

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE REJECTION OF CHRIST

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

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

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

"And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will."—Luke 23:24, 25.

The God of nature is the Author of the Bible. The Author of the nature of things, the One Who gave to all things their nature, is the Inspirer of the Book. There is, as I have often, and in many different ways, shown you, a testimony to God in Nature; and when Nature and the Bible are both correctly interpreted, there can never be any contradiction between the two. Only a science falsely so-called will ever be found to be at variance with the truth of Revelation.

Yet the religion of Christ is a supernatural religion, a religion of supernaturalism. The Bible itself, in its origin, by the method of its unfolding, is a supernatural Book. It is supernatural as to its content: it is a record of supernatural events. It is a Book of miracles. Particularly is it a testimony to, and a record of, a supernatural Person. Jesus Christ was supernaturally born; He lived supernaturally; He died supernaturally; by a supernatural power He was raised again, and ascended into heaven. Christianity is supernatural in that it promises us a supernatural experience. The new birth is supernatural. The new creation—another word for the same experience—is wrought by the direct power of God. The whole record of the Christian church is a record of divine interposition; it is shot through with supernaturalism.

But while all that is true, there is nothing abnormal about the Christian religion. There is nothing monstrous about Christian supernaturalism. The birth of the Lord Jesus, the advent of Deity into human life, was supernatural, and yet it was beautifully natural.

I say, God never does violence to nature. He is its Author, and although wherever He touches us, He touches us with a power not our own, yet He ever respects the laws of being, and never at any time does violence either to our physical, or our mental constitution. The gospel does not ignore the law, much less does it violate it: it

rather fulfils it. And in His dealings with men, God always respects the endowments with which He clothed His human creatures. He respects the laws of mind.

There is a religious psychology, a spiritual, a biblically spiritual psychology. He Who comes to us, comes knowing the nature and constitution of the creature whom He would bring to Himself. He never breaks in upon the human mind, as a burglar violently gains entrance to a house that is not his own. He comes as 'the Lord and Proprietor, the Master-Locksmith, bearing a master-key; and supernaturally and yet with full regard and respect for the natural laws of mind, He opens the human heart. Of Lydia it is said, "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

On the other hand, the Bible always recognizes that it is by the operation of these laws of being that evil obtains its mastery over men: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Evil insinuates itself into the life of men, and secures control of all human faculties until at last the apparently innocent pleasure becomes the iron-handed jailer, and the bejewelled bracelet becomes a shackle of the soul.

I have thus spoken because in this chapter, in which my text is contained, and which is parallel to that which Mr. Brown read from John's gospel, there is a good deal of psychology. Only the Spirit of God could write a chapter like this, and trace and record the gradual mastery of a human will until at last, in spite of himself, and yet paradoxical as it may seem, by his own consent, a man becomes the author of his own destruction.

Pilate is far more than an historical character. There have been other Pilates; and men of like quality live today, and within the realm of their personalities the same

terrific conflict is waged. The human heart becomes a battlefield in which all the forces of light and of darkness, of good and of evil, strive for the mastery.

I shall not discuss with you the characteristics of a weakling. Pilate was a fair sample of a man. He would not have held his position had there not been in him some more-than-average qualities; and I think we may take his story as showing how even the strongest man—by a false strategy—may yield the citadel of his soul to the enemy, and at last be overcome by the forces of evil.

What about this man Pilate? We are to study him in relation to the one and only perfect Man this world has ever seen. Jesus Christ was the embodiment, the realization, if I may so put it for want of a better term, of that divine ideal cherished by the Creator of all when He said, "Let us make man." The man He conceived, the pattern of the stature of the man, was nothing less than that perfectly symmetrical and flawless character presented to the multitude when Pilate—speaking more wisely than he knew, even as he later wrote more accurately than he intended—said to the people, "Behold the man!"

It can never be known what a man is until you measure him with *the Man*. One can never appraise any man's stature, any man's real quality, except by weighing him in the balance with Jesus Christ. You remember the Scripture which says, "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." Beside that, let me set this other Scripture, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." That is to say, everyone has come short of the perfect stature of the moral perfection of Jesus Christ. Pilate, therefore, is to be measured, and his worth appraised, as must be the worth of every other man, by viewing him in contrast and in contact with, the one perfect Man.

I.

Pilate's error was that he assumed the wrong attitude toward Jesus—let me call him only "Jesus" as we endeavour to take Pilate's point of view. To him, Christ was merely Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. I repeat, **HE ASSUMED THE WRONG ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM FROM THE BEGINNING.** Jesus was brought into his life, and if I may say so, cast upon his judgment, without choice upon his part. "The whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate," saying, in effect, "Here he is."

That is true of every man. You can no more escape Jesus of Nazareth than you can escape the air, or the sun; without your seeking Him, He intrudes Himself upon you. When He said to His disciples, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he," he was not begging a compliment. There is a sense in which it was of no consequence to Him what they thought of Him. Their appraisal did not—could not—affect His standing. It was the—I was going to use the word Lord Tweedsmuir objects to. I object to it, too, but it is a short cut to a principle—it was the *reaction* upon themselves of their estimate of Him that concerned Him. Their opinion did not affect Him, but it had a tremendous effect upon themselves.

I say, Incarnate Goodness, the person of Christ, through all the principles of righteousness that radiate from His Person, in all history, in all literature, in the very warp and woof of human society everywhere, is as ubiquitous, as all-pervasive as the air we breathe. The person of Christ, and the principles of righteousness which have their source and centre in Him, and radiate

from Him, intrude themselves upon us, and we are forced to an appraisal of them whether we will or not; we cannot evade these principles because we cannot elude their Principal: He will not be ignored.

Pilate took up *an attitude of negative approbation*. He said, "I find no fault in Him. I have nothing against Him. I have no quarrel with Him. I offer no criticism of Him. I find no fault in Him." You say, "Well done, Pilate?" Oh no! That was his first wrong step. Someone here to-night, perhaps, says, "I am not an avowed Christian. I have respect for Christianity. My mother is a Christian and I believe in her religion. My father is a Christian. I would not offer either of them the insult of finding fault with their religion. I am not a Christian myself, but I have no fault to find with others who are. I have no criticism of Christianity. I do not want to be reckoned among the enemies of Christ."

It is rather dangerous to hang a sign, "To let," in the window of any chamber of the mind. It is dangerous to have an unoccupied room in the heart. There are some people who boast of an "open mind." The mind, like the mouth, was made to shut as well as to open. There are some people whose minds are always open—open to all the vagrant spiders that seek a corner in which to spin their webs. There are professors, and alleged intellectuals, who have twisted themselves into interrogation points, who imagine themselves superior, because they are always asking questions, who put themselves within the scriptural classification as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"—but they find no fault with Him at all! But taking a negative attitude toward a moral question will expose one to the grave danger of taking the wrong path when he comes to the fork of the road.

If you pursue the story a little farther, you will find that *Pilate sought next to obtain a decision in respect to this matter vicariously*. When the enemy would not be placated, and they mentioned Galilee, He said, "Is this Man from Galilee?" "Yes." "Then he belongs to Herod's jurisdiction; I will hand Him over to Herod. Let him decide. "There are many people who are fond of transferring responsibility to other wills. They want a vicarious religion in another than the evangelical sense. If they can transfer responsibility to the priest, to the church, to circumstances, to the trend of the times—to anything instead of, as they say in England, "facing up" to it, they will do so. They are unwilling to "face up" to anything. They are always looking for a loophole. The moment they hear of Herod, they say, "I am glad you mentioned Galilee. Let Herod decide."

There are people here this evening who have too long evaded their own proper responsibility. You have made no definite and irrevocable decision in respect to Jesus Christ. You tell me, "Well, sir, the question of religion is in abeyance with me. I am not antagonistic. I should not be here if I were. I have no objection to it, but the fact is, under present circumstances, in my present situation, in view of all my friendships and fellowships and associations"—etc., etc. I know what you mean. "In view of my many interests, and of the peculiarly difficult position in which I am thereby placed, I prefer to refer the matter to Herod for settlement." No man can long evade responsibility after that fashion; for in but a few hours or less, *Pilate found the same Man on his hands again*; "Herod . . . sent him again to Pilate." Here he is face to face with the same problem. So will you be. You cannot escape it by trying to justify your irresolution and your indecision on the ground of some peculiar situation, some circumstantial exigency which you think renders

you immune to responsibility. Jesus comes back again. What will you do with Him?

Then Pilate thought he had an additional argument. He said, "I find no fault, and Herod finds no fault." "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "No! Let us find a middle course. I will chastise Him, and let Him go. He is not worthy of death. So far as I see, He is not worthy even of chastisement, but you are determined He shall be punished; therefore, let us compromise. I will go half way with you. We will chastise Him, and let Him go." Ah, but one cannot very long postpone decision in respect to Jesus Christ by any such attempt to evade responsibility, without at last bringing oneself into the place of the critic. "Blessed is the man",—that is what I meant by religious psychology, what they used to call "moral philosophy"—"blessed is the man that WALKETH NOT in the counsel of the ungodly, NOR STANDETH in the way of sinners, NOR SITTETH in the seat of the scornful." One does not pass from neutrality to scornfulness by one step: you WALK with the ungodly, you STAND with sinners, and you SIT DOWN in the seat of the scornful.

"No! No! I would not crucify Jesus. I will chastise Him." That is the philosophy of, I had almost said, of Biblical criticism and new theology: it is a compromise with error, and an attempt to discover some defect in Christ; or, if you cannot find any defect in Him, at least you yield to their criticism of Him in an attempt to satisfy those who thirst for His blood.

But Pilate did not placate the insatiable hatred of the enemies of the Lord Jesus by that means. Who was it who spoke through that mob, who cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him?" Whence that inspiration? They were inspired from the pit. The whole conspiracy was satanic. If Pilate had been sufficiently instructed, he would have known that you cannot successfully argue with the devil. You cannot satisfy him with your philosophies or your compromises. He is adamant. And Pilate, in knocking against this wall of opposition to Christ, was only breaking down his own resistance. That is what we ever do. It is a case of knocking one's head against the proverbial stone wall. The stone wall remains—and by and by the head loses power to knock anything. That was bound to be the result of Pilate's attempted compromise. Pilate was steadily weakening all the time, until at last he "gave sentence that it should be as they required."

"He delivered Jesus to their will." Some man may say, "Mr. Preacher, do not try to persuade me. Do not try to impose your will on me. I will exercise my own will. I will do my own thinking. I am the master of my fate, the captain of my soul." Are you? So Pilate thought. And yet how weak he really was! At the end of the day, he had abjectly surrendered his whole manhood, and "he delivered Jesus to their will"—not his will. He had yielded himself to obey, and their servant he had become whom he obeyed. That is how evil secures the mastery of men; and that is how the human heart is gradually hardened against Jesus Christ.

II.

Let me go back over that ground for a minute or two, and observe WHAT PILATE DID. First of all, he *sinned against his own judgment*; he sinned against the light he had. His highest appraisal of Christ was of a negative order, as I have said. He found no fault in Him—but it is not recorded that he found any virtue in Him. When he saw Him, evidently "there was no beauty that (he) should desire Him." But he sinned against the best

judgment he had on the matter, and his ultimate decision was contrary thereto.

It was opposed, too, to *some of the better influences of life*. You must not forget that in the divine economy, God deals with men not merely in church: He knows all about your parentage, all about life's relationships. He knows all about the influences that play upon your life,—

"Unnumbered comforts on my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From Whom those comforts flowed."

He has been always giving, always blessing, always hedging up our way.

I heard a man preach rather an unusual sermon when I was but a lad—I do not know that I could subscribe to all of it, but he spoke of the obstacles that God put between the soul and perdition; how He piled up barriers to make it hard for a man to go over the precipice; how men climbed over them all one after another.

I do not know what sort of woman Pilate's wife was, but certainly God, by some extraordinary means, ordained that He should not be left without witness in Pilate's home, and she sent to him and said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." God spoke even through Pilate's wife—erecting a barrier between him and what he was about to do. I do not know whether Pilate was domestically a very pliable man. He may have been in some cases, but certainly he steeled himself against his wife's counsel, and the ultimate decision that he made—which was the most vital and determinative decision of his life—was made in direct opposition probably to the best and holiest influences that had ever played upon him. How many people are like him? They set themselves against the prayers of a godly wife, a godly mother, a godly father; and defy every influence that God has released from heaven, almost as though they were beside themselves, and determined upon self-destruction.

Then, of course, there was that other consideration. Oh that I could make it plain! *There stands Jesus!* He does not need a witness; He needs no credential; He does not need anyone to recommend Him. There He stands, saying nothing; as though by His very silence He would say, "It is your turn, Pilate. I came down from heaven; I am come into the world." Pilate asked, "Art thou a king?" The Man of Nazareth answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Pilate enquired, "What is truth?"—but he did not wait for an answer. Many people have done that since. But there He stood. Before the judgment bar of God, Pilate can have no excuse. On him was placed the responsibility of forming a first-hand, personal judgment in respect to God Incarnate as He stood before Him.

"What then," said he to the people, "shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" And as long as you ask anybody's opinion as to what you should do with Jesus, you will get into trouble. Consider Who He is, and what He is—and that determined, there can be nothing to do with Him but to receive Him for what He is.

If Pilate, in the beginning, instead of saying, "I find no fault in Him," had opened his heart—I had almost said, to the charm of Jesus Christ, but more than that: if he had taken up a positive attitude in respect to righteousness, if he had taken up that positive attitude toward Christ, he would not have been interested in Herod's jurisdiction; he would never have sent Him to Herod; he would never have had Him back again; he

would not have tried to shirk his responsibility, but would have reached a decision there and then. He would have said, "Not guilty. I release Him." The Christ, of course, would have been crucified: "It must needs be that offence come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh"; "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Thus Pilate took step after step, yielding himself to the enemies' pressure, until at last the collective will of the multitude broke him, and he surrendered.

Do you know anything about mob rule? There is a bit of telepathy here, as well as psychology—a great crowd of people determined on one thing. Pilate in the beginning ought to have stood out against it, but, instead, he yielded to it, until by and by they said, "We have you."

You have your associates, friends, all sorts of influences touching your life that would keep you from definite, final, and irrevocable decision in favour of Jesus Christ. And every time you yield to it, it becomes easier to yield the next time, until by and by the force of others' wills breaks you.

I am talking out of my own experience. I have seen it happen again and again. I have seen in this church, back in nineteen twenty-one, a multitude of people who were ready to cry, "Hosanna," and then, because they could not stand up to what was right, go down, down, down, down, until at last I heard the same voices say, "Crucify him." It is always true where the Word of God is on trial. In the individual life, in bodies of Christians collectively, there operates the same principle: the longer you delay your decision for Christ, the more difficult it will become to make it in His favour; and every surrender you make to the enemies of Christ, must make it easier for you to make another surrender, until you will become so accustomed to making excuses that you will become an expert in excusing yourself; and by the operation of the same mental law, incapable of resolution. Thus will a man set aside his reason, his conscience, his affection, and, like Pilate, decide at last against Christ.

III.

THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION OF THIS. What was it? Pilate had no love for the chief priests, or the scribes, or the Pharisees. They were no friends of his—and he was no friend of theirs. I think Pilate held that entire mob in supreme contempt. He loathed the whole crowd of them; and if, consistently with his own advantage, he could have refused them, he would have done it—and you can see him trying to do it. Unwilling to yield, yet he yielded; but he yielded reluctantly. People pursue a like course to-day. They are not Christians, but they have no special love for the mob that howls down the Christian religion. Pilate had no love for Herod. I think when he sent Jesus Christ to Herod, he rather chuckled, saying, "That is fine: I have given him a job to do." They were enemies, not friends. I think he reckoned he was doing Herod the greatest possible disservice when he unloaded this alleged culprit upon him. He had no desire to please Herod—he might have desired to please his wife, but he failed equally there. On the other hand, I suppose he had no special reason for antagonizing her. He was a bit of a simpleton if he did it unnecessarily!

As for the person of Jesus Christ, Pilate had just met Him for the first time. Toward Jesus as a man, he bore no ill will. If he could have done as he desired, I think he would have said, "I rather like this prisoner; I am

impressed with Him; I am on His side; I will release Him."

So there are those who say, "I should like to be a Christian. I should like to please my friends who would like me to be a Christian. I am not against Christianity. I have nothing against Christ. So far as I know Him." What is wrong with you, Pilate? What is working in that mind of yours that is driving you on in spite of yourself, overwhelming your conscience, your affections, your will? What is this thing in you that you cannot resist? Let us try to discover:

"What evil hath He done?" Pilate asked. Said they, "He made Himself a King. Crucify Him." Said he, in mockery, I think, perhaps in a tone of bitter sarcasm, "Shall I crucify your King?"—"He knew that for envy they had delivered Him." But like a pack of wolves they barked back at him, "We have no king but Caesar. If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. We will tell your master of you; it is either His head or yours. Show yourself disloyal to Caesar, and we will report you." Ah! that was another matter! "If I let Jesus go, if I let Him come into my heart—I may lose everything else, and have nothing left but Jesus." You are right. That is almost certainly what it would cost you. But you have not come to the place where you can say,—

"Jesus, I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all, shalt be:
Perish every proud ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet how rich is my condition
God and heaven are still my own."

But there was something else in Pilate's heart, occupying the place that belonged exclusively to Jesus. That was the root of the whole matter. So is it still. Pilate thought more of his worldly position, its emoluments, whatever honour was attached to it. He thought only of the things that are seen and are temporal; he had no eyes for that vast realm of reality that is not seen and is eternal. What will you choose, my friend? Pilate would have said, "I like Jesus; I should like to do Him a favour. I am not specially averse to displeasing His enemies if I could do it with impunity; but I fear it would jeopardize my position. I might cease to be governor." He weighed Jesus in the balances of his own carnal temporal judgment, and while he weighed Him, the mob cried, "Crucify Him." He said, "Let me release Him, and crucify someone else. There is another man here about whose guilt there is no doubt. He is a disturber of the people, a robber, and a murderer. Let me crucify him, and release Jesus." They said, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

"Now Barabbas was a robber." And all that Barabbas represented then and now are robbers. This One in the seamless robe, who is He? He is the greatest of all gifts, and He comes down from the Father of lights, the Giver of every good and every perfect gift. He never robbed anyone; He is always giving, always enriching, always saving. Will you not have Him? No! No! And yet "Barabbas was a robber." You may not see it now, but if anyone here this evening shall choose Barabbas instead of Jesus Christ, the time will come at the end of the day when everything will slip away; when all that is of the world will be seen to have been but a vain vanishing show, which has left the soul a pauper forever. Then you will have to cry, "Alas! Alas! I am despoiled of everything of value in time and in eternity. I chose a robber!"

But to choose Jesus: What a Giver He is! What grace He bestows! What jewels He gives to His beloved! I would fain come to you as did Eleazar, when he came to Rebekah and said, "I am my master's representative, who is a very rich man. He bade me bring some samples of his wealth, and if you will come with me, he will make you the consort of the richest man on earth." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He gives us peace; He gives us pardon—and peace because of pardon; He gives us joy; He gives us the all-comprehensive gift, life. "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." Oh the folly and the blindness of it, that men will steel their hearts against the Giver of life and of everything that is worth while for time and for eternity; and instead, choose a robber and a murderer! God save us from the folly of it! Hear me: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God"—without money and without price—"is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let us pray:

O Lord our God, how helpless we are! Thou hast opened the eyes of many in Thy presence, to behold the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off. We would confess we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thou hast made some of us partakers of Thy grace; Thou hast given us a rich earnest of our richer inheritance. We thank Thee for it all, Lord Jesus. Look into our hearts, and bear us witness by Thy Spirit that we speak the veritable truth, the truth indeed, when we say that the foretaste Thou has given us here compensates us for all earth's losses. We esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. And yet here are some, O Lord, prone to be deceived at the devil's bargain-counter, to take that which has no value—nay, that which is worse than valueless, which has in it the potentialities of destruction—instead of Jesus Christ. O Spirit of the living God, come to our help this night, and do what no human power can do. Save the Pilates of this congregation from delivering Jesus to the will of the prince of darkness so far as they are concerned. We beg of Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt come to our hearts; make this a night of salvation to some in Thy presence, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

BOOK REVIEW

THE BIBLE COMES ALIVE by Sir Charles Marston, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937, 290 pages and index.

"And the letter which Nedeiah, the grandson of the king, had brought to Shallum, the son of Jaddua, from the prophet, saying, 'Beware! has thy slave sent to my lord.'" So reads one of the letters found on January 29, 1935, at the site of the ancient city of Lachish. "The king" seems to be Jehoia-kim, and "the prophet" Uriah, of whose faithfulness and martyrdom we read in Jeremiah 26:20-23. So has the spade yielded a private correspondence contemporary with Jeremiah. The regular word for God in these eighteen letters is Yahweh (Jehovah), translated in the Authorized Version "Lord."

Very important at Lachish is the discovery of a bowl of the age of Moses or earlier with an alphabetical description, which Professor S. Langdon interpreted as "His righteousness is my hand and . . ." (Cf. Isaiah 33:2, "Be thou their arm"), and he says: "Obviously we have here the most important discovery of modern times in respect to Biblical criticism."

It was once said by unbelievers that Moses could not write. Here is writing, and in alphabetical script, found in Palestine, corresponding to other finds in Sinai of the same script to be dated before the days of Moses. So is archaeology undermining the foundations of much Old Testament destructive criticism.

Sir Charles Marston feels that "the neglect of the Old Testament may be the main cause of the neglect of Religion". He has devoted much money and no little learning to the defence of the proposition that *The Bible Is True*. His new book with its special attention to the excavations now going on at Lachish, is another contribution to this end (price \$2.75).—W.G.B.

"BY THEIR FRUITS"

No truth could be more self-evident than that of our Lord's teaching, to the effect that a tree is known by its fruits. That principle applies to individuals and to institutions.

We have heard from several about the report contained in THE GOSPEL WITNESS of last week respecting the conference of pastors recently held in Timmins where the whole work of the North was passed under review. These men are real prospectors. While others have gone North prospecting for gold and silver, these men are prospecting for jewels which will be reckoned among the Lord's treasures in the day when He makes up His jewels.

Someone remarked to the Editor, "Why did you not point out that every one of the men in that conference was a product of Toronto Baptist Seminary?" The reason was that we did not write the article, and the one who did write it was too modest to suggest that such a gathering was an advertisement for the Seminary. We call attention to it now. What would the Union of Regular Baptist Churches be without the Seminary?

About fifty of our Pastors are the product of the Seminary.

Recently, for various reasons, the Union found it necessary to discontinue their work in Liberia. It is always easier to begin an enterprise than to terminate one; and no matter what the circumstances, there will always be some—and among them the very best of people—who will not wholly approve of such discontinuance. Everybody, of course, regrets it, but while some recognize it was inevitable, some good people think otherwise.

It has been reported to us that some have said that the Liberian work was discontinued in order that more funds might be available for the Seminary. Such an assumption is the longest astronomical distance from the truth. It is true that the Seminary is always urgently in need of funds; but we have neither suggested nor desired that one cent of foreign mission money should be diverted to Seminary channels. The Seminary is conducted in the most economical way possible, and we are certain that as much real and useful labour is given for every dollar invested in it as in any religious enterprise in the world. There are no slackers in the Seminary.

But it may be well to inform our constituents that for the ten years of the Union's existence the total cost of Seminary operation was \$110,606.81, of which amount \$9,367.98 came from the Union treasury, or 8.4%; and of the amount received from the treasury a good part, in the early years, was first put into the Union treasury by Jarvis Street Church, as the practice then was to pass all Seminary funds through the Union office. The Editor of this paper, and the church he serves, believe together in Baptist home and foreign missions, and we are determined to support them both to the limit of our power; and we shall give with enthusiasm to the support of our new foreign mission work in France. But, on the other hand, we cannot successfully carry on either home or foreign missions unless we have a thoroughly evangelical, Baptist training college for preachers. Look up your WITNESS of last week again, and read the report from the North, and remember every one of these men is a Seminary man, and then ask yourself whether it is worth while supporting an institution like that.

Why not send the Seminary a liberal Christmas gift?

"THE PLOT THAT FAILED"

Nothing that the Editor has ever published has made quite the appeal as this story. Although the contents of the book have been published serially in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and our regular readers have thus read the story for themselves, yet hundreds of them have already ordered the book, desiring to have the story in permanent form. The first consignment of bound volumes will come from the bindery to-day. We are happy to say that the orders came in so rapidly that we were compelled to double our order for immediate delivery of bound copies.

It is interesting also to note that the announcement of the reduction in price from \$1.50 to \$1.00 of the splendidly bound volume of sermons entitled, "Other Little Ships", precipitated a real run on that book. The publishers told us at the time that we were extravagant in the method of binding, and that the quality of work was such as is usually put on a book that is made to sell at \$3.50. It is becoming a very popular book at \$1.00 a volume.

A large number of people have ordered "The Plot That Failed" and "Other Little Ships" at the same time, for Christmas presents. One constant friend of THE GOSPEL WITNESS sent us an order for fifteen copies of each, thirty volumes in all. Perhaps other of our readers may be moved to do the same thing. We should like every minister in the country to have a copy of "The Plot That Failed". It contains three hundred and eighty-four pages, including a very fine illustration of the church itself.

We have received many letters from ministers and Christian workers, saying they would highly prize a volume, but cannot afford it. Only to-day we received a letter from a missionary regretting his inability to subscribe to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and yet telling us that he longed to have it, and asking us also if we could spare him copies of some back numbers which had been lent him by someone else. If anyone would like to subscribe for that missionary, we should be most happy to send the paper.

Some of our friends have sent in \$5.00, saying, "Send me a copy of 'The Plot That Failed', and send the other four copies to four ministers who cannot afford to buy one for themselves." We could easily dispose of hundreds of copies to ministers we know, in that way. It might be used of God greatly to strengthen them in their work, and in encouraging them in their fight for the faith. While we think either of these books would be an appropriate Christmas gift, we are sure they would be just as much appreciated even if ordered for or by people who cannot be reached before Christmas.

The books will be ready for mailing this week, and will be sent out as they are delivered from the bindery, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Send in your order at once. We should like to present every student in the Seminary with a copy. How many friends of the students will help us to do so?

WHOSE PRIVILEGE IS THIS?

In another article we referred to a missionary who would like THE GOSPEL WITNESS. We publish the letter herewith:

Jamaica, B.W.I.

"My dear Dr. Shields:

"I earnestly hope you have fully recovered from your serious illness, and are again actively proclaiming 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'. Through many years I have admired

you in your stand for the old faith. I first saw you in 1909 or 1910, when you preached for dear Dr. Dixon in Moody Church one Sunday a.m. on Jacob's vision of the ladder, and through the years I've rejoiced in your conflicts and victories for Christ and His cause.

"How I wish I could send you a subscription to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, as I long to receive it regularly,—but I am very sorry I cannot. Will you *please forgive me* making a second request: if possible, kindly put my name on your mailing list.

"The Lord is blessing His Word through our testimony, and we are glad of being in a hard and difficult field. We need prayer, for were it not for our risen Lord's sustaining grace we do not see how we could continue—but He abideth faithful!

"May He strengthen you day by day, and restore you to full health and strength, and use you mightily, is my prayer for you.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) _____."

Another interesting letter reaches us from Africa. It illustrates the influence of THE GOSPEL WITNESS:

Ayan, Afaa,
via Salt Pond,
West Coast of Africa.

"THE GOSPEL WITNESS,
Toronto, Canada.

"Dear in Christ Jesus:

"I am here sending you this application for THE GOSPEL WITNESS, that you may despatch it to me through the post office at Mankessin by early mail. For I have conspicuously seen those whom are readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS have got a full advantage with better experience. Therefore, I hope you can support me to develop into the good knowledge in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"With kindest greetings,

Yours cordially,
(Signed) J. A. AIDOO."

Who will adopt this missionary for inclusion in our GOSPEL WITNESS family?

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINTED SERMONS

Someone handed us a letter to read. By omitting all marks of identification, we may perhaps without impropriety publish a few extracts as showing what use is made of the printed sermons, and also of other news items contained in THE GOSPEL WITNESS:

"You remember how thrilled you were over Dr. Shields' 'Saved Forever' sermon the Sunday night we left? Well, _____ had not been at evening services, and I've been wondering if she would not enjoy going with you to Jarvis Street Sunday nights if you could so arrange it, that is, if she enjoys listening to Dr. Shields? His own people surely do anyway. I never in my life went into a church where the lovelight for the Pastor so shone on every face. I've thought since at times that possibly it was because he had been sick so long; but when _____ came to the house last Saturday, I asked him if he knew that smile of love on the faces of the people in Jarvis Street, and he said at once, 'Yes; I know that smile'—and it must be six years or more since he attended Jarvis Street. Oh, it must be ten years, and yet he distinctly remembers the smile on the faces. Have you not noticed it? I never saw it in any church before in my life.

"About that sermon, 'Saved Forever', it surely was lovely, and I have read it carefully and marked it to send to my sister down east—and now I have lost it. She needs that assurance, so if you have a copy, underline 'Saved Forever,' and send it to her.

"I have the sermon, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His'. Wasn't that one lovely. Mrs. _____ came over last Thursday, and stayed till five p.m. I read it to her, and she asked me not to send it to my sister until _____ had given it at the B.Y.P.U. I do wish _____ had heard him give that one. When you write, tell me about the services. Do you get out to any of the prayer meetings? We thought they had a wonderful Sunday School—nine hundred when we were there,

and in a sermon Dr. Shields said two hundred were absent from one primary class because of the paralysis epidemic.

"Did you read the article by Dr. Hamilton on the Union Convention held in Jarvis Street? Did you hear Mr. Boyd? His talk must have been searching, and what a fine young man he must be."

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

OPEN DOORS—Let Us Enter. Those who read in last week's WITNESS the splendid account of the great conference held in Timmins will have noted with much satisfaction that our pastors in the North already have plans on foot for seizing new opportunities as they present themselves. It is most reassuring to know that our workers in that rapidly developing country with its manifold needs can be trusted to leave no stone unturned in the prosecution of the work of the gospel. Independently of this report, the Union Office has received in the last two weeks first-hand information of certain new settlements in the North that are in need of a gospel testimony. We expect that in the near future we shall be asked to send a missionary to these places. They may develop very rapidly and in a few years be good-sized towns. Here are open doors, we believe, "great and effectual". Help us to enter in. We must depend chiefly upon the members of the churches as they make their offerings for the work of the Union. The Home Mission expenditure of the Union has been increased considerably of late. We have assumed responsibility for a number of new causes in Southern Ontario, Northern Ontario and Quebec. Let us one and all unite in earnest prayer and sacrificial giving that we may be able to advance to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We urgently exhort pastors and members to keep the need of the North before their churches in order that the united prayers of our people may be made for the blessing of the Lord on our new causes, and that we may be enabled to enter other doors as they open.

BRISCOE STREET, LONDON—Rev. R. D. Guthrie. Rev. Robert D. Guthrie is now broadcasting the gospel over CPPL, 730 Kc. London, every Sunday at 5.30 p.m. This takes the place of the Sunday morning broadcast from the church the third Sunday of each month.

Last Sunday Pastor Guthrie baptized one believer who was converted in Briscoe Street Baptist Church over two years ago. This wife has gone on with the Lord under much opposition in the home, and two weeks ago the Lord gave her a great victory, and she decided to obey God rather than man in the matter of baptism. There was a good congregation present, and a young lady was converted at the close of the evening service. We were thrilled to see the tears of repentance.

The church is actively engaged in a very profitable visitation campaign throughout the community. The teachers visit their absentees, the ladies of the church visit Thursday afternoon, and the men of the church visit Thursday and Friday evenings. The effort is showing results in an increased attendance in the Bible School.

TOTTENHAM AND CHURCHILL GOSPEL MISSIONS—Pastor Grahame M. Reeve. Rev. Frank Wellington assisted Pastor Reeve in two weeks' evangelistic services. Many people came to the Missions for the first time. One man said he had attended church but once in twenty-seven years—that time being his wife's funeral. It is evident that the meetings have set before us open doors and opportunities for new contacts.

There were at least nineteen open professions, and others were brought under conviction. Among those who accepted Christ were two Roman Catholic mothers—there were five mothers in all. One of the former Catholics, immediately her conversion was known, received much needed food and clothing by way of the priest; this was a severe test, but the woman promptly returned everything stating she was through with their church.

These meetings followed a summer of special prayer. After such fellowship and blessing any pastor should feel revived. Rev. Wilfred Wellington assisted as song leader during the last week and Tottenham Mission will always be glad to welcome these brethren again.

GOSPEL WITNESS SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINE

Christ the Son of God

JANUARY 1st to MAY 31st, 1938

Edited by Dr. Olive L. Clark

- LESSON I.—January 2nd—THE SON OF GOD BECOMES MAN.**
Lesson Text: John 1. Golden Text: John 1:14.
- LESSON II.—January 9th—THE FIRST MIRACLE.**
Lesson Text: John 2. Golden Text: John 2:5.
- LESSON III.—January 16th—CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.**
Lesson Text: John 3. Golden Text: John 3:7.
- LESSON IV.—January 23rd—CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.**
Lesson Text: John 4. Golden Text: John 4:14.
- LESSON V.—January 30th—THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED.**
Lesson Text: John 5. Golden Text: John 5:24.
- LESSON VI.—February 6th—CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.**
Lesson Text: John 6. Golden Text: John 6:35.
- LESSON VII.—February 13th—CHRIST AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.**
Lesson Text: John 7. Golden Text: John 7:37.
- LESSON VIII.—February 20th—CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.**
Lesson Text: John 8. Golden Text: John 8:12.
- LESSON IX.—February 27th—THE BLIND MAN CURED.**
Lesson Text: John 9. Golden Text: John 9:25b.
- LESSON X.—March 6th—CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.**
Lesson Text: John 10. Golden Text: John 10:11.
- LESSON XI.—March 13th—CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.**
Lesson Text: John 11. Golden Text: John 11:25.
- LESSON XII.—March 20th—THE DEATH OF CHRIST FORETOLD.**
Lesson Text: John 12. Golden Text: John 12:32.
- LESSON XIII.—March 27th—CHRIST TEACHES HUMILITY.**
Lesson Text: John 13. Golden Text: John 13:35.
- LESSON XIV.—April 3rd—CHRIST COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES.**
Lesson Text: John 14. Golden Text: John 14:1.
- LESSON XV.—April 10th—CHRIST THE TRUE VINE.**
Lesson Text: John 15. Golden Text: John 15:7.
- LESSON XVI.—April 17th—THE RESURRECTION.**
Lesson Text: Matthew 28. Golden Text: Matt. 28:6.
- LESSON XVII.—April 24th—THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.**
Lesson Text: John 16. Golden Text: John 16:13a.
- LESSON XVIII.—May 1st—THE PRIESTLY PRAYER OF CHRIST.**
Lesson Text: John 17. Golden Text: John 17:4.
- LESSON XIX.—May 8th—THE BETRAYAL, DENIAL AND TRIAL OF CHRIST.**
Lesson Text: John 18. Golden Text: John 18:37b.
- LESSON XX.—May 15th—THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.**
Lesson Text: John 19. Golden Text: John 19:30.
- LESSON XXI.—May 22nd—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.**
Lesson Text: John 20. Golden Text: John 20:28.
- LESSON XXII.—May 29th—CHRIST APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES.**
Lesson Text: John 21. Golden Text: John 21:17b.

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12 Copies	.50

Address: THE GOSPEL WITNESS,
130 Gerrard St. E., Toronto.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 1 Fourth Quarter Lesson 52 December 26th, 1937

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Lesson Text: Luke 24.

Golden Text: "He is not here, but is risen"—Luke 24:6.

I. The Women at the Empty Tomb—verses 1-9.

Compare Matt. 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; John 20:1.

Among the women who gathered at the tomb that Resurrection morning were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less, Salome the mother of James and John, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward (8:3). These devoted women had been active in His service in Galilee, were the last at the cross, and the first at the empty tomb. They had paid particular attention to the location of the sepulchre (23:55), that they might return bearing spices and precious ointments with which they expected to anoint the body of their beloved Lord. It is noteworthy that Martha and Mary of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus, did not accompany them to the tomb; they evidently believed that Christ would die and rise again (John 12: 3, 7).

The stone which had been securely placed at the entrance to the tomb and sealed by order of Pilate (Matt. 27: 65, 66), was removed by the power of God manifested through the touch of an angel at the time of the earthquake (Matt. 28:2). The Roman guards were overpowered at the sight of the visitor from heaven, and two men in shining apparel succeeded them as watchmen.

These godly women believed the message that Christ was alive, that He had risen from the grave, and that His body no longer rested in that tomb (Rev. 1:18). They also remembered the word which Christ Himself had spoken to them in Galilee (9:22).

II. Peter at the Empty Tomb—verses 10-12. Compare John 20:2-10.

The eleven disciples would not believe the joyful testimony of the women that Christ had risen, but two of them, Peter and John, were sufficiently interested to investigate for themselves.

They perceived that the tomb was empty. In those days, after a body was embalmed, it was wrapped with narrow linen bands. The body of Christ could not have been stolen, for those linen wrappings were lying on the floor of the tomb, undisturbed when Christ arose from the dead. The burial clothes probably still marked the contour of that precious body, as the chrysalis indicates the form of the newly-escaped butterfly. The position of the grave-clothes, the fact of the empty tomb and the witness of those to whom Christ appeared after His passion, are among the "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3) of the resurrection of Christ.

Peter departed, "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass," but it is said of John that "he saw and believed".

III. Christ Appears to Two Disciples—verses 13-35.

Compare Mark 16: 12, 13.

Toward evening on the same day Christ appeared to two of His disciples as they walked toward Emmaus, a village about six and one-half miles from Jerusalem. One of the disciples was Cleopas; the other may have been Mary, the wife of Cleopas (John 19:25), or perhaps Luke himself.

The eyes of these disciples were not heavy with sleep as were the eyes of the disciples in Gethsemane, but they were heavy with sorrow. Their minds were confused, and their hearts were oppressed. They were so absorbed in their grief and disappointment (Exod. 6:9) that they did not realize the identity of the stranger who had joined them. Moreover, a mysterious change had been wrought in the person of the glorified Lord: He appeared "in another form" (Mark 16:12). They who walk along the way of life, unconscious of the presence of Christ, miss a great deal.

They thought Him only a stranger, one who could not appreciate the cause of their sadness, whereas they themselves were the ignorant ones. They had not believed the

word of Christ and, consequently, they were unable to understand His experience of death and resurrection.

Jesus of Nazareth was truly a prophet, but He was more than a prophet. He fulfilled the prophecies describing one who would open the eyes of the blind and preach deliverance to the captives, and they had trusted that He was the Messiah. His death had been the occasion of their stumbling, and they erred, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God. They failed to believe *all* that the prophets had spoken. They believed the portions which described the Messiah as a glorious King, but they rejected those concerning the Messiah as the suffering Servant of Jehovah. They had not remembered that the pathway to glory leads through the valley of humiliation, and that to reach the Mount of Olives, the Saviour must needs pass through Gethsemane and Calvary.

They had indeed been foolish and slow of heart. They were not dull of intellect, but slow of heart. Faith is not merely giving mental assent to the facts of the Gospel, but it is also an act of surrender of heart and obedience of will. These disciples had not believed in their heart that God had raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Christ endorsed the teaching of the Old Testament (verse 27). From Genesis to Revelation the Bible speaks of Christ. The hearts of these disciples burned within them as He opened to them the Scriptures and expounded the teaching concerning Himself.

Their eyes were at length opened, and they knew the Lord. It does not say "They opened their eyes", for such a revelation must come from God (Acts 16:14). God must bring the sinner to realize his lost condition, and lead him to a knowledge of Christ as Saviour. This chapter speaks of opened eyes (verse 31), opened Scriptures (verse 32), opened understanding (verse 45) and lips that are opened in testimony (verse 48).

IV. Christ Commissions His Disciples—verses 36-49.

Compare Mark 16:14-18; John 20:19-23.

The resurrection body of Christ was a glorified body, but it was a real body of flesh and bones. It was a spiritual body in the sense that it was controlled by the spirit; Christ appeared in their midst though the doors were shut. No longer did Christ subject Himself to the limitations of the flesh; death could not have dominion over Him now (Rom. 6:9).

The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that some day all those who have died in Christ shall live again (1 Cor. 15: 20-23, 50-54; 1 Thess. 4:14; Rom. 8:11). When He comes again, we all shall be like Him (1 John 3:2), with the spirit no longer imprisoned in a body of humiliation, (Phil. 3:21), but clothed upon with a body of glory and immortality (2 Cor. 5:1).

The disciples needed instruction with regard to the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ in God's plan of redemption. Christ must fulfil all the prophecies concerning Him which had been written in the Old Testament Scriptures, which the Jews divided into three sections; the law, the prophets and the psalms.

Had Christ not arisen, our faith had been in vain (1 Cor. 15: 14, 17). Christ died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). His resurrection was a guarantee that Christ was the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), that all His claims were true, that Satan had been vanquished, and that full atonement for sin had been made.

The disciples were commissioned to carry to all nations (Matt. 28:18-20) the message of salvation in Christ, bidding them repent and believe the Gospel, that their sins might be forgiven. Power from on high would be given to the disciples, when the Holy Spirit, promised by the Father (John 14:26; Acts 1:4), should come upon them.

V. Christ Ascends Into Heaven—verses 50-53.

Compare Mark 16: 19, 20; Acts 1:1-14.

After forty days, during which Christ spoke to His disciples of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, He led them out to Bethany, and pronounced a final benediction upon them. As He blessed them, they beheld Him departing from them into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Two heavenly messengers in white apparel appeared, comforting their hearts with a message of hope: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."