pastor is to carry on his work.* I would remind you also that no one can vote by letter or telephone. The members who will determine the immediate future of Jarvis St. Church will be the members who attend next Wednesday, and cast their votes. *I therefore appeal to every "Yes" voter to be present at all costs, and to be sure to be on time, eight o'clock.*

"We shall meet for special prayer Monday June 27th at eight o'clock. I would venture to urge all who desire the will of the great Head of the Church to be done in Jarvis St., to attend this meeting that we may unite in praying that God will overrule all things for His own glory in Jarvis St. Church.

"Sincerely yours,

"T. T. SHIELDS.

"P.S. All being well I expect to conduct the prayer meeting, Saturday 25th. It will be my first service in Jarvis St. for seven weeks. Let us have a great rally Saturday evening. See the papers for Sunday's subjects.

T. T. S."

Unknown to me at the time another letter was sent by those who had been defeated at the April 29th meeting. When that meeting concluded, the resignation of six or seven Deacons had been submitted, and the term of office of three or four others had expired; but, thinking perhaps they would bow to the majority of the church, and not knowing as I had later to learn, how bitterly implacable religious people could become, I supposed it was possible for them to accept the church's decision and work harmoniously with the majority.

A week later, as we have seen, the Pastor was stricken with scarlet fever, and quarantined for six weeks. A day or so before the expiration of the quarantine, I received a letter enclosed in a business envelope of Mr. James Ryrie, and addressed in his handwriting. The letter bore a date, as I recall, early in the second week of May; and there was written across the corner, in Mr. James Ryrie's hand, "Held pending quarantine." The letter is stored away in the Jarvis Street archives somewhere, and it is not of sufficient importance to turn it up, as I recall the substance of its contents so vividly. It was signed by the Deacons who had resigned, and, who were retiring, and, notwithstanding the great meeting of April 29th, and the very decisive vote registered in the Pastor's favour on that occasion, notwithstanding the acceptance of their resignations had been postponed by my own motion of clemency in proposing an adjournment, the letter informed me that the members of the church who were not present demanded that I resign! Notwithstanding they had visited every solitary member of the church, and some of them many times, begging them to come out to the meeting of April 29th, they now assumed the members who had refused to respond, to be in opposition to the majority voting on April 29th! Thus elections are to be determined by the voters who stay at home and will not go to the polls! How dangerous the argument from silence! And how easy it is to put words into the mouths of people who are absent, and quote them as in support of one's position. The letter served only to show me there was no change of heart on the part of these Deacons, and that further war was to be expected.

It was therefore not surprising to learn that in preparation for the meeting of June 29th, my opponents had sent out a most scurrilous letter. That my readers may know the spirit of the opposition, I print the letter in full, not even deleting the names of those who signed it. It may be that some of them have since repented, but if they have, they have not said so; and therefore I must let their names stand. I ask my readers to ponder this letter carefully, especially those among the WITNESS readers who are themselves pastors.

Following the letter, I shall point out that it was a tissue of misrepresentations from beginning to end. Sixteen years have passed since these events occurred, and some of the outlines of the story had grown somewhat dim in my memory. I therefore endeavoured, in my earlier chapters, to cover with a mantle of charity the actions of some people, which had their place in leading

up to the crisis. But coming now upon the record of later events, I find I cannot pass this record over. Were I to withhold the letter following, I should probably be charged with being afraid to insert it because it speaks in such general disparagement of the Pastor of Jarvis Street church. No one likes to read such things about himself even if they be not true; but for sixteen years God has so set His seal to the Jarvis Street ministry, the fallacy of the contentions urged in these letters has been abundantly demonstrated. But other ministers will have their troubles; other pastors will need to join with the Apostle in exhorting others to pray that they may be delivered "from unreasonable and wicked men". Many of my brethren will have already learned, and others will yet learn, that "unreasonable men" are often more difficult to deal with than men who are positively and openly "wicked".

Here follows the letter sent out by the opposition in preparation for the meeting of June 29th:

"Toronto, June 23rd, 1921.

"Members of Jarvis Street Baptist Church.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters:—

"Since the annual meeting of April 29th, 1921, at which the vote was taken as to whether the present Pastor should continue or not, many of those who voted "No" on that occasion have been asked to state their reasons for their decision.

"The opportunity to state their case was not given to those who voted on that evening against Dr. Shields' remaining pastor. Just previous to the vote being taken Dr. Shields was given an opportunity to make a statement. No further discussion was allowed and even with this favorable circumstance of a statement on his own behalf with no reply thereto, the actual vote was 284 for Dr. Shields remaining and 199 against and in addition there were six ballots cast which recorded no vote.

"We have always rejoiced in our fellowship with the members of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, which with most of us has extended over many years, even long before the present pastorate began. The harmony, co-operation and spiritual power of our membership through the more than ninety years of its history has made Jarvis Street Baptist Church an outstanding Christian influence, not only in the City of Toronto, but throughout the whole country. This has been true in every department of the Church's activities.

"We believe that the inharmonious, unsatisfactory and deplorable condition that exists in Jarvis Street Church today is not to be accounted for from any lack of spirituality, as the Pastor has publicly stated. We are firmly convinced that this condition is the inevitable result of the Pastor's administration of the Church's affairs.

"Permit us to ask you to explain the discord in and consequent resignation from the Board of Deacons.

"Why the Pastor's lack of continued interest in the Sunday School? If we are to hold the young life of the Church the Pastor must show a sympathetic interest in their welfare. The foundation for the Jarvis Street Church of tomorrow is now being laid today.

"Why the disintegration of and lack of sympathy with our Young People's work?

"Our Young People's Society was, when our Pastor came to us, in a flourishing condition, meetings being held every Monday evening. After the first year of the new pastorate the work slowed up, there being practically no co-operation. In order to secure co-operation some of the ideas of the Pastor were tried out and for a time instructional classes were held, the Young People's Society gradually being superseded by a work that did not seem to require an active organization. Finally when these instructional classes were discontinued there was no organization left and the work among young people, was at a standstill until Rev. Mr. Merrill organized the Young People's Federation. For some three years this organization was carried on, linking up the Adult Bible Classes, Teachers, Choir and Young People of the congregation; now by the Pastor's apparent lack of interest and sympathy and without Mr. Merrill as a leader in such work the workers are thoroughly disheartened.

"Why the lack of harmony between the Pastor and the Choir?

"Why the Pastor's interference with the Finance Committee? In view of the extra contributions from the members toward the Forward Movement and in view of generally increased expenses of the Church work, this committee as a whole deemed it wise to secure pledges from those who could afford to increase their subscriptions before any increase in the Pastor's salary was made. The wisdom of this suggestion has now been made apparent by the fact that, whilst voting to increase the Pastor's salary by \$2,000.00 per annum, only seven contributors have increased their subscriptions by an amount totaling \$1.65 per week and we are now falling behind at the rate of about \$750.00 per month.

"Why the resignation of those who have been Dr. Shields' associates? First one, then another; for instance, Rev. Mr. Merrill whom the majority of the Church had learned to love because of his kindly and unselfish ministry. It cannot be said that brotherly love prompted Dr. Shields to charge him with disloyalty. The public testimonial imposed upon Rev. Mr. Merrill and the flattering remarks made concerning him are strangely in contrast with the unfair and unkind demand for his resignation in private. This unseemly incident of last October challenged the confidence that many had in the Pastor and grieved them sorely. Many Sunday School teachers, Church members and adherents became dissatisfied and critical and, when later the question of an increase in Dr. Shields' stipend was brought up at Dr. Shields' own request, the resolution carried with but a bare majority of five or six votes.

"Why the Pastor's non-acquaintance with so many members of the Church and his seeming lack of interest in their home life? The sick, the infirm and the sorrowing, still complain of lack of visitation.

THE PASTOR HAS MADE THE STATEMENT THAT THOSE WHO ONCE SUPPORTED HIM AND WHO ARE NOW AT VARIANCE WITH HIM HAVE NO DESIRE FOR A NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY. WE TAKE CLEAR AND DEFINITE ISSUE WITH HIM ON THIS POINT AND DECLARE THAT JARVIS STREET ALWAYS HAS AND DOES NOW STAND FOR A CHRISTLIKE PRESENTATION OF THE VERITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"Willing, consecrated Christian workers, many of whom have been identified with our Church for twenty-five to fifty years and who have stood for the highest ideals in denominational, business and civic life, are being forced to go to other churches.

"It is increasingly difficult to persuade men of the Church possessing the necessary qualifications to stand for deacons and officials, while some of those who stand highest in the esteem and love of the Church members are forced to resign owing to the uncongenial spirit and unchristianlike attitude of the Pastor.

"So widespread among our membership has become this dissatisfaction with Dr. Shields' leadership that we are more than ever convinced that unless Pastor Shields withdraws, a great many of our members will transfer their membership to other Baptist Churches where the leadership is more in conformity with their idea of the Christian Spirit.

"At the general meeting of the Church, called for the purpose of dealing with the questions—"Shall the Pastor continue or not?" Dr. Shields made an unfair and violent attack upon some within and without the Church, whom he imagined differed from him, and finished his address with a fervent appeal to the membership to vote for the preaching of Evangelical Truth, a question which had no part in the issue. With the issue thus confused, the vote was taken and he was credited with a support to which he was probably not entitled and he was not sustained by two-thirds of the votes cast which he demanded. Dr. Shields sent out a strong personal appeal to about nine hundred members to be out to vote at the annual meeting. It is a well known fact that it is easier to get members out to vote who are enthusiastic over a ministry than those who are disheartened through a ministry. Yet with this strong personal appeal for support only two hundred and eighty-four out of about nine hundred came out and voted for his remaining. Many disheartened members stayed away relying on his written promise that, unless he received two-thirds of the ballots cast, he would tender his resignation, such members possibly believing that he would not receive two-thirds of the ballots cast.

"Briefly stated, these are some of the conditions existing in Jarvis Street today which we believe are due to Dr. Shields' administration:—Rev. Mr. Merrill, our beloved Asso-

ciate Pastor, was driven from us; at least thirteen of our eighteen Deacons are out of sympathy with the Pastor, two of them, our revered Deacons D. E. Thomson and J. G. Scott, have already transferred their membership; the Finance Committee is at variance with him; our organist, Dr. Broome, and his faithful choir have been disrupted; a great many of the Sunday School workers and young people have been estranged from him; the House Committee are opposed to him; our Church Treasurer and our Church Clerk, who have rendered faithful service, have already tendered their resignations.

"Added to all this our records show that, whilst we had additions by baptism of thirty-six during the Church year (twelve of whom came from the Sunday School and five from the Parliament Street Branch), we still show a decrease for the year of twenty-seven in membership, whilst the other leading Baptist Churches of the City show remarkable increases. We know that numbers do not mean everything but the fact is that, exclusive of those who came to us from the Parliament Street Branch and those from our own Sunday School, our records show that since 1915—a period of six and a half years—only eighty-three members or an average of less than thirteen per annum have been added to us by baptism.

"We feel that these and other considerations which might be named should make it apparent to Dr. Shields that the time has come when he should terminate his pastorate with us, both for the sake of his own usefulness and the good of dear old Jarvis Street, which means so much to us all.

"The adjourned annual meeting is to be resumed on Wednesday, the 29th instant, at 8 P.M. It is most important that every member of the Church should attend this meeting, when the matter of the continuance of Dr. Shields' ministry shall be again considered, and it is essential that there should be a full expression of the opinion of the entire membership. You are urged to be present to record your vote at this time, the most critical in the history of Jarvis Street Church.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. E. Clarke, J. Francis Brown, James Ryrie, Albert Matthews, Gideon Grant, W. J. Lugsdin, Thomas Wilkins, Ephraim Sale, H. R. Wellington,

Members of the Deacons' Board.

"Mrs. W. R. Henderson, Mrs. J. W. Stockwell, Mrs. Jessie Gibson, Mrs. Edmund Burke, Mrs. Harry Ryrie, Mrs. Robert Lawson, Mrs. J. F. Brown, Mrs. James Ryrie,

Members of the Deaconesses' Board.

"Frank W. Merrill, J. B. McArthur, Q. B. Henderson, Edmund Gunn, H. P. L. Hillman, R. S. Stockwell,

Members of the Finance Committee.

"H. R. Wellington, Violet Elliott, C. P. Fell, Andrew McLellan,

Members of the Sunday School.

"S. E. Clarke, F. W. Scott, L. A. Henderson,

Members of the Weekly Offering Treasurers.

"W. Frank Harvey, Gladys Tolhurst, Jean McLean, Frank G. Lawson,

Members of the Young People's Federation.

"J. W. Siddall, W. A. Skirrow, A. E. Scott, Mervil MacDonald, F. B. Stockwell,

Members of the Ushers and Plate Collectors.

"J. B. Lawrason, J. E. Clarke,

Branch Workers."

We refer now to some of the matters raised in this letter. It was alleged that the Pastor lacked interest in the Sunday School. How amazing! It never was true. After I had been called, and before I settled in Jarvis Street, I was told that it was impossible to have a Sunday School of any size in Jarvis Street. At the date, under review, however, the Sunday School had been organized into a very active opposition. The Young People's Society was in such a "flourishing condition" when I first came here that it was frequently attended by about a dozen people! The instructional classes which were substituted were attended by nearly two hundred. The organization of the Young People's Federation, which stood in Mr. Merrill's name, was my own work; and I gave him the credit for it.

As to the lack of harmony between the Pastor and the choir, the Pastor had stood as a buffer between the choir and its almost numberless critics for years; and when at last he yielded, all the blame was heaped upon him.

The "interference with the Finance Committee" is amusing. Every bit of work in planning the financial affairs of the church fell to the Pastor. All preparation for everything had to be made—and then a company of men, utterly unrelated to the spiritual work of the church, were loaded on to the Finance Committee, and had to be told what to do. It is true they met in monthly meeting, and magnified their office, but it was only when they wanted to obstruct the work that they became zealous in the work of the Finance Committee.

There was one man who had sought to manipulate the Finance Committee, and to tie up the finances of the church. There were some others who said they were ashamed to belong to a church that, at a time when salaries were being increased everywhere, made no increase in their Pastor's salary; and some even proposed to go behind the Finance Committee and provide the Pastor with a supplementary income.

When I told a very discerning Pastor—I will mention his name, Dr. J. W. Hoyt, then of Peru, Indian, of my difficulty, he said to me, "Present a financial measure to the church. Make it as personal as you can; and you will bring that enemy out of his hiding place." I came back from Peru where I had been assisting my friend, and deliberately, for the purpose of doing as he suggested, told them they would increase my salary by two thousand dollars or get another Pastor.

All that Dr. Hoyt said would happen, did happen. The vote was to be taken on a Wednesday night. We had the usual very considerable company of the Wednesday evening prayer meeting—the business meeting was to follow. Just as the prayer meeting was closing, a mob swarmed into the room, among them members who never attended prayer meeting or church, but who had been whipped up by this man, and brought to this business meeting. Some of them I did not even know. When they swarmed in, filling the room, I feared that we were utterly swamped. When the letter says that the motion carried by a majority of five or six votes, it is technically correct; but it carried by the great company of people who regularly attended the prayer meeting. It was opposed by the company of absentees who had been whipped up for the occasion, many of whom never attended a service, and were never seen at a Communion Service.

But that meeting was well worth while. That and other meetings taught me the danger of having dead members on the church roll. To other pastors, I give the advice: If you would avoid trouble, keep your church roll clean.

The sincerity of the protest of those who declared they wanted nothing but "a Christlike presentation of the verities of the Christian faith", may be judged by the fact that several of the signatories were later up to the eyes in their support of Professor I. G. Matthews in McMaster University; and the pulpit of the church which they formed after they left Jarvis Street has been opened to every variety of Modernist, including Professor Marshall and Dr. T. Reavley Glover.

Many of the signatories of this letter had not been near the Sunday School in years, yet they suddenly endeavoured to attribute everything that had been done, to the Sunday School, and to say that from 1915 to

1921, only eighty-three members had been added to the church by baptism. The truth was, in that period one hundred and eighty-three had been thus added. But it was the practice then to claim every member who had ever been in attendance upon the Sunday School at any time, whether converted there or not, as a fruit of the Sunday School work. Perhaps it was: I never disputed it. To me, the work was all one. But this letter is a fine illustration of how terribly people who had before been regarded as earnest Christians and loyal members of the church can misrepresent facts to suit their purposes.

It is a striking commentary on the truth of this vicious letter—for it can be called nothing less—that after these Sunday School enthusiasts had left it (it had grown from one hundred and ninety-five in 1910, to an average of not more than three hundred in 1921) the Lord has enabled us to gather in Jarvis Street Sunday School with the largest average attendance to be found anywhere in the Dominion of Canada—and that, under the same Pastor.

As to their complaint of the few baptisms, how could there be conversions while the spirit of this letter possessed the church? But in the first year after their withdrawal—we state the case now by way of contrast—notwithstanding the first six months of the year were months of war, two hundred and nineteen united with the church; in 1922-23, one hundred and eighty-two; in 1923-24, three hundred and eighty-four; in 1924-25, four hundred and seventy-five, and so on. To these figures we shall return later in our story.

This was the preparation made for the business meeting of June 29th.

(To be continued)

THE ARTICLE ON "RELIGIOUS LUNACY"

In our issue of September 2nd we published an article entitled, "Religious Lunacy". The article was a criticism of a four-page paper entitled, *The News*, which is the magazine section of a weekly religious paper called, *The Postscript*. We did not in that article give the address of these publications.

It is our custom, when anyone's position is criticized in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, to send a marked copy to the person concerned. This was done in the case of the Editor of *The Postscript*. Last week, too late for use in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, we received a very kind letter from the Editor whose paper we had criticized, and we have written this brother at some length, in reply. We believe it will be of interest to our readers to have the opportunity of reading both letters, and they are therefore printed below.

REV. H. C. MARLIN'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR

September 7, 1937.

Dr. T. T. Shields,
130 Gerrard St. East,
Toronto 2, Canada.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Thanks for sending me the marked copies of THE WITNESS containing reference to *The Postscript* and the supplemental *News* visualizing the rapture.

Although the writer is editor and publisher of a daily paper, an ordained minister and rather successful evangelist and Bible teacher we were not conscious of being a lunatic until we read your article. We believe some people said that about St. Paul. You condemn because you do not know us. I used to be that way myself, so you have our good will

anyway. We are perfectly willing to be called a lunatic for Christ's sake.

The *News* comes as nearly being a visualization of the Rapture as a newspaper man could make it. I simply wrote the articles to attract attention to this great Bible truth trying to place myself among those left behind. That there will be many left behind who *know* about the doctrine cannot be doubted from the scripture. Hence there may be "A New York" pastor who can give the papers of the day something similar to that which we presented. It might be Dr. Shields, who now doubts but would not doubt then. It is not very far fetched to understand that point.

Your paper would indicate that you have a considerable following. You attack what we have said, but you do not advance any Biblical proof for your position. You do not believe in the Rapture but you have not given Biblical reasons for rejecting it.

I was raised an infidel, educated as a lawyer and a newspaper owner. I scoffed at the Word of God for many years but was converted. From that day to this I have given everything I possess to the furtherance of the Gospel and have preached about two hundred and fifty times a year.

So convinced am I of the truth of what I believe I hereby challenge you to a personal debate in your own church on the issue and will forfeit \$500 if I do not appear. I'll come to you and pay all my own expenses and present my side of the controversy with the intention of winning souls to Christ Jesus and defending the scriptures and treat you with the kindest brotherly love while we discuss it.

Meanwhile I shall be more than pleased to consider my errors if you will point them out. I want to be true to God's Word and wouldn't mislead one precious soul for the whole world.

You may have had a good laugh about it but Brother it is no laughing matter where the salvation of souls is concerned. It is nothing to become amused about when people are being deceived.

If I am deceiving men then I deserve to be punished and ought to be a castaway.

I respectfully challenge you to show me wherein I am wrong.

If I am right and I believe I am—then I ask God to open your own eyes to the truth. I am open to conviction and praying that if I am blind my blinded eyes may be opened.

I have been very busy this morning but I took time out of a very busy day to say to you that I am not quite as crazy as you led your readers to believe. There are about 750 copies of the *News* in circulation in your city according to our records here and 50 more copies going out to your city today. We have made two additional press runs of the little paper so there are still a few who believe in the rapture.

As a minister of the Gospel you are now obligated to show me where the errors are, and I await your reply.

With kindest regards and best wishes to you and your work, I am

Yours in the Fellowship of the Coming King,

H. C. MARLIN,

Editor Postscript.

Founder-Pastor Covington Tabernacle.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS EDITOR'S REPLY

Jarvis St. Baptist Church,
Toronto, Sept. 15, 1937.

Rev. H. C. Marlin,
The Stillwater Valley News,
Covington, Ohio.

My dear Brother Marlin:

I acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 7th inst. in a brief note last week, promising to answer it at length at my earliest convenience, which I now attempt to do.

I understand your point of view thoroughly, and have not the slightest doubt of your sincerity. I am sorry you feel that anything in the article was directed toward the writer personally: I dealt merely with the doctrine set out in your fictitious magazine section. Let me assure you it would make no difference even if I did know you: my criticism was not of you but of the doctrine set forth in your paper.

I too am willing to be called anything for Christ's sake; but we must be absolutely sure when we are called fools for

Christ's sake, that what we teach is folly only to the carnal and unenlightened mind, and not folly in the light of the Word of God.

Before I go into the details of your letter, let me assure you that I too believe the Bible to be the very Word of God. Those who have any acquaintance with my record, know that I have never compromised at that point. I also believe in the second personal return of Christ. I believe the truth of Christ's second personal coming is as truly a fundamental of the faith as is the truth of His first advent. His second coming is complementary to the first, and is indispensable to the consummation of His redemptive work. I have no kinship whatever with those who deny the truth of the Second Advent. Moreover, I have no doubt that the Bible teaches that those who sleep in Christ will be raised at His coming, and will be caught up together with the living saints in the air, and be for ever with the Lord. No one, surely, who believes the Scripture can possibly question that is clearly taught in First Thessalonians four: thirteen to eighteen.

But you say:

"*The News* comes as nearly being a visualization of the rapture as a newspaper man could make it."

I dare say it is a fairly accurate "visualization" of the rapture as you conceive it; but I shall attempt to show you that it is little short of a burlesque of what the Word of God has to say about the rapture. You say that you "wrote the articles to attract attention to this great Bible truth". I affirm that the view set forth in *The News* is not a Bible truth at all.

You say, "Many will be left behind who know about the doctrine", and that that "cannot be doubted from the Scripture". That, of course, depends upon what is involved in the phrase, "left behind". But in the sense *The News* describes them as being "left behind", I am absolutely positive there will be none at all. I gather from *The News*—if I am mistaken, will you please correct me—that you believe in some kind of selective rapture. If that be so, of course, you do not necessarily assume that the New York pastor was not a Christian; nor, by that principle, are you necessarily so uncharitable as to class me with unbelievers. Apparently, however, "it is not very far fetched" for you to "understand" my being excluded from the felicities of the raptured saints, because I "doubt" what you conceive to be a "great Bible truth". It appears, however, that your classification of people is to be determined by their attitude toward your interpretation of the scriptural doctrine of the rapture.

As to my having "a considerable following", I am not sure. I sincerely hope I have none. I have endeavoured always to induce people to search the Scriptures for themselves, and both by tongue and pen I urge people continually to accept no interpreter of the Bible as an authority, but always to remember that our sole authority is the Word of God itself. As to THE GOSPEL WITNESS it has a fair circulation in from fifty to sixty different countries, and it is in the sixteenth year of publication.

It is quite true that I did not attempt to adduce any biblical proof for my position, for that was beside my purpose in the article I wrote. Regular readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, I believe, have a very clear idea of my view of the Second Advent. I reproduced the quotations from your article as an illustration of what I regard as the absurdities to which the pre-tribulation rapture theory inevitably drives men. But I do believe in the rapture. I do not reject it. I shall, however, endeavour to give you some "biblical reasons for rejecting" your interpretation of that precious doctrine.

I am sorry to hear that you were raised as an infidel, and that you ever scoffed at the Word of God; but I am glad to know those experiences are all in the past. I am sure you will agree with me that neither one nor the other of the matters you mention is anything to be proud of; and where God has forgiven—and actually forgotten—we may well do the same, and commit the folly of our unregenerate years to the oblivion to which it is entitled. However, please do not assume that I am among the scoffers. Without intending any disrespect, I am positive that your interpretation of the Second Advent, and its related events must lead many people to scoff at the Word of God. I believe that it has at its heart the seed of a very grave heresy which is bound to do great injury to those who really believe the Bible to be the word of God.

I gladly clasp your hand in fellowship when you say, "From that day to this I have given everything I possess to the furtherance of the Gospel and have preached about two hundred and fifty times a year." In fact, I greatly rejoice. Without offence, let me here say, however, that I am certain that the view of the rapture which you attempted to visualize in *The News* was not derived from a direct, personal, study of the Scripture itself. I am so familiar with the whole subject that I know you did not derive it from the Scripture. You may think you did, but I shall prove conclusively to everyone who will take the Scripture alone for what it is, that you could not have derived it from the Scripture—for the simple reason that it is not there.

I think I dare to say that I have a sympathetic understanding of how you fell into this error. Your lot had been cast among those who did not believe. You were educated as a lawyer, and became a newspaper publisher. That would indicate that you were something more than a youth at the time of your conversion. Naturally, you would eagerly devour whatever religious publications offered you help in your new-found life. Many people do; and with no personal knowledge of the Bible, they assume that those who have been longer in the way are reliable guides. They listen to their teaching. They read their books. Then they read the Bible through the medium of the prejudices which such teaching creates. That is to say, they come to the Bible with a certain mental bias toward the view which has found lodgment in their own minds. Being themselves ignorant of the Scripture to begin with, they found no reason for not accepting the view presented.

That is my ground of objection to the Scofield Bible. It has a great deal in it that is most excellent. But even if all the notes in the Scofield Bible were true—as true as the Bible itself—the principle of the Scofield Bible is most dangerous. Young Christians, knowing nothing of the Word of God, turn to portions of Scripture which are certainly not "the sincere milk of the word", but are rather "strong meat". They have no capacity for the understanding of such scriptures in their spiritual infancy. Nor is it necessary to their spiritual life that they should, in the beginning, understand the profounder portions of the Bible, but as new-born babes, they ought to desire the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. Instead, they get a Scofield Bible. They come upon a passage they do not understand, and they immediately consult the Scofield notes. Invariably they are at least plausible; and the young believer, knowing no better, accepts them as being the one and only interpretation of that particular passage of Scripture—and from that forward, they never read out of the Bible what the Bible actually teaches, but read into it the Scofield Bible interpretation of it.

Some years ago, when speaking one Sunday afternoon in Los Angeles, from Bob Shuler's platform, there was present Dr. W. E. Blackstone, author of "Jesus is coming". He was at that time a very old man, I believe nearer ninety than eighty. He was a very gracious soul, and beyond all question one of the Lord's elect. He told me he had not heard a public address for many years, and I told him if he would sit on the platform with me, with his back to the audience and facing me, sitting beside the pulpit, he could hear the address. He did. He spoke also a few words to the congregation, and he asked them to pray that his book, "Jesus is Coming", might be admitted to Russia. He said he was glad the Bible had been admitted—as it was at that time, with some restrictions; but he said, "One might read the Bible alone for fifty years and never discover some of the things that are in my book." I did not dispute with him, for he was such an old man, but I mentally observed as he made that remark, That is certainly true. Nor would anyone discover it were he to study it for a hundred years, for the simple reason that there are many things in Dr. Blackstone's book that are not in the Bible.

And that, I am certain, is true of many of the books issued by my pre-millennial friends. They come to my desk in very considerable quantities, sent for review. But to review one is to review them all. They are all stereotyped. They all say the same thing. I believe the whole matter of the Second Advent as represented by the Scofield Bible, and those who belong to that school, needs reconsideration.

I cannot go into the matter in this letter as fully as I should like. I am writing it to you with a view to publishing both your letter and my reply in THE GOSPEL WITNESS,

and you are welcome to do the same in your paper, *The Postscript*.

I come now to the paragraph in your letter in which you challenge me to a public debate in my own church, promising to forfeit five hundred dollars if you do not appear. I could not be honest if I did not say that I am strongly tempted to accept your challenge, but I fear that that sort of thing would not be profitable. We will, however, leave that matter in abeyance for the moment.

You say that you would come and present your side of the controversy "with the intention of winning souls to Christ Jesus and defending the scriptures and treat you with the kindest brotherly love while we discuss it". Once again, my dear brother, let me suggest to you the wisdom of endeavouring always to distinguish between the Scripture and your interpretation of it. I will send you under another cover some back numbers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS which will lead you to see that I have not failed to stand for the defence of the Scriptures to the limit of my ability. But I must insist that when I differ from you in your interpretation of the doctrine of the rapture, I am not attacking the Scripture; but in consonance with my whole record, endeavouring further to defend the Bible against what I sincerely believe to be a misinterpretation of its truth. But your interpretation of Scripture is no more authoritative than mine, for neither have any authority at all. The Bible is our one and only authority.

I am sure, were we to meet, we should find very much in common; and I very frankly tell you that I am just as anxious to convert you to what I consider a sane view of the teaching of God's Word as you are to convert me; and as long as we do so as believers in the Book, desiring only to know what the Book teaches, we shall get along very well.

It is your next paragraph which leads me to write as I am now writing. To my sorrow, I know there are many who hold your view who are unwilling to admit even the possibility of error, and unwilling even to debate the question. I do not believe any one of us can ever become infallible; and no matter what our natural ability, or education, or experience, to the end of the chapter we may, any of us, be mistaken; and it can never do harm to re-examine, in the light of Scripture, positions which we believe to be scripturally grounded.

I therefore rejoice in your statement, "I want to be true to God's Word, and wouldn't mislead one precious soul for the whole world." I say the same for myself. And because, in these days of prevailing unbelief, when the Word of God is generally denied, and the doctrines of the gospel are commonly held up to contempt, my friendships and fellowships have been almost altogether with those who hold your view. Just as I rejoice in the soundness of Dr. Scofield's view of the cardinal doctrines of evangelical faith, I rejoice in the soundness of my pre-millennial friends in respect to that body of truth which is the *sine qua non* of saving faith; and I am indisposed to quarrel with any of them over eschatological matters. However, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that the slightest departure from the Word of God may lead to a great heresy, like the flange of the railroad at the switch, that turns the train on to another track, and sends it at last to a terminal thousands of miles removed from that of the track upon which it started.

I would not have you think I am narrow in this matter. Perhaps the majority of men whom I have invited to my pulpit have been men who were more or less pronounced in the view you hold. I invited them, however, because of their fidelity to the gospel.

You say:

"You may have had a good laugh about it, but, brother, it is no laughing matter where the salvation of souls is concerned. It is nothing to become amused about when people are being deceived."

You surely do not intend to imply in that paragraph that the salvation of souls is in any sense dependent upon the acceptance of the interpretation of Scripture set out in *The News*? I certainly could not laugh at anything that would involve the ultimate deception of anyone. If the view of the tribulation held by your school were correct, and if, further, your assumption that the church will be raptured before and not after the tribulation, and therefore will escape it, be scripturally grounded, should I live to that day, it would bring me only a happy surprise. I have had

tribulation enough; and am not particularly anxious for more. And if I am mistaken in my view of the rapture, and you are correct, I think I have everything to gain, and nothing to lose.

In your next paragraph you say:

"If I am deceiving men, then I deserve to be punished, and ought to be a castaway."

I do not for a moment suggest that you, or those who believe with you, are deliberate deceivers. I believe you, and they, are mistaken; and what you need is not to be "punished" and "cast away", but to be led to a re-examination of the Scripture, to make absolutely sure that you are right. I do not, for myself, pretend to have reached finality. The subject under discussion is one which has engaged my thought through a somewhat extended ministry. On the other hand, other men who have had an even longer ministry than mine, hold your view; so that years of experience, in itself, do not necessarily count for much. At the same time I say, that while I have looked at it for many years, and am still a diligent student of the subject, I am quite unable to accept your view.

I may also truthfully say that a very large number of people who once held your view, have abandoned it when they have honestly looked into the Scripture. Please do not suppose that I am egotistical enough to suppose I am an authority; and I beg you to believe I am not so uncharitable as to suppose you are a deceiver deserving to be "punished" and "cast away". I am happy to number many men who hold your views as strongly as you do, among my intimate friends. They are men in whose Christian integrity I believe absolutely, and with whom I have the sweetest fellowship in the things of God, although we are utterly at variance in these eschatological matters.

In your next paragraph you say:

"I respectfully challenge you to show me wherein I am wrong."

It is a very large subject. I have written much upon it, and on more than one occasion have delivered a series of addresses on the subject. I think perhaps it will suffice for this purpose if I send you, as I am doing herewith, three copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS—April 23rd, May 5th, and May 12th, 1932; being the fourth, fifth, and sixth, addresses in a series on the Lord's return. These three sermons discuss the matter more fully than I could do in a letter, and represent my position on the subject.

(To readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS: Please do not ask for this series. We have taken three from our file for Mr. Marlin, but apart from our file, the series was long ago sold out. I am contemplating putting them together in book form.—Ed. G. W.)

Whether you or I should be right on this subject, I believe your next paragraph represents exactly the attitude we ought both to assume. I quote it with delight:

"If I am right—and I believe I am—then I ask God to open your eyes to the truth. I am open to conviction, and praying that if I am blind my blinded eyes may be opened."

The information contained in the next paragraph that seven hundred and fifty copies of *The News* are in circulation in Toronto, is ample justification for my article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The fifty more copies which you say "are going out to the city", were ordered by one who confidentially enquired of me where to apply for them.

I am glad you recognize that, as a minister of the gospel, I am "obligated" to show you where the errors are if such there be. That is why I wrote my article. That is why I have written you at length, and for the same reason I am publishing your letter and mine, so that my readers may judge. I repeat, you are welcome to publish both letters in your paper. I sincerely hope you will do so.

Returning to the matter of your challenge to a public debate: we may leave that in abeyance until you have read the copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS which I send you by this mail. When you have read them, I should be glad to hear from you again.

With kindest regards and best wishes to you and your work, I beg to subscribe myself,

Yours in the fellowship of the King of kings for Whose glorious appearing I wait,

(Signed) THOMAS T. SHIELDS.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 3rd Quarter Lesson 39 September 26th, 1937

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

RECOGNIZING THE DAY OF VISITATION

Lesson Text: Luke 13.

Golden Text: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—Luke 13:24.

I. The Day of Visitation as a Day of Grace—verses 1-9.

Public calamities have their lessons. Christ used the two incidents uppermost in the minds of the people to warn his hearers to repent. The men who met with disaster and perished were not necessarily being judged for sin, but those who would not repent, would surely perish in just punishment. Providential happenings should be a warning to all to repent, and whether or not they escape physical death, they will escape spiritual death and eternal judgment. The Galileans mentioned may have been followers of Judas of Galilee who advocated that the Jews should refuse to pay taxes to Rome. The movement broke up after his death (Acts 5:37).

The time allowed for repentance is limited, as shown by the parable of the fig tree. The vineyard is used in Scripture as an illustration of Israel, the property of Jehovah, cultivated, tended and protected by Him (Psa. 80: 8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Matt. 21:33-45). When He looked for the fruit of righteousness which He had a right to expect from this privileged nation, He found none. Justice would say of the barren tree: "Cut it down; it is only a hindrance", but Mercy pleads that it be spared while there is hope of repentance: "Let it alone all this year also." The same principle applies to the mercy which God extends to the individual.

"In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserved eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

The time of probation ended, judgment must follow (Prov. 1:24-31; Rom. 2:4, 5; John 15:6).

II. The Day of Visitation as a Day of Power—verses 10-17.

The sick in body, mind and soul sought Christ in the synagogue, realizing that His presence meant hope for them; nor were they disappointed.

While individuals rejoiced in His glorious power (verse 17) the official leaders of the Jews constantly criticized Him on the ground that He used the Sabbath Day as a time for healing the sick. It is difficult to deal with unreasonable men (2 Thess. 3:2), but the Saviour's argument that these Jews seemed to care more for their animals than for the members of their race (Compare Matt. 12: 10-12), put them to shame.

Christ showed His power to cure instantly and completely the one whom Satan had bound.

III. The Day of Visitation and the Kingdom—verses 18-30.

The time when Christ was on earth to visit and redeem His people (Luke 1:68) was heralded as the time when the Kingdom of God was nigh unto His people (Luke 10:9), for He was, and is, and forever more shall be, the King (Rev. 19:16).

The result of the presence of Christ and of His Gospel upon the earth during the present age was described by means of two parables. Compare Matt. 13:31, 32; Mark 4: 30-32. When the mustard seed, "the least of all seeds" was planted, it grew into a mighty tree. From the small beginning of Christ and His disciples, the Kingdom of God would grow into a great institution, Christianity. The fowls of the air which lodged in the branches of the tree represent the insincere professors, in reality the minions of Satan (Luke 8:5; Dan. 4:20-22; 1 John 2:19), who seek refuge under the shadow of the Kingdom, but who do not belong to it.

As the leaven, or yeast, at first so insignificant that it is entirely hidden, permeates every portion of the dough, so

would the Kingdom, ushered in quietly by the Saviour's advent, be extended to the far corners of the world. Not that all men would accept Christ and become Christians, but that the message and influence of the Gospel would become a universal testimony.

Christ did not answer the man's enquiry as to whether few or many would be saved, but He implied that many would be lost. Teachers of younger classes, especially, will find this section a splendid one for stressing the need and the way of salvation. Christ compared the Kingdom of God to a house, with but one entrance, and that through a narrow gateway (Matt. 7:13, 14). It is necessary to "strive", to put forth strong effort, to contend as for the mastery, in order to enter that gate, since the way is beset by many difficulties. Christ Himself is the door (John 10:7); there is no other entrance (John 14:6; Prov. 14:12).

Many will desire to enter, but will not be able, because they will try to come when it is too late. The picture of the closed door is a solemn one. To have been close to Christ will not avail in that day; He will refuse to admit all whom He does not know as His own (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:10-12). Urge pupils to enter while yet the door of God's mercy is open (Luke 11:9; 2 Cor. 6:2).

The illustration is also of national significance. The Jews prided themselves on their ancestry, and felt that they were secure, but Christ prophesied that they would shed tears of despair, and gnash their teeth in anguish, when they should see the patriarchs, the prophets and the Gentiles from all parts taking their places on the Kingdom, while many Jews were excluded (Matt. 8: 11, 12). First in their own estimation, they would be last as to position in the Kingdom.

IV. The Day of Visitation and Jerusalem—verses 31-35.

The Pharisees had not hitherto shown concern for the safety of our Lord, and it seems probable that they acted as messengers of Herod, who thought to terrify the Saviour and to put an end to His triumphant journeying. Christ knew the significance of the message, and spoke of Herod as a fox, because of his cruel, crafty designs. "Tell Herod that I must continue my work. I have but a short time to minister, and then I shall have finished my course. It is contrary to usage that a prophet should perish elsewhere than in Jerusalem!" No threat of Herod could keep the Lord from following the path laid out for Him, that path which led to Jerusalem, to the cross.

But what of Jerusalem? Though destined to suffer shame, scoffing, scourging and death in that city, Christ lamented over it in tender compassion (Luke 19:41-44; Matt. 23:37-39). "I would—but ye would not" is a sad commentary upon the stubbornness of men. Christ longed to save them, but they refused to be saved (Psalm 81: 11-14). Men have the power of resisting the overtures of grace. If they had only recognized the day of visitation! If they had only known the things which pertained to their peace! But they cast off their Deliverer, and were left desolate.

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