

"THE PLOT THAT FAILED" AND "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"—See Page 7

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

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Christmas For Ever!

TO a believer the implications of Christmas cannot be confined to a particular season. To us, Christmas means that "the Son of God is come." It is no longer necessary to erect altars to "the unknown God"; for God has come out of the unknown, declaring Himself in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. Christmas therefore, to the believer, celebrates a Fact more enduring than the foundations of the earth. God will never withdraw the Revelation He has given, nor extinguish the Light which shines for us in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Son of God not only came, but He "is come". Christmas cannot be relegated to a period of history, or to a point of time. It is no longer necessary that anyone should have visions of a ladder set up upon earth whose top should reach to heaven; much less is it necessary that men should combine to build a city and a tower whose top should reach to heaven, to make for themselves a name. There is a City and a Tower already built, and a Ladder let down from Heaven to Earth, upon which the ministering angels who are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation", ascend and descend.

We need not debate the reality of Santa Claus or Father Christmas: this we know beyond all peradventure that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." And of all gifts, the greatest is the "unspeakable gift" Who has come to abide.

The Gospel Witness sends its warmest Christmas greetings to all the members of The Witness family, earnestly praying that this Christmas season, in spite of the encircling gloom, may be a season of great joy as the result of a deeper and fuller experience of the reality of Christ, and of the inheritance that is reserved in heaven for all believers.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A CHRISTMAS MORNING SERMON

By the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 25th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God."—Luke 2:13.

Prayer before the Sermon

We invoke, O Lord, the aid of Thy Holy Spirit that as we approach Thee in the name of Him, Who died for us, our worship may be acceptable in Thy sight. We thank Thee this morning for the reality of these things of which we have been singing. We bless Thee that Jesus Christ, to many of us, is far more than a historical Character. We rejoice because He has come to us personally, and we know Him to be our Saviour. We therefore come to Thee in the name of Him Who was dead, but is alive forevermore, the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, and Whose glory men behold.

How much, O Lord, we need Thee at this hour! How greatly does the world need to know that Jesus was really born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king. We thank Thee that there is no day so dark, no situation so difficult, no set of circumstances so trying that Thou art not able to triumph over all. In this day of darkness in which we live, when still the world is in conflict, when anger, and wrath, and clamour, and bitterness, seem everywhere to abound, we pray that Thou wilt exercise Thy sovereign power, and exorcise these passions from the souls of men, and bring peace to this troubled world.

We have come together this morning as those who believe in Thee. We would fain join with the angels in praising Thee, and with the shepherds and the wise men in bowing at Thy manger throne, in humble adoration of Jesus as being Christ the Lord. Oh, that our hearts may really adore Thee to-day, and that the reality of the gospel may, by the ministry of Thy Spirit, be borne in upon our needy souls!

Of Thy mercy, make this morning's service prove to us all an oasis in the desert, a tarrying by the well-side, refreshment beneath the palms of Elim. Speak to each of us in Thy Word this morning. Bring inspiration and joy to every heart here before Thee.

Command, we pray Thee, Thy blessing upon all Thy people everywhere. And especially do we pray for the nations of the earth that Thy sovereign hand may be upon the counsels of the various governments. Show Thy great power, we pray Thee, in the chancellories of Europe to-day. Forbid, we implore Thee, O Lord, that the dogs of war should again be unleashed! Bring to poor strife-riven Spain peace, we beseech Thee.

Especially do we pray for the British Empire, for the various Commonwealths, and for the Government in London, for His Majesty the King, the Queen, and all the royal family, the Prime Minister and all his colleagues, and for the Foreign Office particularly. The Lord give wisdom, patience, and courage, and graciously effect the fulfilment of Thy holy plans.

Now open Thy Word to us, and enlighten our minds that we may see in this old story some truth that shall bring us comfort to-day. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

It would be difficult for any mortal man, I suppose, after nineteen centuries have swept the strings of imagination and experience, to the accompaniment of the Christmas theme, to say any new thing. But the old paths, and the old songs still have value; nor is the old story let outworn. Indeed, some old things are sometimes classed among the newer, or newest things of earth. And the old story, the Biblical story of the Advent, is really, in our day, quite novel. Then, too, our memories are short, and we need to be told the story often because we forget so soon.

There is one consideration, chiefly, to which I direct your attention this morning in this passage from the story of the Nativity. And it is this, that immediately upon the completion of the angel's announcement—as though they had descended, and with a holy impatience were awaiting their opportunity to take part in the announcement of this glorious event—"suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host" which up to that time had neither been seen nor heard.

What special significance attaches to the sudden breaking in of heaven's chorus of praise upon this extraordinary announcement by the angel of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ?

I.

Briefly, we may remind ourselves of TWO OR THREE DETAILS OF THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE, that we may the better understand the song of the multitude of the heavenly host. The angel had announced the coming of a Saviour. To many of us that is almost a holy commonplace. We so regard the Lord Jesus, and we rejoice that His name was called Jesus that He might save His people from their sins. And yet the Saviourhood of the Lord Jesus almost everywhere to-day, if it be not explicitly denied, is quite generally ignored. Already I have heard several Christmas messages by radio, and one might suppose that those who spoke had never heard the angel's message at all. So it will help us, perhaps, just to remind ourselves, first of all, of this simple, and, as I have said, holy commonplace, that the coming of the Lord Jesus was the advent of a Saviour. That is the universal need.

I am aware that the stores have been packed with good and attractive things in Christmas dress. The people who have been able, have racked their brains, and sought to exercise their ingenuity in discovering some fresh way of paying a Christmas compliment. And yet, useful as all these things may be, they are far removed from the heart of the Christian gospel, because it has become common for people to believe, or, at least, to assume—though perhaps they do not carefully formulate such a belief—that men can live by bread alone, whereas the great imperative is a Saviour. We need a Saviour! And that is the glorious message of Christmas: that which goes to the very heart of things, to the foundation of all foundations, the thing which is cardinal, upon which all the felicities of life must really hinge—that One has come Who is a Saviour. Jesus came to be a Saviour, not a philanthropist!

I suppose we may take the angel's message in this matter as being supremely authoritative. The postman is busy, not addressing letters, still less writing them: but in the somewhat commonplace task of delivering

them. Nor should we thank him, were he to take a message from a friend and say: "I am not at all satisfied with this. I will write another. I will address it in a somewhat different fashion. I will make the envelope a little more complimentary to those who are to receive it." We should all resent it, and say to the postman: "That is none of your business. Deliver your message."

Now the angel was not as wise as the modern professor! It never occurred to him to meddle with the divine programme as I am afraid many Christian ministers are doing to-day. He simply delivered the heaven-sent message. And the good tidings of great joy were to this effect, that there was born in Jerusalem, a Saviour.

I do not think we can amend it. I do not think we can, by any skill of ours, improve upon the ancient dictum. We had better believe what the angel believed, that Jesus Christ came into the world. Oh, yes, we all believe that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world". Ah, yes; but what is worthy of all acceptance? That He came "to save sinners." He came to be a Saviour. That is the important question this morning, as to whether we have received Him as Saviour.

But that was not all. He was announced as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the One of divine appointment. The angel said that His advent was no accident. It had been foretold because it had been predetermined. He had been divinely selected. The Babe that was born in Bethlehem was none other than Christ, the Messiah. Have you reflected upon what a tremendous announcement that was? And of the extraordinary significance of it? Two thousand years, or nearly so, have passed since the angel spoke, and in that time men have been anticipating the return of Christ, for He is to come again. But the Lord has delayed His coming, so that latterly many are saying: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

There are some who say: "The story of the second advent of the Lord is an old one. For centuries men have been declaring their belief in His coming, but He has not come." Has it occurred to you that the first coming of Messiah had been predicted for twice as long a time, at least, as men have waited for His second advent? From the beginning it had been said that One should come, the Anointed One. Oh, it was very old, this story. And yet, I would remind you that after several millennia had passed, after a period of time had elapsed at least twice that which has followed since our Lord was here in the flesh, the angel announced that "to-day" this particular day, after the rolling round of all the centuries, at long last, God has implemented His promise and Messiah has come.

I think it is refreshing for those of us who regard the second advent of our Lord as the blessed hope of believers, and of the church, and the only solution of all the problems of the world—it is well that we should refresh our minds by reflecting that the first advent seemed to be even longer delayed. And yet at last God's hour did actually strike, and all that He had said should come to pass, was really effected by His sovereign power, and the angel made the announcement: "Unto you is born this day"—this day!—this day! How

thrilling that must have been! This day!—"A Saviour", Who is identified as Christ, the Messiah. The Scriptures are true. His coming is verified! God's faithfulness is forever established! Messiah has actually come!

My dear friends, do not allow yourself to be content always with calling Him Jesus. I am not sure that they are right who insist that we should always, as often as we mention Him, refer to Him as Jesus Christ, the Lord. Sometimes we must take the point of view of those who wrote, and speak as though we were contemporary with the events we contemplate. In Bethlehem's manger, to a great many people, He was only Jesus. But for the child of faith it is well that we should afford ourselves this tonic, of remembering always that He Whom we call "Saviour" is the Christ. Century after century passed, millennium after millennium, unfolding the divine plan in the history of the world: God "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets". But, oh, He had a fuller disclosure of Himself to make! In His eternal thought there was one great day in the future in which He would break in upon the world's darkness and confusion, and prove that God never fails in the fulfilment of His word.

And when you are asked to trust the Saviour, never forget that the Saviour is Christ, of Whom all the prophets spoke, and Who came exactly as God said He would come from the beginning. And, as we look into the future, however dark it may be, however full of confusion and perplexity, let us remember that Jesus is the Christ!

I read an article this last week by DR. HUTTON in *The British Weekly* in which he reviews the past thirty years, and he says that for some strange reason for now thirty odd years, the clouds have dropped about Christmas time, and that for more than thirty years it has seemed difficult for men and women of discernment to rejoice. And yet, he said, if the advent of Jesus means all that we say it does, if it be so that the Child represents the great truth that God will have His way, we may expect that at the season when the thoughts of all are turned toward Him, the devil himself would become especially active.

I love to remember that Jesus was born in the days of Herod the king, and that God had His way then, as in the days of Hitler, or Mussolini, or anyone else.

But we must not forget that the angel said more than that.

He is "Christ the Lord." It was not a title of honour emptied of any particular significance. It was designed to mean exactly what the word itself implied, that while Jesus came into the world to save, while He came as the Messiah, in fulfilment of God's long promise, He came also as Lord, to be Lord. And never, surely, never since in the beginning "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" has the world more urgently needed One Who is Lord. The statesmen of the peace-loving nations of Europe now for a long time have been saying to themselves: Would that we had power to preserve peace, and at the same time to make these outlaw nations behave themselves! Have you not felt, as you read your papers: "Oh, for some mighty hand that could keep order! that could simply command those who have murder at their heart to be still!" While Britain marks time, and talks—and talks—and talks—in order that she may gain time, I

suppose, tens of thousands may work—and work—and work, and undo what she is trying to do. Oh, the folly of these foolish philosophers, these anti-biblical, so-called Christian preachers of pacificism! Undoing all that Britain has been trying to do in order that she might be in a position, at last, to say: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther"! Ah, yes; but blessed be God, there is One Who is the Lord, to Whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth. And if we take that wider, national, international, even world outlook this morning, whether it be upon Europe, or upon Asia, with all its elements of danger everywhere, surely it must minister comfort to the believing heart to remember that there is One Who is Christ the Lord: "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

But perhaps we cannot take so wide a view. I have much sympathy with those who say: "These national, and international matters are rather beyond me. My personal problems are so great, so immediate, so insistent, so insoluble to me, that I cannot look abroad. What I want is to know that within the little sphere of my individual interests there is a power adequate to meet my personal needs." I have thought much of the attitude of the people of Israel when Moses came to them with his gospel—and he did go with the gospel, that God's hour had struck, and He was going to deliver His people from the bondage of Egypt—when Moses first came to them we are told that they hearkened not. Their bondage was so bitter, their own problems were so personal, their own experiences so completely shut out the light of the sun, that they said in effect: "Oh, Moses, we cannot hear you. Our backs are smarting from the whips of the taskmasters. Life is so almost unendurable and intolerable, that we cannot even get a glimpse of any promised land." "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." And there are many people like that to-day. You will find even in these tragic days those who will tell you: "I have not had time to read the papers. I have not had time to think of other things. I have been so preoccupied with my own personal troubles. Nor do I go to church, I am so absorbed in the mere struggle for existence, that I have no heart for religion."

My friends, what sort of Helper do we need? Let me remind you that he could be no Saviour to us Who was not Christ the Lord. I mean, there is so much involved in your salvation and mine, that the humblest and most obscure individual in the world cannot be saved in the sense in which the Bible uses that great term, with any lesser power than that which must be exercised by One Who is Lord. Oh, yes, the past, and the present, and the future, are all wrapped up together, as the woman of Tekoah said: "We are all bound in the bundle of life." And what a world of interests are tied up in that bundle of life! You cannot divorce yourself from the past. You cannot, even if you would, shut yourself up to the present. Even the smallest of us must live a large life. Human existence in a sense spans the eternities. We are born by no accident. The hand of God is ever upon us, and the interests of every individual soul stretch forward to the coming down out of heaven of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem; and He, Who is our Saviour, points yonder and says that THAT, in the largest significance of the term, is salvation;—that it involves not only the forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from all the confining

and limiting bonds of this temporal life, but deliverance from all the enemies which beset us, and providential preservation and perseverance, until, at length, cleaving a path through all the antagonisms of the prince of darkness, we shall be brought at last, without fault, before the Throne of God. Who is sufficient for a salvation like that? No one but One Who is Christ the Lord. Oh, trust Him, my brothers, not alone for the forgiveness of sin, great and inestimably valuable as is that incomparable boon; but trust Him for a salvation that stops short of nothing but a complete restoration of the soul so grievously marred by sin, to the perfect likeness of God Himself! Only the Lord can do that. Do not offer me a merely human Saviour. Do not ask me to believe in One Who is nothing more than a man. My Saviour—I am sure of that—must be Lord and Christ.

II.

Well now, that was involved in the angel's message. "To-day," said the angel, "that is accomplished. He is born, Who is the Saviour, and Christ the Lord."

And scarcely was there an instant's silence. Hardly had the great announcement been made when "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God". One angel was not enough. ALL HEAVEN STOOPED TO PLACE HEAVEN'S CONFIRMATION UPON THE PROCLAMATION WHICH HAD JUST BEEN MADE.

It is a great thing, my dear friends, *to have the angels on your side*. I would far rather know that the multitude of the heavenly host approved of my gospel than to be commended by all the scholarship of the world. There was no murmuring; there was no dissent; there was no deletion from nor supplement to the announcement; for no sooner had it been made than the multitude of the heavenly host suddenly manifested themselves, and they were heard praising God for this triumphant announcement. The angels will not sing in approbation of your multitudinous philanthropic schemes, or of all your social service, good as these things may be. But all heaven approves of this glorious gospel of the Saviourhood, the Messiahship, the Lordship of Him Who was born and laid in Bethlehem's manger.

When shall we have the courage to stand up in opposition to an unbelieving world, and declare: "I take my side with the angels." Why not? We do, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

I do not think I should be irreverent if I were to say that this sudden display of angelic interest, and of heavenly approbation, *was indicative of heaven's enthusiasm for the divine programme*. It is possible for people to become enthusiastic about things that have no farther view than the near side of the grave.

Once or twice, oh, more times than that, when I have been away from home in some American city, I have been asked to address one of the service clubs. I think I have addressed them all, the Rotary, the Kiwanians, the Lions, and the Elks—I am not quite sure whether I have been with the Moose or not—but with social animals of all sorts. And I have a vivid recollection of sitting one day at luncheon in a certain American city, where there were assembled possibly a couple of hundred men, representative business and professional men. And they spent fifteen or twenty minutes planning some act of service. And there was not one of all the two hundred men who would not have dismissed any office boy who could not

have done it all in five minutes. But there were two hundred of them. And how important they were! But when your great organizations come together, and your great churches plan their social service schemes, and their legislative programmes, you do not hear any angels singing. I do not believe heaven is interested so much in these secondary matters. But heaven has a holy enthusiasm for the divine programme. Said the angel: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." They said: "We are interested in this." And that is just what the Lord Jesus said later. He said that the angels rejoice over one sinner that repented.

How many things we all have begun! In how many movements have we participated! I remember at the beginning of my ministry, the young people's movement was going to bring in the millennium, but some of the young people have passed middle life, and are growing old, I suppose, and the millennium has not come—at least I have not yet discerned it, if it has. We have had many other movements. I remember a Layman's Missionary Movement which proposed to give the gospel to the whole world. We were going to get it done in our generation. And so many great banquets were arranged to launch the Movement, that had they known it, the poor heathen must have become envious of those who were so richly fed. Then we had the "Men and Religion" movement, and many other kinds of movements, which seemed to do everything but move. I remember one big meeting, and what an important meeting it was! It was attended by many men who had been sitting on the back benches, who were never present in prayer meeting, and never noted for their interest in the souls of men, who had suddenly become enthusiastic. Everything was going to be done in a short time! Preachers were to be permitted to come and look on. I was at one such meeting, and there was present one very godly man, a very quiet man. And the president of this great laymen's movement said: "I think we should all like to know what our ministerial brethren think of us, and of our movement. Perhaps Brother So-and-So will tell us." He got up, and with a very gracious smile said: "All I have to say, my brethren, is that I am profoundly thankful to God that the laymen are going to move." Then they appointed a minister as their Secretary. And they called on me, after they had introduced this preacher secretary of the Laymen's Movement. They said they would like to know what Mr. Shields thought of it. I said: "I think you have shown great wisdom in selecting a preacher to keep you moving."

But oh, how these man-made affairs have died down, having accomplished very little. I do not believe the angel choir sings at the launching of these "big" enterprises. I fear they would esteem it scarcely worth their while. But when the angel announced this programme: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" suddenly the choir was heard, and all heaven was heard singing, for they said: "That is an accomplished fact. He never began anything without finishing it. Having come to be a Saviour and Christ the Lord, then redemption is an accomplished fact in the purpose of the eternal God."

Let us sing about it now. We need not wait until by and by. In the end of the Book there is the record of

John's seeing the end of the chapter, and One in the midst of the throne taking the book, and breaking the seals, and lifting the mortgage from this corrupt and groaning creation, when once again the angels were heard, as John saith: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

That is the only solution of the world's woes, and that is the meaning of Christmas. Let us join in the angel's song:

"While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night
All seated on the ground;
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

"'Fear not!' said he—for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind—
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

"'To you, in David's town, this day,
Is born of David's line
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord:
And this shall be the sign:

"'The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid.'

"Thus spake the seraph—and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels, praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:

"'All glory be to God on high!
And to the earth be peace!
Good will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin, and never cease!"

FORWARD WITH CALVIN A Glance at the New Orthodoxy

By the Rev. D. H. C. READ, B.D.

Four years ago in Strasbourg a group of students from half a dozen different nations were talking of modern creeds and convictions. There is only one item of that discussion that I carry clearly in my mind. It is the statement of, I think, a Hungarian which had our general agreement to the effect that there were only four real forces at work in Europe at that time: Fascism, Communism, Romanism, and Calvinism.

That verdict was reconfirmed in its theological aspect a few months ago when an acute and well-informed young Frenchman informed me that he saw only two ways open to him—Romanism or Calvinism. That is typical of the way that Continental youth is thinking. And it would surprise many people to know how this way of thinking is finding an increasing response among the youth of this country. There is a most distinct turning towards the more dogmatic expressions of Christian faith.

I am aware that in many quarters this is regarded as highly regrettable. The seeking after authority is condemned as a sign of the weakness of the times. We are told that the young are inclined to extreme statements. Grave warnings are sounded against the wanton jettisoning of the hard-won positions of the previous age. In a word, the whole conservative trend in theology is badly described as Reaction:

And it seems to be supposed that that word carries with it a sufficient explanation and condemnation.

I.

No one would deny that these warnings contain food for thought, but a far more serious warning needs to be sounded. One of the most dangerous tendencies of our age is to greet a new movement with a label and a closed mind. It is imagined that to classify anything absolves one from the labour of further thought on the subject. This habit of labelling people is a convenient substitute for facing up to a challenge. "Did you hear X. speaking the other night at the meeting?" "No; I didn't go; he's a So-and-so, isn't he?" And in our minds the whole race of So-and-so's are banished to an outer darkness where they cease to trouble us.

Call a man a High Churchman and a whole constituency closes its ears to what he may have to say on any subject whatever; call a man a Fundamentalist and a thousand open minds shut, with a click; call a man a Modernist and another community wash their hands of him. We think that by attaching the label we have sufficiently explained them. And one of the most popular labels in use to-day is Reaction. Whenever another voice confronts the modern world with the Word of God there are always enough ostriches to look up and say "Reaction" before plunging down again beneath the sand.

What exactly is this so-called Reaction in theology? It is difficult to describe the very significant change of the last six or seven years. Perhaps a revealing way to express it would be to say that for many of us to-day the speeches that one reads of "Modern Churchmen" have a quaint old-fashioned air about them. Nothing, for instance, brands a man so noticeably as out-of-date as the use of the phrase the "modern mind." Heresy is no longer regarded as the badge of theological respectability. Freedom of thought is not universally regarded as the first requirement of dogmatic.

II.

The various factors at work in a conservative direction have never, as far as I know, been clearly enumerated. If we were to give just a glance at some of them it might help us to form an estimate of the movement as a whole and to decide whether the word Reaction is an adequate description of what is undoubtedly the significant trend of recent theological thinking.

(1) There has always existed a strong body of opinion among the Churches of all denominations which can be described as Evangelical of the old school. This kind of Protestant orthodoxy is the logical descendant of revival—Moody and Sankey among others. Owing to its intense concentration on practical evangelism this strong movement has seldom found worthy theological expression, but it has always confounded the prophets who continually predict its imminent extinction.

In this line of succession there has been an extraordinary growth of young people's organisations, not least among University students. Anyone who thinks that this way of thinking is confined to the aged need only attend the Keswick Convention.

(2) There has always been a body of traditional Calvinism in this country as elsewhere. In Scotland it is most clearly represented by the Free Church. It is not strong numerically, but commands considerable respect for its uncompromising adherence to the confessional standards of historic Calvinism. There are other bodies working on the same lines, avoiding the subjectivity of the evangelical group, but confining Christian thought within a very narrow framework.

(3) The renaissance of Calvinism within the Churches that has drifted considerably from the old confessions is a remarkable feature of the last few years. Not many realise in this country that there has been a strong neo-Calvinistic movement independent of the rise of the theology of the Word. In Switzerland especially in recent years the study of the Institutes has led to a catastrophic alteration of the theological point of view of a great number of pastors and professors.

Protestant France has witnessed a revolution in theological thinking. While a great many of the older pastors are in the liberal tradition, the younger men are almost unanimously Calvinist. In Scotland students are once more debating Total Depravity, Predestination, and kindred subjects.

On the secondhand bookstalls, copies of the Institutes are becoming increasingly rare.

(4) The most obvious force acting upon theology in a conservative direction during the last ten years is undoubtedly Karl Barth. The theology of the Word, more sympathetically interpreted to the English mind by Brunner, has not only fallen upon soil already prepared in the above-mentioned ways: it has broken like new light upon those who were groping in the gathering gloom of religious philosophy.

Ever since Barth rang his "alarm-bell" more and more have seen in the submission to the Word the only hope for the Reformed Churches. Why does this theology have such a fascination for the younger generation to-day? It is not just the domination of an arresting personality in the appealing context of a Church persecution. It is the sense that here and here only are we getting on to the true lines of Reformed dogmatic; that here and here only have we a realistic theology fit for the needs of our day.

(5) Among the factors making in a conservative direction we must also take into account the "Catholic" tendency. Wherever there is a strong sense of the historic continuity of the Church an increasing emphasis is laid upon the creeds and confessions of Christendom. The attack on the creeds has now spent its force. Probably far more people to-day accept, for instance, the Apostles' Creed than ten years ago.

These movements in our midst to-day are there to be seen. What are we to say about them? Can we believe that they are adequately dismissed when we breathe the magic word Reaction?

III.

I take it that Reaction means a going back to something that we had left behind. This is something that can never take place in Reformed Churches. It can never be a question of going back to Calvin as the Roman is going back to Aquinas. For the latter is bound to many of the thought-forms of a previous age and attributes to doctors of the Church authority that we can only attach to Holy Scripture.

When the Reformed Church is proceeding according to its own inner principle it can never go back at all. We have only to ask ourselves what happened at the Reformation. Did the Church take a step forward then? Or shall we dismiss the movement as a mere reaction to the ideas of the New Testament?

The very return to the Scriptures was in itself a step forward. And whenever the Church listens anew to the Revelation of God in Scripture, there is a going forward. Whenever it is led into the paths of philosophy or ecclesiasticism there is a going back. It is in this light that we have to view the so-called reaction in present-day theological thinking.

There is a popular phrase in use by those whose intentions are good. It is "Back to the Bible." We never go back to the Bible. For the Bible is never behind us. It lies ahead, beckoning us, calling us. Not "Back to the Bible" but "Forward to the Bible" might well be the marching cry of the Church. The Bible has never been our possession as the Word of God. It escapes us continually. It outruns our thought at both ends. And the Church that is subject to it, is inevitably pulled forward. The Bible transcends environment and leads us not back to the first century but on to the end.

IV.

If we examine the movements that we have been enumerating we shall see that they have this common element—an attitude of submission before the Revelation. In each there is a strong sense of a transcendent God who has spoken to us in Christ; and in each there is a strong conviction that the record of that Revelation has supreme authority. There is also a common belief that doctrine is of the most vital importance as the nourishment of the Church.

These things are not just blind enthusiasms. They are the sober conclusions of a Church striving to right itself after nearly toppling over into the abyss of humanism without falling over backward into the opposite pit of Romanism. Theology does not simply swing like a pendulum. It wanders down irrelevant by-paths, but ever and again hears the summons of the highway of the Word. And when it hears that summons it goes not backwards in sullen reaction but forwards in fear and joy.

—From "The British Weekly," December 2, 1937.

JARVIS STREET ACTIVITIES

This week the Editor called upon an old lady who is a highly-esteemed member of Jarvis Street Church, who is no longer able to attend the services of the sanctuary. We learned from her that the first thing she looks for when receiving THE GOSPEL WITNESS is news of Jarvis Street Church. Because THE GOSPEL WITNESS goes to a great number of people who are not members of Jarvis Street, we have hesitated to say much about the church itself lest we should seem to be advertising Jarvis Street. Indeed, we have published far more news of other churches than we have of Jarvis Street. However, we shall try in future to bear in mind that non-residents and shut-in members of the church who are readers of this paper will expect at least a little note to let them know how things are going on.

To them we say that our School is steadily recovering from the blow it received during the two months following the summer holidays in which infantile paralysis was epidemic. The workers in the School are full of enthusiasm, and companies of them go out every Tuesday evening from six to eight, looking for new prospects, in addition to the regular visitation of scholars continued by the teachers.

The public services of the church are largely attended, and we believe there is not a service in which the presence of the Lord is not felt. The prayer meetings of Tuesday and Saturday are well sustained; the Saturday evening meeting continues to be a great blessing to everyone as it has been now for nearly seventeen years. The Thursday night preaching service, preceded by a half-hour of prayer is also a source of great comfort and inspiration, as well as of instruction, to those who attend. For a regular mid-week service the attendance is large.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS still continues on its weekly ministry. The classes in the Seminary meet day by day; and all the work of the church goes steadily on, even though we do not make a great deal of fuss about it. We are sure, could we have the ear of every member of the church, they would join us in sending cordial Christmas greetings to all their fellow-members.

CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE

The Christmas morning service will be held as usual, notwithstanding Christmas comes on Saturday. This week we publish the sermon preached last Christmas morning instead of the usual sermon of Sunday. The Saturday evening prayer meeting will be held as usual. In view of Christmas falling on Saturday, and the holding of the service Saturday morning, we asked Saturday

evening if there were those who desired the meeting to be held as usual. A good number indicated that they so desired, and the meeting will therefore be held.

WATCH-NIGHT SERVICE

For a number of years we have held a watch-night service. Next week, in order to give the people a rest, we will hold no service on Thursday evening, but transfer the service to Friday. It will take the character of a watch-night service, beginning at ten-thirty on Friday night and closing a few minutes after twelve midnight.

THE NEW YEAR'S MORNING SERVICE

The usual fellowship service will be held New Year's morning at ten o'clock. This is always one of the greatest meetings of the whole year, when the church family come together to give thanks for the goodness of God, and to testify to each other concerning His faithfulness. We are confident this coming New Year's morning service will be no exception to the rule so long established.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO THE JARVIS STREET FAMILY

In addition to reaching thousands of others, "The Gospel Witness" reaches every family connected with Jarvis Street Church. The Pastor takes this opportunity of sending to every member of Jarvis Street his warmest Christmas greetings. I am especially mindful of those whom we think of as being "shut in", and are therefore deprived of the opportunity of mingling with their fellow-members in the services of the church. I send them this word of greeting to let them know that we miss them from their accustomed place; and assure them that as we gather from time to time about the mercy-seat, they are always lovingly remembered.

Important as material things are, we have all learned there can be no real Christmas save for those to whose hearts the Lord Jesus has come. We pray God's richest blessing upon the entire membership of the church, and wish every individual man, woman, and child, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Affectionately your Pastor,

(Signed) T. T. SHIELDS.

"THE PLOT THAT FAILED"

This book has already proved very popular, and hundreds of volumes have been purchased. We have heard that book men who have seen it are astonished that we are able to offer a book of such quality for a dollar. The only explanation is that the price does not provide a cent toward the labour of writing the book. By that we mean, the author receives absolutely nothing; nor does it pay for the cost of typing and proof-reading, or for the labour of sending it out.

It merely pays the cost of printing and binding. In the new year we shall be obliged to ask 10c additional for postage. That is what it costs to mail the book; and even if we sell every book that has been printed we should have no margin left at all. The book is not published to make money, but to give information. One Pastor writes that he thinks it is the finest text-book on Pastoral Theology that ever was printed. We will send the book post-paid for \$1.00 up to the first of January; after that date, we shall have to ask those who desire the book mailed to add 10c for postage.

"OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

The reduced price from \$1.50 to \$1.00 for "Other Little Ships", has caused quite a large fleet of "little ships" to set sail during this Christmas season. We will still send this book for \$1.00 up to the first of January; after that date, we shall have to ask those who desire it mailed to supply 10c for postage, as for "The Plot That Failed".

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Fourth Gospel was written by "the beloved disciple" John, the son of Zebedee and Salome. Salome seems to have been the sister of Mary, the mother of our Lord (John 19:25), and if so, John would be related to Christ according to the flesh. At any rate, we know that John, together with his brother James, and Peter, was admitted into close fellowship with our Lord.

The Gospel according to John supplements the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and was written with a definite object in view, as we see from Chapter 20, verses 30 and 31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this record was written, not primarily as a biography, but as a Gospel. Among the many miracles of our Lord, some were selected which would set forth His Deity in an unique way. They were signs, performed in the presence of His disciples, demonstrating that Jesus, the Man who lived a perfect human life before the people, was indeed Jehovah's Anointed, the Messiah, and that He was the Son of God. The testimony of the words and works of Christ herein described would bring conviction to the hearts of the readers.

Conviction concerning the person of Christ should be accompanied by new life. The Gospel was written that men might believe, and that they might have life through faith in Christ. These two central truths should be kept in mind at all times. Luke, in his Gospel, set forth accurately the facts concerning the life of Christ, while John set forth the interpretation of those facts.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 1 Fourth Quarter Lesson 52 January 2nd, 1938

THE SON OF GOD BECOMES MAN

Lesson Text: John 1.

Golden Text: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—John 1:14.

I. The Word of God in Creation—verses 1-9.

It is fitting that the opening verse of this Gospel, the aim of which is to manifest Christ as the Son of God, should contain a strong affirmation of His essential Deity. Christ *was* and *is* the eternal Word of God. There never was a time when He was not with God, for He was God. As a word is the expression of a person's mind, and is the means by which his character, thoughts and will are made known, so Christ is the expression of God's mind, and through Him we know the character, thoughts and will of God (Heb. 1:1; John 14:9).

He was the Creator of the universe (Heb. 1:2). He has life in Himself (John 5:26); He also has the power to bestow life (John 17:2). Life may be symbolized by light, just as death is associated with darkness. Christ came as a light to those who were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death (Isa. 9:2). The darkness was great, but the darkness could not overcome the light (possible rendering of the Greek word for "comprehended"; compare 12:35 "lest darkness overtake you").

John the Baptist, though "a burning and shining light" (5:35), was a temporary, transitory light; but Christ, the true Light of God, is eternal and perfect, shining upon every man who comes into the world. All may find life by believing in Him (1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10).

II. The Word of God Becomes Flesh—verses 10-18.

The world failed to recognize its Creator. He came to that which was His own, yet His own people received Him not. There was no room in the inn for the Son of God when He came to earth as a little child.

People are divided into two classes, according to their attitude to Christ. It was the same when He was here upon earth: Many rejected Him, but many welcomed Him. To those who believe upon Him, and receive Him, He gave the authority to become the children of God (Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:16). They came into the family of God through spiritual birth (3:5).

The only-begotten Son of God died that He might open the way for sinful men to become children of God. In order that He might become subject to death, it was necessary that He take upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; Phil. 2:7). He was born to die.

As the Word of God incarnate He tabernacled among men, living a life the characteristics of which were grace and truth. He was perfect as a Redeemer, and perfect as a Revealer of God, for He became flesh that He might redeem us and that He might show us the Father. Grace and truth, elsewhere described as mercy and righteousness, are the two great attributes of God which are most conspicuous in His redemptive work. John marvelled at the manifestation upon earth of the glory of God (1 John 1:1, 2; Luke 9:32; 2 Pet. 1:16).

He whose life was characterized by grace and truth bestowed grace upon His own. The Old Covenant rested upon the basis of obedience to the law, but the New Covenant availed for those who would believe in Christ (Rom. 4:16). The righteousness of God was manifested in the law, but His righteousness and also His Love were revealed in Christ alone, for Christ was God's complete and final revelation to man (Heb. 1:1, 2). Some ancient manuscripts read "the one who is God, only-begotten," in verse 18.

III. John's Testimony Concerning the Son of God—Verses 19-34.

In answer to the question of the priests regarding his status, John the Baptist testified that he was sent to prepare the way of the Lord (Isa. 40:3). Indirectly, he thus gave testimony concerning the Deity of Christ. When the Pharisees challenged his ministry of baptism, John took the opportunity of explaining the prophetic aspect of his mission as the forerunner of One greater than He. Christ was the fulfilment of the herald's work.

On the following day, John pointed out Christ as the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb (Exod. 12:3), provided by God to bear away the sin of the world (Isa. 53:6). Teachers will find verse 29 an excellent verse to use in pointing out the way of salvation in Christ. Use the illustration of the pass-over lamb.

God had given John a token whereby he might recognize the Son of God, and when the prophet saw the Spirit of God descending upon Christ in the form of a dove at His baptism (Matt. 3:16, 17), John knew that Jesus must be the Christ, the Son of God.

IV. The Disciples' Testimony Concerning the Son of God—Verses 35-51.

The fact that the first disciples followed Christ because He sought them illustrates the purpose of His coming to earth; He came to "seek and to save that which was lost". Each of the disciples, when found, testified concerning Him.

John the Baptist, ever conscious that he should decrease, while Christ increase (3:30), and willing that it should be so, was content to see his disciples leave him to follow Christ. They immediately confessed Him as their Master, their Teacher. The unnamed disciple was probably John the Evangelist, the writer of this Gospel.

Philip testified of Christ to Nathanael as the One of whom Moses (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22) and the prophets (Luke 24:27) wrote in the Old Testament. Jesus of Nazareth, born to Mary, was truly the Messiah. Nathanael should probably be identified as Bartholomew.

After Nathanael had personal knowledge of Christ he was ready to acknowledge Him as the Son of God (6:69) and as the King of Israel (12:13; Matt. 27:42), thus admitting His Divine origin and His human sovereignty.

Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:12) found its fulfilment in Christ. The Son of God, who was also Son of man, would make fellowship between earth and heaven possible. He is the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5); He is the Way of God (14:6; He is the new and living Way whereby men may approach God (Heb. 10:20).

Study the various titles used of Christ in this chapter.