

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 16, No. 27

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 11, 1937

Whole Number 808.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS."

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 7th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"My beloved is mine, and I am his."—Song of Solomon 2:16.

There is no part of the fortress of truth which we call the Bible against which the adversary of our souls has not directed his battering-ram. There is no refreshing rivulet flowing from this fountain of life which he has not endeavoured to pollute with the poison of his criticism. There is no word contained in all the sweet love-message of the Book against which the sneer of malice, or the contempt of ignorance, has not been aimed.

In the realm of music, many of the world's greatest masterpieces have failed of recognition, and have earned for themselves only the contempt of supposed authorities, until after the death of the composer. And this lovely song which lies at the very heart of the oratorio of the Messiah—for that is what the Bible is—has been treated with contempt, or with scorn, by those who have failed to recognize any significance in the death of Him Whose excellencies it signalizes.

Perhaps that is not surprising. A religion of organization, of machinery, of carnal endeavour, by its flapping belts and grinding wheels, has so filled the world with noise as to drown the love-notes of a song like this. It is not to be wondered at that a spirit which does homage to a religion of numbers, of bigness, of mammonized materialism, should have no taste, nor desire, nor vision, for a lover's walk in an enclosed garden, through an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, amid trees of frankincense; or for a bower of beauty, fragrant with myrrh and all chief spices, such as were the haunts of lovers described in this Song of Songs.

Some of us have learned that there is a great gulf fixed between the cold, formal, mechanical, largely theoretical, religion of ceremonial institutionalism, and a religion which consists in a vital, conscious, pervasive, inseparable, union with the living Son of God. The Bible has no message for men who hope for an institutional salvation; but those who have learned that salvation is

in Him of Whom the Father said, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him", are able to sing, as we often do here,

"I am my beloved's,
And my Beloved is mine,
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into his house of wine;
I stand upon his merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Emmanuel's land."

Forevermore it must remain that those who would be saved, and who would live in the fullest enjoyment of the salvation of God's provision, must have eyes and hearts for Jesus Christ only.

Let us look at this old text. I do not suppose we can find anything new in it. Love is as old as human experience—nay, it is as old as God Himself, for "God is love". It is none the less sweet, however, and precious to us all—all the more precious, indeed, if there be nothing new in it.

I.

First of all, FAITH VIEWS HER HERITAGE AS CONSISTING IN A PERSONAL POSSESSION OF INESTIMABLE WORTH. Says the spouse in the Song, "My beloved is mine." So ought every true believer to be able to say—indeed, so every true believer will be able to say concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Beloved of our souls, and He is *our* personal possession.

I think I may say that faith here confesses to a *certain measure of enlightenment*, an opening of the eyes to behold a beauty formerly concealed. There was a time when she did not see so much in Him, when she would fain have passed him by. He was "without form or comeliness", and when first we saw Him, "there was no beauty that (we) should desire Him." But this lover grew upon the vision of the spouse, until his incompar-

able glory at last dawned upon her consciousness. She awakened to the discovery that her heart had become engaged: she had fallen in love with one whom she now delights to call her beloved.

What a mystery there is about God's method of awakening a slumbering soul! How strangely He came to us who are Christians! How peculiarly He dealt with us in our individual experiences! How He gradually stole in upon us! How, in His presence, all other things seemed to diminish in value, until at last, like the disciples on the mount, coming to themselves, awakened from their slumber, discovering that all else had vanished, they found that Jesus Christ filled the whole horizon. Thus we experienced that miracle recorded in the Word, that the "God who, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We beheld Him by faith! He had been to us a figure in a Book, a character of history; His name had been to us synonymous with many things for which we had no affection, toward which we could feel in our hearts not the slightest desire. Yet He dispelled all our prejudices, by the divinest strategy He besieged our souls, and when He had subdued the outposts He overwhelmed us by His grace and led our souls captive with such tenderness that when our eyes were opened to behold His loveliness, we called the Conqueror "Beloved".

What a revelation that was to those of us who are saved, when we had to say, like Holy Rutherford, "Christ hath come and run away to heaven with my heart and my love, so that neither heart nor love is mine: I pray God that Christ may keep both without reversion."

I think we may say that this expression of the text represents a reversion of judgment, a revision of estimate; for there was a time when she had not been neutral only, but antagonistic. How strange it is that men should hate God! Have you reflected upon that? How extraordinary that any sane man should be antagonistic toward Jesus Christ! Yet men are. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." Who is this whisperer who has so maligned the Prince of glory, so slandered Him to the souls of men, that they now hate Him instead of loving Him? How easily men's minds may be evil affected toward a person or a cause! It is said even of men and women that "the poison of asps is under their tongue." How a poisonous tongue can sting people, and sever friendships! How readily people circulate evil reports!

I had put in my hand to-day a church calendar from a church in New York State, in which is an item headed, "Evil Reports", which I shall read:

"Let us be slow in believing evil reports unless they are absolutely authenticated. Someone reported that a minister in a rage went to a meeting, which his wife attended against his will, dragged her from the hall, and forced her to go home with him. In the columns of a paper the minister made this admirable defense: 'In the first place, I never attempted to influence my wife in her views nor her choice of a meeting; in the second place, my wife did not attend the meeting in question; in the third place, I did not attend the meeting myself. To conclude, neither my wife nor myself had any inclination to go to the meeting; finally, I never had a wife.'"

That is how the slanderer works, the arch-slanderer, the one who is not only "the accuser of the brethren", but the accuser of the Christ Himself; and he has so misrepresented Him to men, that instead of loving God, they

hate Him; instead of giving their hearts' affection to the Son of God, like Saul of Tarsus they "breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord". But here is one who experiences an intense reaction from recognized error. Like the Apostle Paul, who once thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth and who, when in later years he was going up to Jerusalem, and some of his friends "besought him not to go up", said with tears, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus—He is more than all the world to me, the Beloved of my soul."

Do you remember that day, my friends?—we are to come to His banqueting-table to-night. What a marvel of grace that we should be invited, we who were His enemies!—but do you remember the day when suddenly life was inverted, turned upsidedown, and all our judgments of spiritual values were seen to be wrong? Suddenly we discovered that in Jesus Christ all virtues had been incarnated, and were now embodied in Him, representing us before the throne. What an unique religion! What a wondrous salvation is guaranteed to us in that simple fact: our hearts being knit in love to the Son of God!

This spouse seems to take pleasure in advertising her lover's excellencies. "My beloved"! She extols him as one worthy of her deepest and highest and strongest affection. Very personal it is with her; whatever others may say of him, she says, "He is my beloved. He has my heart whether he has the hearts of others or not." Can you say that? Sometimes it is all we can say. At one time that was all this spouse could say. She had allowed a distance to come between herself and her lover, and she was indisposed to make any effort, apparently, to recover his presence and his favour, until she heard one knocking at the door. Half awake she said, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." As she reflected upon the worthiness of her absent lover she cried, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedeth, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." Or, to revert to that dialogue between the risen Saviour and the unfaithful disciple, our Lord did not waste words. He said, "Peter, I do not ask you whether you have been faithful; I do not ask you whether you have proved yourself worthy of me; I do not ask if you have been courageous, and have played the man: tell me one thing—that is the only thing I want to know. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Notwithstanding all, in spite of all, apparently in contradiction of all, is there a fire burning in your heart for me, Simon?"

Can you say, "O my Beloved, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love thee"? That is what He always wants to know of us as Christians. Other things He desires as the fruit of it, but this must be the foundation and the root: do you love Him?

Do you lack assurance, any of you? Would you say, "O preacher, my life is so stained; it has been so inconsistent and irregular that I am almost ashamed to say I am a Christian. I once professed, but I have wandered far away." You know what this great Lover says—

"Never mind all that for the moment. Tell me this, Do you love Me? Lovest thou Me?" Can you answer in the affirmative? Can you say, "Well, yes; in spite of all, I know that my heart is thrilled by the music of His name. I have sung it, and meant it, and could sing it now,—

'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.'

You do love Him then, do you? You can say before God, "I do. I know it is not as strong as it ought to be, but there is a spark there; I love Him."

"Whosoever loveth, is born of God." It is the hallmark of the true Christian. It is the one unmistakable, indisputable, distinguishing, characteristic of the soul that has been born from Above, that the love of God has been "shed abroad in (his heart) by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Hence he really loves God.

But hear her as she says, "My beloved is *mine*." There is a pride of personal possession: he is mine. How does she know? She knows that somehow or another she has given Him her heart. The believer knows that his love has not been spurned. The believer is made to know, by divine certification, that He will not break His covenant-engagement; He will keep His word to us. He says we belong to Him: He is ours.

We have not very much in this life—nor do we need much, if we have the Lord Jesus. "My beloved is *mine*." Did you sing it just now? Did you sing it with your heart as well as with your lips? Oh the pity of it that we should ever sing these glorious hymns of praise mechanically! I do not think you sang it thus. I believe there was a tone and quality of assurance in it as you sang just now—

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine!
For Thee, all the pleasures of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou!
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!"

Oh the wonder of it, that Grace should make it possible for poor sinners to address the Prince of glory and say, "My beloved is mine."

II.

But further, FAITH ALWAYS RECOGNIZES THE MUTUALITY OF THIS RELATIONSHIP, AND DISCERNs THAT TRUE FAITH FINDS ITS FULL FRUITION, NOT ONLY IN THE JOY OF POSSESSION, BUT IN THE JOY OF BEING POSSESSED. The spouse said, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." How amazing! Do you stop, my dear Christian friends, sometimes to try to form some estimate of our Lord's valuation of us? "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

There are people who would count it no honour for you to describe yourself as their friend. They want nothing to do with you. I suppose there are some who would not like it to be known that they were even an acquaintance of yours. Sometimes that attitude may justly be mutual. Be that as it may, here is one who, with a justifiable pride, proclaims her relationship to her beloved. She says, "I am his, and what is more, he is mine."

How did she know? It was the result of his sovereign choice. He had chosen her. The Lord has a way of having His own way. The Heavenly Bridegroom, in

consonance with what He knows to be the Father's will, has chosen a bride for Himself. Said He to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Why are you His? Because He made up His mind you should be; because He made choice of you—and made choice of you notwithstanding all your unworthiness. Long, long ago I reached the conclusion, as a minister, that so long as two people were satisfied with a wedding, that was about all that could be expected. I do not expect more than that. If the bridegroom appears to be a worthy man, someone will say the lady in question is not good enough for him—in the majority of cases, it is the reverse. But whichever way you look at it, about all you can hope for is the pleasure of two people. This spouse says, "He is mine, altogether mine: he chose me."

Have you ever wondered why you are a Christian? Make an inventory of all your excellencies, those qualities that excel—we can find none. I do not know how I should put it, good points, if you like. "There is none that doeth good, no not one." If we seriously attempt to try to account for the fact that the Lord Jesus loves us, what shall we say?

"He saw me ruined by the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all."

There is nothing attractive about us.

There was in Him when our eyes were opened to behold Him. But who but a God of love could ever see anything in you or me worth saving for ever? Suffer a very homely illustration. I have seen our Jewish friends, before they attain affluence or any great measure of prosperity, going along the street with a handcart, gathering rags and all manner of refuse. As I have seen them I have said, "What can they see in that—getting rich from things that other people throw away." I remember my father telling me, as a boy, of a journey he had one day, riding in a compartment such as obtain in English trains. As the train sped along something bright flashed in the embankment at the side. A man sitting beside him, a Jew, said, "Did you see that?" "Yes." "Did you recognize it?" "I do not know that I did; I thought it was a bottle." "No! No! it was a piece of money." "Surely you could not see a piece of money when travelling at the speed we are going?" "Oh, but have you never heard the proverb, 'Worth a Jew's eye'? It means that a Jew can see money where nobody else can."

That is the explanation of their searching around the garbage cans, picking up the world's refuse—and getting rich on it. But the Bible says that those who are the princes of glory are esteemed "as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day". Be proud of that, will you? We have nothing of which to be proud, and yet notwithstanding our unattractiveness, our inherent unworthiness, the eye of our gracious God, supplemented by the divine wisdom, with the knowledge of all the powers of Deity, saw potentialities in us that no one else could ever have conceived. Therefore He selected us, and poor as we were and are, we can still say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

We cannot too frequently emphasize the value of the word of God. He Himself has proclaimed His possession: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." "Those whom thou hast given me, I have kept." What a blessing it is to be conscious of being possessed by some-

one, belonging to someone, owned by someone. The pride of ownership is great. Yes; yet I think sometimes it is better to be owned than to own.

Do you know what it is for the Prince of glory to take you into His grip as He says, "You are mine"? And can you answer, "And I am His"? "My beloved is mine, and I am his." What a safe place to be! Last Sunday evening I spoke to you about the security of the believer. Here it is again: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." That is being saved for ever.

Do any of you read Rutherford? If you do not, you miss one of the greatest wellsprings of spiritual delight to be found outside of the Holy Book itself. Mrs. Cozens has woven into a brief poem from which I have already quoted, some of his lovely sayings. How he loved the Lord! And how he was hated of men!

"I have borne scorn and hatred,
I have borne wrong and shame,
Earth's proud ones have reproached me,
For Christ's thrice blessed name:—
Where God His seal set fairest
They've stamped their foulest brand;
But judgment shines like noonday
In Emmanuel's land."

Blessed is the soul who can say, "I am His." Then it matters little what the world says. To be His is more than a knighthood, more than a peerage, more than all the wealth of the world beside, just to know that for ever we belong to Him. Can you say it?

Is there an unconverted man or woman here this evening? Do you say, "I thought being a Christian was putting restraints upon the soul, setting up a standard, and then labouring to attain it, giving up a thousand things I desired, and finding no joy." No! it is to see in Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour of the world; and to fall so deeply and eternally in love with Him that your relationship to Him transcends all other considerations for time and for eternity, enabling you to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Will you receive Him? Will you accept Him? Does anyone say, "But would He accept me?" Let the wounds in His hands, in His feet, in His side, and the marks of the thorns about His bleeding brow—the five bleeding wounds—answer whether He will accept you. He died for you, and all He asks is that you give Him your heart and life. Then you twain shall be no more twain, but one—and one for ever.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that ever Thou didst send Thy Son into the world, for herein is love—ah, herein is love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. O Thou conquering Lover, subdue every emotion of the soul to Thy will, and lead us all captive, conquered by sovereign grace, made Thine for ever, for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

MINER'S BAY—Pastor F. Vaughan. "We believe the Scripture which says, 'For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not'" writes Pastor Vaughan. "For the past six months we have endeavoured to sow carefully through visitation, and during that time nearly three hundred visits have been made. Our first sign of harvest has been the splendid attendance at our week-night services, which has been maintained now for at least three months, and the number is gradually increasing. It is quite evident that some are becoming concerned about their souls, and we have felt His presence in a wonderful way as we have endeavoured to preach the Word. Our

prayer is that God may visit us in saving power, and we believe He will.

"Last night the school house at Buller was filled, and we felt that the Spirit of God was bringing home the truth of the new birth to many hearts. At Dongola School there were twenty-eight present on Tuesday night last, and there, too, His presence was very real. Thus God is encouraging us, and we believe that the above-quoted Scripture will yet be literally fulfilled, and we shall have the joy of reaping precious souls."

LONG BRANCH—Rev. B. Jeffery. The Lord is continuing to bless the testimony of the Long Branch Baptist Church. Last week there were three conversions, and one backslider was restored. One of the women who was saved was reached through house to house visitation. She told the workers that she had been praying for a year for someone to tell her how to be saved. When the Word was given to her she received it with gladness, and there was great rejoicing together. On Sunday a baptismal service was held. The meetings at New Toronto are still going on, and they are expecting to open up a Sunday School as well.

MOUNT ALBERT—Rev. J. Armstrong. Recently the Pastor, Rev. J. Armstrong, had the pleasure of baptizing four lads in their teens, in the open air. Three of them were from Maple Hill, and one from Mount Albert.

MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, TORONTO—Rev. Alex. Thomson. Boys' and Girls' Week. The meetings were announced as happy hours for boys and girls, to be conducted by Rev. W. N. Charlton of Hespeler.

The meetings were held for one week commencing Monday, Nov. 1st at 7 o'clock. They were happy hours indeed, as Mr. Charlton, by means of beautiful illustrated Bible stories and interesting object talks, plus helpful choruses and hymns, told in simple language the wondrous story of Jesus and His love, so that even the smallest child could understand.

Each night saw an increase in attendance not only of boys and girls but grown-up folk too. The meetings were made the happier because some of the boys and girls gave their hearts and young lives to the Saviour.

The campaign closed on Sunday with a decided increase in attendance at the Bible School, and the presence of the Lord was manifested both in the spirit-filled messages of the speaker, and the ready response of the listeners.

As Brother Charlton leaves us, we thank God for His labour among us and also pray that the drops of blessing we have enjoyed may become showers.

WAVERLEY ROAD, TORONTO—Rev. W. E. Atkinson. Evangelistic Services were commenced last Sunday at Waverley Road under the leadership of Messrs. Nygren and Bundy. There have been good attendances and several conversions thus far. The meetings will continue for two weeks. We earnestly commend these services to the support of our readers by their prayers and their presence.

A FORMER STUDENT OF THE SEMINARY, who is now working in the mines in Northern Quebec to pay the expenses of preaching the Gospel, informs us that he could make good use of a portable organ. Have any of our churches such an instrument that is not being used? If so, write to the Union Office at once, and let us put it into active service.

PASTOR JOHN ARMSTRONG is holding special meetings at Buckingham, Que., with Rev. M. Doherty and his people. A great deal of visiting has been done and a number of un-saved have been present at the services. Remember this special effort in prayer.

SOME OF THE PLEDGES made in behalf of various churches at the Convention to wipe out the deficit have already been redeemed. Rev. Robert Guthrie of Briscoe Street, London, has written to say that his church has bettered the pledge he made for it. We would remind the churches that these promises fall due November 21, but are receivable at any time. When we have this money in hand, the Union will be able to go on with the Lord's work in accordance with the scriptural injunction, "owing no man anything".

SARNIA—Student-Pastor H. MacBain. We asked Student-pastor Hal MacBain at lunch to-day how the building was coming along in Sarnia. He said that they officially opened it last Sunday. At the evening service particularly there was a fine attendance. The new location is in a good residential district, and yet near main streets of the city.

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 XXXI.

Last week's instalment of this story was really a parenthesis carrying us back to October, 1921, in order to relate the story of the publication of "The Inside of the Cup". We resume our narrative of events following the Annual Meeting of April 28th, 1922, a report of which we gave the week before last.

The blessing of the Lord continued to rest upon the church's united ministry; conversions were frequent, and baptism continued to be administered practically every Sunday. At the Communion Service of May 7th, 1922, twenty were received into the fellowship of the church; ten were received into fellowship the first Sunday in June.

An interesting item in the church minutes appears under date of May 17th, to this effect:

"Dr. Shields stated that because of the news from all over Canada and elsewhere, of blessing received through the reading of the Church Calendar, that in his opinion a great ministry could be exercised through a Church Newspaper, which would be full of the gospel, embodying gleanings from Jarvis Street Pulpit, etc., and which paper could be a medium of weekly communication between the church and its increasing multitude of friends.

"Mr. George Long moved that the Pastor be authorized to edit such a paper for three weeks, the church to decide at the end of this time as to the advisability of its continuance. Seconded by Mr. Hayden, and carried."

In explanation of this note, I may say that for a considerable period it had been my habit to publish short articles on spiritual matters, quite apart from church news, in the weekly calendar, which was a small, four-page leaflet. Without any design or plan, we found the calendars were all used up, as people were forming the habit of mailing these calendars to their friends; and from far and near appreciative letters reached me indicating that there was a place for a printed message issuing from Jarvis Street.

Years before this time some appreciative friends had suggested the occasional printing of the Pastor's sermons. The question had been submitted to the Deacons of the church, and after some consideration and investigation, it was decided that the cost of publishing even an occasional sermon would be too great to make the undertaking a wise one!

With fear and trembling we launched THE GOSPEL WITNESS. A good deal of prayerful thought was given to the selection of a name for the paper; and I recall very distinctly an evening in May, 1921, when Mr. William Fraser and I talked and prayed together on the subject. After writing out a number of names, THE GOSPEL WITNESS seemed the most appealing, and we have never felt from then until now the slightest disposition to change the name. The first issues were published without a number, and for some time no subscription price was named.

One good friend, a lawyer of distinction, who had stood valiantly by through all the fight, offered two suggestions respecting the new paper. One was that

it would never do to publish sermons: that would be to court failure from the beginning. My friend assured me that, however interested people were in hearing sermons, in our day very few people could be found to read them. His second suggestion was that no particular time should be named for publication. It should be neither weekly nor monthly: he proposed that it should be stated that the paper was issued "occasionally", as news and funds made possible.

The second suggestion I did not entertain at all. We are all subject to the common human frailty of postponing duties which are undated, and I was afraid of the "occasional principle. We began by dating THE GOSPEL WITNESS on Saturday; it was later changed to Thursday. But now for these more than fifteen years the paper has issued regularly every week. The size of the first WITNESS was six by nine inches, each sheet a single column. The first WITNESS contained the digest of a sermon occupying two pages; in the next issue, the sermon occupied four pages; the third and fourth contained no sermon at all; the fifth, a four-page sermon. Thereafter each issue contained a full sermon. The sermons were published from manuscript until the issue of August 26th, and from that forward the sermons of morning and evening, and very generally Thursday evening also, have been stenographically reported, and published, with very little revision, as delivered.

The three weeks' experiment proved so generally successful that there was no thought thereafter of discontinuing the paper. The experiment has now continued until the sixteenth year. This issue of the paper will be Number Twenty-seven, of Volume Sixteen—whole number Eight Hundred and Eight. And, contrary to all that was predicted, the paper has been carried through all the years mainly by the weekly sermon. Far more than a thousand stenographically reported sermons and addresses have been printed. During the depression the number of ministerial readers declined because many ministers were scarcely able to live on their meagre salaries; but for a number of years our ministerial readers alone, of all denominations, numbered approximately three thousand.

It may interest our readers also to state that the following are some of the countries represented on our subscription list: Mexico, Bolivia, Argentine, Peru, Chili, Paraguay, Salvador, Brazil, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Trinidad, Bermuda, Barbados, Antigua, New Zealand, Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, N.S. Wales, Philippine Islands, Fiji Islands, India, Burma, Ceylon, China, Japan, Persia, Greece, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Africa, England, Scotland, Ireland, Morocco, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, Esthonia, Latvia, Holland.

It may be worth while too to call attention to some notable issues. One of our outstanding issues published a report of the Northern Baptist Convention in Washington in May, nineteen hundred and twenty-six. THE GOSPEL WITNESS was the first religious paper on the

Continent to publish an account of that great meeting; and that particular issue exceeded the combined circulation of *The Watchman-Examiner*, of New York, and *The Baptist*, of Chicago.

Another great issue was the "Ichabod" number, which appeared in nineteen hundred and twenty-six. This was published in the smaller form, half the size of our present page. But it was an issue of one hundred and seventy-six pages, or the equivalent of eleven regular issues of THE GOSPEL WITNESS in one. That particular issue involved forty-eight hours of continuous desk work, during which time the Editor did not leave his desk for food or rest. We were engaged in a holy warfare, when time was an important factor. Many wondered how such issues were produced. There is but one explanation: THE GOSPEL WITNESS staff worked!

Another special issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS was the Des Moines University number, which had forty-eight pages of the present size, and the edition was seventy-five thousand, involving the use of several tons of paper.

Still another important issue was one that appeared in June, 1924, announcing the coming to Toronto of Dr. J. Frank Norris, and giving some description of his remarkable ministry. That issue exceeded fifty thousand. There were many other special numbers, when the regular size was doubled or trebled, and the number printed greatly increased.

But numbers, after all, and extensive circulation, do not represent a paper's influence. There are probably few religious papers on this Continent more frequently quoted than THE GOSPEL WITNESS. For many years *The Christian Herald*, of London, England, has periodically reproduced a sermon appearing in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Many stories could be told from THE GOSPEL WITNESS office, both instructive and amusing. Very often THE WITNESS has had to play detective and not infrequently it has turned the light upon dark places. From all parts of the world where THE GOSPEL WITNESS circulates, from time to time we have received news of backsliders being reclaimed, God's people edified, the shut-ins and the mourners comforted, and sinners converted to God.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS has been a militant paper, and it is instructive to observe that the issues which have required the largest editions have been those which have come from the press with a great battle-cry. Indeed, it has seemed throughout the years that the hotter the fight, the more people wanted the paper.

"LOOKING IN"

On the Tenth Annual Meeting of Ontario and Quebec Regular Baptists

By Dr. Harry G. Hamilton of Buffalo

Any attempt to describe in an adequate manner this truly great Convention of Regular Baptists, held in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, October 19th-21st, must necessarily fall short, for no description, either by word or pen, can portray the presence of the Holy Spirit of God in such an assembly.

We do not know how the attendance of this year's meeting compared with that of former years, but we confess to a happy surprise at the goodly number of delegates and friends who were present from far and near. Not being a member of the Convention nor very well acquainted with the churches of the Convention we cannot accurately report the churches represented but we distinctly remember the names of Montreal, Lachine, Lachute (we trust that the reader will pardon if these names are mis-spelled) Orillia, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Guelph, Sarnia, North Bay, Buckingham, London, Windsor, Hespeler, Val d'Or, Alton, Kapuskasing, Medina, Sudbury, Orangeville, Tillsonburg, Toronto, and Geraldton.

All the sessions, morning, afternoon, and evening, were well attended. It seemed to us to be a man's Convention. Pastors and male delegates were in the majority. This is as it should be. It is a sorry day when the churches of Jesus Christ leave the weighty matters of business to the women folk. Thank God for the loyal women like Deborah of old who are willing to take the reins of responsibility when the men will not, but such was not necessary at this meeting. The sessions were well presided over by the genial President, Rev. Alex. Thomson, who has delightfully found a place for himself in the hearts of the people and who has served the Convention interests loyally as President for upwards of three years. In his absence on account of other duties, he was ably assisted by the Vice-Presidents, Pastors Slade and Charlton.

This writer was the Guest Speaker and was invited to deliver three addresses all of which was a delightful experience to him. It would be difficult to find a more happy, hearty and hilarious group of Saints under any banner than that of the Regular Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. The subjects chosen for the occasion seemed to hit the mark, for many spoke appreciation of our efforts. In their order, the addresses were as follows: "Paul's Encouraging Advice." "Let Us Go On" was the text. The subject chosen for Thursday afternoon was "The Most Beautiful Woman in the Bible" or "A Study in the Little Book of Ruth." The closing message Thursday evening was "The Determination of Resolute Men," and the text was the words of Paul, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In our estimation, the high spots of the Convention came on the afternoon of Wednesday and the forenoon of Thursday. The theme of the Wednesday afternoon session was "Pioneering". There were three speakers, Pastors Adam Galt, Russell Slade, and John Boyd. These young men, attractive looking fellows, are products of the Toronto Baptist Theological Seminary, whose chief support is underwritten by the Jarvis Street Baptist Church and its friends. Our hearts were strangely touched at the intrepid courage and daring of these young soldiers of the Cross as they rehearsed in our hearing, in a most modest manner, the operation of God in their lives to His glory, by the calling forth of sinners to make up the Body and Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any one of them we would be delighted to have as our pastor. They were not cut and dried addresses delivered from copious notes, but dynamic reports that had been burned into their hearts by a vital living experience. All over the entire auditorium, which was well filled, we observed strong men and beautiful women stifle their emotions and wipe away the falling tear as the Holy Spirit of God spoke through them to our parched and withered souls. Talk about apostolic succession. I heartily believe in it as long as such men as Galt, Slade and Boyd serve the Lord. Henry Drummond once said, "The evidence of Christianity is not the Evidences. The evidence for Christianity is a Christian", and there we had it to the full, and we will never worry in the least of Christianity ever coming to the crossroads as long as the Toronto Baptist Seminary can produce men of such calibre as these.

As Pastor Boyd of Sudbury was introduced, there stood before us an unusual fellow, tall, lean and overworked, a young man of twenty-five years, on whose broad shoulders seemed to rest a tremendous burden. It was the burden of his Master, that of the salvation of lost souls whom he was eager to rescue as they rushed headlong to the cavern of the damned. An unemotional kind of a personality, a veritable Abraham Lincoln if you please. With clasped hands, he draped himself over the pulpit as he spoke to us in a calm, unemotional and dignified manner. We readily perceived that he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Oh, what an hour ever to be remembered! God was in our midst and we knew it by blest experience. He told of an experience through his house to house visitation work. A Roman Catholic woman met him at her door, on hearing of his mission, abruptly said: "I am a Roman Catholic." "Ah," said he, "I know a Saviour who loves Roman Catholics; can we chat about Him?" They did, and he captured her soul.

Thursday forenoon was equally glorious as Pastors Brackstone, Cunningham, Hisey and Watt spoke to us. The sorrow of both these two sessions was that a stenographer was not detailed to give us every utterance of these apostles of the faith.

"How about the finances?" someone will ask. I am convinced that we need never worry about finances as long as we can engender a spirit like that which prevailed at every session. Believe it or not, this writer was more than happily surprised in listening to the report of money contributed by the churches throughout the year for the maintenance of the work at home and abroad. Regular Baptists of Canada have been raised of God for such a time as this. We were pleased to see some foreigners like ourselves there, such as Dr. J. W. Hoyt, formerly of Belden Avenue, Chicago, and Rev. David Alexander of Iowa.

We listened to a motion read and discussed as to the possibility of centering their Foreign Mission work under the direction of the French Baptist Bible Mission, an organization under the leadership of Pastor Dubarry of Paris, whose endeavour is to reach the unchurched millions in France and Switzerland with the gospel. The motion carried with only one opposing vote. The new officers were presented by the retiring President, Rev. Alex. Thomson, who invited all to come to the platform. The newly-elected President was Dr. T. T. Shields, who has associated with him some nineteen or twenty earnest looking men. The brother who was chosen to speak for the group on arrival on the platform was one of the converts of the French Baptist Mission in Paris who, with his other two brothers, came and settled in Canada several years ago. As we listened to him, we said: "If the French Mission can produce men like he, then on with the battle to the utmost."

SEMINARY NOTES

Meditation and Praise

Chapel service each school morning is a time of spiritual refreshing. Last Thursday it was a simple but helpful service of meditation and praise, meditation on the sufferings of Christ and praise for His exaltation. We give Dr. Clark's arrangement, thinking it may be helpful to some for devotional services such as prayer meetings:

I. Christ's Humiliation:

Reading: Isaiah 53:1-6.

Hymns: "O Sacred Head! now wounded"; tune Passion Chorale, in "The Canadian Baptist Hymnal" 120. "All ye that pass by," tune Wareham, 122.

II. Christ's Exaltation:

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11.

Hymns: "The head that once was crowned with thorns", tune St. Magnus, 147. "Hail, Thou once despised Jesus", tune Austria, 152.

What a blessing are good hymns! How they bring home Scripture truths! How they lead forth the soul in praise and supplication!

An Academic Holiday

This week is the last one of the first quarter of the School year and the period of the quarterly examinations. Dr. Olive L. Clark is taking advantage of the freedom from lectures to take "an academic holiday"—a time off teaching to work hard!—and is spending it doing some research which she has long wanted to do, in the largest library on this continent, the Congressional Library, Washington, D.C.

Student Preaching

Seminary students learn the theory of preaching in the School and seek to put their knowledge into practice as opportunity affords. Yet student preachers are not practising on the people: they have the Word of life to deliver as the Lord helps them.

With the move of Pastor Duncan Macgregor to Stouffville, Hillcrest Church, Toronto, has been without a pastor. On recent Sundays Students W. C. Tompkins, W. R. Slade, Rev. Wilfred Wellington, Students E. A. MacAsh and S. A. Black, have supplied. We hear that their messages have been much enjoyed.

A week ago last Sunday Messrs. Black, Paterson, and Leach, took the evening service at the Working Boys' Home.

Last Sunday Mr. Black preached in the morning at East York Mission, Mr. S. B. Whitehouse, pastor, and a lady whom the Lord has used much in soul-winning spoke in the evening, when Mr. Paterson sang. We rejoice that three adults professed faith in Christ at the evening service.

Mr. W. Cutler is in charge of the meeting in the King's Mission one Monday evening a month.

The Seminarian

"Bigger and better" is the motto of Editor E. A. MacAsh for our School paper, *The Seminarian*, which makes its 1937-8 debut this week. It is bigger: this edition has eight full pages, printed in newspaper type so as to hold more. As to the "better", judge for yourself: here is a table of contents which we make from the proofs before us: *Six Months after Graduation*, *What I Think of the Seminary*, by Frédéric M. Buhler; *A Younger Sister in the West*, in which Mrs. G. R. Dawe, wife of the principal of Western Baptist Bible College, now doing graduate work at the Seminary, tells us something about that college; *Pen and Pencil*, news items of interest; *Bells and Yells*, more news items of special interest; *Vacation Gleanings*, by Miss Irene Downing; *Alumni Dinner*, reported by the Editor; *Letter from Former Student*, by Mrs. G. M. Reeve; *My Religion Satisfies*, by Miss H. Phoenix; "Refer to A.G.", by Mr. C. Leach; *Studying the Psalms*, by Mr. H. Charlton; *Student Directory*. We want every friend of the Seminary to be a reader of *The Seminarian*, for it shows the work of the School from the inside. The price of the paper is 10c per copy, 40c per year, issued each School quarter. If you are not already a subscriber, write to-day to *The Seminarian*, 337 Jarvis St., and start with Volume IX., Number 1.

Conversions and Baptisms at Ellwood City

A letter to hand to-day from Pastor R. B. Morrison of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, brings the following good news:

"Bro. Jack Watt paid us a surprise visit and I immediately put him to work in having him preach the Sunday of October 31st. He brought two stirring messages and three young men came forward at the invitation.

"Our prayer services are being very well attended; last Wednesday evening there were some thirty-six present.

"Last Sunday we experienced a time of blessing, and never have I seen the church services so well attended, the church being well filled for all our services.

"Over and above this, we had the joy of baptizing twenty candidates this week. We are looking forward to even greater things in His name. Pray for us."

Second Quarter

This is the week of the examinations for the First Quarter of the School year. The teachers are diligently finding out what the students do not know! Next week we begin the Second Quarter. New students may enter at the beginning of any quarter. Indeed, one young lady came to us from another school about two weeks ago. Pray that we may have in the new quarter "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

In Appreciation

Although conducted with the utmost economy the education of each individual student enrolled in Toronto Baptist Seminary involves the expenditure of a considerable sum each year. To have such expense shared by a student's father, where such a share is possible, is a mark of appreciation of service rendered the son. We record with grateful appreciation that this week the father of one of our students sent a substantial contribution for the Seminary Fund. We believe that such gifts are real investments in the Kingdom of Heaven.—W.G.B.

BOOKS BY DR. SHIELDS

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Bible School Lesson Outline

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Vol. 1 4th Quarter Lesson 47 November 21st, 1937

SIGNS OF THE END-TIME

Lesson Text: Luke 21.

Golden Text: "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."—Luke 21:33.

The Lesson in Junior Classes.

Instead of giving an exposition of the whole chapter, teachers of younger scholars might find it more profitable to concentrate on some of the truths mentioned, and make clear the teaching of these principles.

1. **The Word of God—Golden Text.** Discuss the Bible as the Word of God (Psa. 119:105), of which every word will be fulfilled (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Psa. 119:89). Exhort pupils to read it (Rev. 1:3), study it (Psa. 119:11), and obey it (Psa. 119:2, 4, 133).

2. **The Duty of Giving—verses 1-4.** The first duty is to receive Christ (John 1:11, 12; Rom. 6:23), then to give Him our hearts (2 Cor. 8:5). It is blessed also to give of our substance to Him (Acts 20:35). He blesses even the smallest gift.

3. **Encouragement in Persecution—verses 12-19.** Christian boys and girls who suffer because of their stand for Christ will be rewarded (Matt. 5:10-12). Let them commit themselves to the Lord (1 Pet. 4:19).

4. **The Promise of His Second Coming—verse 27.** The Bible clearly states that Christ will come again in person (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10, 11; 1 Thess. 4:14-17). Let us be ready, watch, pray and serve Him (verses 34-36; Luke 12:36-40, 43; 19:13).

The Lesson in Adult Classes.

I. **Christ at the Treasury—verses 1-4.** Compare Mark 12:41-44.

Christ watched the rich and also the poor as they gave their gifts. He estimates gifts, not according to their actual value, for the widow brought just two mites, worth less than a cent according to our reckoning, but according to the measure of sacrificial love which prompts the gift (2 Cor. 8:12). Giving is a duty and a privilege (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

II. **The Olivet Discourse—verses 5-33.**

1. **Signs of the End-Time—verses 5-33.**

Compare Matthew 24; Mark 13:1-31.

As Christ was leaving the temple on His way to the Mount of Olives (verse 37), the disciples called His attention to the large and beautiful stones in the structure, and to the gifts placed there by worshippers. Christ then foretold the destruction of the temple, a prediction which was fulfilled in the year 70 A.D. When the Romans under Titus attacked the city and set fire to it, the soldiers dug up even the foundation stones of the temple in order to reach the gold of the temple which had melted in the flames.

The disciples asked two questions. "When shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things are about to come to pass?" What is meant by the expression "these things"? From the parallel accounts of this discourse we judge that in the minds of the disciples the destruction of the temple was associated with the promise of the coming of the Lord and the end or consummation of the age. They probably remembered such prophecies as are given in Zechariah 14. At any rate, our Lord prophesied concerning these events, and did not confine His teaching to information concerning the destruction of the temple.

Christ warned them of possible deception. False Christs would arise saying "I am he", and false prophets would say "The time is at hand". He warned them also against becom-

ing fearful at every time of war and tumult. These are inevitable, but "the end is not immediately". History has proved that our Lord's warnings were timely.

The answer to the second question, that regarding the sign of the approach of the consummation of the age, is contained in verses 10 and 11. There would be a war of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, a Hebrew idiom used (e.g. 2 Chron. 15:6; Isa. 19:2) to denote a major war, an almost world-wide conflict. Associated with this war would be earthquakes in divers places, famines, and plagues. These four things would constitute the beginning of the birth-pains (Matt. 24:8 Greek), warning the world of deliverance (Rom. 8: 19-22). Finally, strange sights and signs would appear in the heavens and upon the earth.

But before these events, the disciples would be called upon to endure persecution for Christ's sake. Therefore, our Lord gave them appropriate encouragement, promising to them wisdom (Luke 12:11, 12), protection and deliverance. All such trials become to all of us a source of testimony—a testimony to the love, faithfulness and power of God.

The answer to the first question, the one concerning the destruction of the temple, is found in verses 20-24. The disciples would know that the destruction of the temple was near when they should see that the city was besieged and blockaded on all sides by the foe (Luke 19:43, 44). Those still inside the city were warned to flee, an exhortation which seems at first sight to be a strange one, for escape would be difficult when the city was surrounded. History tells us that when the Roman troops had been besieging Jerusalem for some time, the commanding officer, Titus, withdrew his forces, the reason not being recorded. The Christians in the city, evidently acting according to this word of the Lord, fled to Pella in Transjordan. Later the besieging forces returned, and captured the city. Jerusalem is still under the control of the Gentiles, but some day "the times of the Gentiles" will be fulfilled.

Similar instructions were given with reference to the hasty flight from Jerusalem in the last days (Matt. 24:16-20; Mark 13:14-18). Like conditions will prevail at that time of tribulation of which the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was but a foregleam.

Verse 25 resumes the thought of verse 11, dealing with the phenomena noticeable in the heavenly bodies and upon earth before the coming of the Lord. The disturbances are to be of an unusual character, but our Lord did not give specific details in regard to these future events.

These portents would be the prelude to that stupendous event, the personal coming of Christ in power and great glory (Rev. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:16; Matt. 24:30; 25:31). What a day that will be!

Men follow the signs of the natural world (Luke 12:55, 56). The sprouting of the fig tree, or of any other tree, is an indication that summer is near. Similarly, our Saviour taught that the presence of the signs which He had described would herald the outward manifestation of the Kingdom of God. "This generation" may refer to the generation which would see the signs. If so, it would indicate that the same generation would also behold the fulfilment of the prophecies.

The word of God is sure and faithful. Though heaven and earth should pass away (Psa. 102:10-12, 25-27; 2 Pet. 3:10), all His promises will surely come to pass.

2. **The Command to Watch—verses 34-38.**

Compare Matt. 24:36-51; Mark 13:32-37.

After recounting these outward signs of His coming our Lord turned the thoughts of His disciples to themselves. Their personal attitude to Him was the important thing. He did not reveal the time of His coming; He would have us all be ready for Him, no matter when He should come (1 John 2:28). As children of light, His own should walk as children of light, not as children of darkness (1 John 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:1-9). Hearts should not be weighed down by pleasure, self-indulgence or care. To the wicked His coming will be as a snare which suddenly encloses a flock of birds resting in a field.

Expectant watching (Matt. 25:13) should be accompanied by constant prayer (Luke 18:1).