

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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RELIGIOUS GOURDS

Once upon a time there was a prophet called Jonah who did not like the commission he was given, and so fled from the presence of the Lord. His subsequent history is known to all Bible readers. He got into a storm, and then into deep trouble. Notwithstanding his disobedience, he was at heart a servant of Jehovah, hence he was subsequently re-commissioned; and this time he preached the preaching that God bade him. But when Ninevah repented, and God remembered mercy in the midst of wrath, "it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry".

It must be a matter of general observation that many of those who really have dealings with God are very easily displeased, and become angry from very trifling causes. Perhaps there are few things the people of God are in greater need of learning than how to keep their tempers and possess their souls in patience.

The membership of the church this Editor serves, at this present time appears to be blessedly free from supersensitive people. But we have had them. And poor Jonah is rather hard to manage, whether he be a preacher, a deacon, or a private church member. He is supremely concerned for his own reputation, and even the buzzing of an ecclesiastical mosquito will make him fly into a tantrum at any time.

But we read that Jonah was not only "displeased exceedingly", but that a little later—and for another reason—Jonah "was exceeding glad". It is characteristic of people of the Jonah temperament that it takes just as little to make them glad as it does to make them mad or sad. Their nerves—or whatever part of their anatomy has most direct connection with their temper—seems to lie just beneath the surface of their skin, and their equilibrium is very easily disturbed one way or another.

What was it that made Jonah so "exceeding glad"? Jonah at that particular time would not have associated himself with any of his brother-prophets; nor indeed would he seek fellowship with anybody. He would probably have called himself an "independent", for this is his story: "So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." Poor Jonah! He was manifestly in a very sulky mood; and especially pre-

pared himself a booth beyond the limits of Ninevah, from which vantage point he eagerly watched "till he might see what would become of the city".

What a sad state he was in! What a despicable spirit he manifested! He seems to have been sad all over, and mad all through. Of course, he was not to blame! There was nothing wrong with him! He wanted to see Ninevah overthrown, and prepared his independent position so that he might have an unobstructed view, and obtain firsthand knowledge of the great disaster.

It is amazing how people who profess allegiance to Jesus Christ prepare themselves to gloat over others' sorrows. We have known tenants who were displeased with the conditions of their tenancy to leave the house in which they lived, but who have left it in good order so far as it was in their power to leave it so. But there are some people who, when they get out of sorts with a church, are not content with merely leaving it, they want to tear it to pieces, and they take up their position in some booth hard-by, whence they hope to see their gloomy prophecies fulfilled. Their hearts are strangers to that charity which "seeketh not her own", that "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth".

But there grew up over night a new "tabernacle", for we read: "The Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." We have seen a great many gourds grow up over night. One can find almost in every block nowadays a religious assembly of some description that has come suddenly into being, and blossomed out as the one and only tree of life. The meeting-house may be small, but it is forthwith described as "great". The congregation may be smaller still, but is forthwith described as "vast". And usually such seats as there are, and are filled, are occupied by Jonahs—by men and women who have been "displeased exceedingly", and have become very angry about very little. But, finding themselves beneath the shadow of this new gourd, like Jonah they become "exceeding glad"; and within a week or two their friends are told that they have had more real joy in the short time they have lived under the shadow of the

gourd than in all the rest of their Christian experience. In fact, they were never so happy in their lives. By all accounts, they are so happy there is danger they will never want to go to heaven! Thus suddenly, exuberantly, superlatively, their gladness succeeds their madness.

Is this the explanation of the upspringing of all these religious gourds? Have they come into being to shelter some disobedient Jonahs that are out of temper? One might suppose that it would be easy to find such a shadowing gourd nowadays.

But perhaps someone will remind us that the Lord prepared the gourd. There is in that fact a great principle to be observed. We know that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever". But Jonah was an odd character. He had to have a great fish especially "prepared" for him—and later an especially "prepared" gourd. But both the fish and the gourd were temporal elements in the divine scheme of discipline. Sometimes God lets His children have their own way, and if they want to run away out of the city and build a booth, and sulk, He may, in His grace, put a shadow over their heads to deliver them from their grief—but leave them there.

We have seen a good many religious gourds grow up in Toronto. We were in an American city not long ago, where we were told of a certain man who seemed to think he was especially ordained of God to shed light upon a darkened city—and he was not very particular how he kindled his fire. Some brethren were missing boards from their tabernacles, taken to help the fire burn. They asked us what we thought they ought to do. Our advice was, "Do nothing. It is not worth turning in a fire alarm, because the fire will be out before the firemen could get there." And so it proved. Cold ashes mark the spot where but a short time ago a fire was kindled that promised to set a great city ablaze with revival zeal. Since then another bonfire has been kindled somewhere else, which doubtless will burn furiously until the shavings and little sticks are turned to ashes.

But Jonah was destined to have further experience with prepared things, for "God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered." How often it is so! These religious fungi soon wither away. There may be a real mushroom here and there, but generally speaking these growths are more likely to be a fungus of another order.

And what happened to poor Jonah? His history continues as follows: "And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live." Again we exclaim, Poor Jonah! This man that could be so easily made mad and glad by turn, when the worm, and the east wind, and the sun, had done their work, fainted, and then said, "It is better for me to die than to live." People do not grow in grace under the shadow of a gourd. They become increasingly sour and bitter. Sometimes it is a little difficult to put up with Jonah, but since the Lord endures him we must have patience with him too.

And we may be sure of this, that in the end of the day Jonah ardently wished he had stayed at home and behaved himself. Neither his booth nor his gourd afforded him any permanent joy; and the divinely-in-

spired record of his life closes with a picture of Jonah still nursing his griefs, and out of sorts with the Lord. There are people in this city and in all cities who have experimented with half the churches in town, but they are never happy unless they are miserable, and seem more desirous of seeing people cursed than blessed.

The lesson of the book of Jonah is that when a man gets out of sorts with God, and out of right relation to Him, he becomes eccentric, out-of-centre, at odds with the universe. In contrast therewith we may remind ourselves of the implied promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

A BIT OF FUN FROM ENGLAND

Yesterday we received a letter from our friend, Rev. Chas. Fisher, M.A., of Lansdowne Hall, London. He enclosed a little skit which he had written for his own amusement. In the letter he says :

"I enclose a little burlesque at your expense and that of Dr. Norris. My wife says, 'Do not send it. They will misjudge you.' Well! Well! Surely you can both stand a little bit of leg-pulling from a friend."

Of course we can. It will do neither of us any harm, especially as we are both already stretched beyond the six-foot limit!

Our friend Mr. Fisher did not expect that we would publish it, but we are putting it in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and we dare Dr. Norris to print it in *The Fundamentalist*. Come on now, Brother J. Frank; be a sport! Though truth to tell, we should not be at all surprised if he gets ahead of us: it may, for aught we know, already be in print. In any event, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

But somehow or another we have missed *The Fundamentalist's* article to the effect that "genius has outstripped itself. Titan has been eclipsed; Demosthenes, Plato, Aristotle, possibly even Solomon, are back numbers; nay, every orator, statesman, strategist, philosopher, that this old world has ever known is a cold, burnt-out star, in comparison with the mighty luminary of Canada."

The galley proof of this article never reached Toronto, and we feel greatly disappointed. As a matter of fact, we think Dr. Norris ought to write just such an article about "The Plot That Failed". All he did was to publish our Foreword so far as we have observed, so we think the article that evidently reached Brother Fisher, and somehow failed of publication, ought to be printed. The fact is, we have received one hundred and forty orders for Dr. Norris' book, and as yet all we have had from *Fundamentalist* readers was two enquiries as to how much the book would cost. Of course, that is the difference! The difference is not in the effectiveness of the salesmanship, but in the quality of the article advertised. Our readers therefore may be on the lookout for a description of "The Plot That Failed" from the Southern luminary. Meanwhile, we hope all our friends will enjoy Brother Fisher's "Once Upon a Time" as much as we have done.

"ONCE UPON A TIME—IT HAPPENED IN NORTH AMERICA"

(By Interested Onlooker)

Nature is niggardly in its supply of diamonds of the first water, and of luminaries of the first magnitude; for instance, Kohinoors are worth about five million dollars, and there is

only one sun for the whole of this universe of ours. Yet, strange to say, in the religious world of our day, two "suns" have appeared in one Continent (and that only half of one), for North America has both Dr. T. T. Shields and Dr. J. Frank Norris shining at the same time. One would not dream of saying, "What profligacy", but rather, "How fortunate is North America and the rest of the world"!

One of the luminaries, in its early ascendancy, shed its bright light over the Southern part of the Continent, while the other displayed its beneficent rays over Canada.

This one, being associated with the South land, took on a geniality from contacts with the smiling coloured folks around there, and from the sunshine of the Texas farmlands. The other, of conservative British stock, living in the more austere climate of Canada, and being reared in the more serious and sober ways of a manse, developed a temperament of an altogether different type. He was stolid, serious, impressive, alike in mould of brain and of physical frame. But, like all suns, they had one thing in common, they were both hot at the centre, and generated much heat, throwing off sparks, and shedding light-beams around them, by voice, and radio, and printed page.

Being light-bearers, these two "suns" had perforce to dispel darkness and wage constant warfare (as the sole luminary in the heavens does against disease and death), against all types of moral darkness and disease, and spiritual death. Both alike made trenchant and damaging attacks on the false system of Rome; both rolled up their sleeves, (so to speak), and "went for" the Drink Traffic; and *pari passu* (which men with Roman noses know so well), both beflogged, denounced, and battered, the slobbering sycophants who entrenched themselves in the corrupt bureaucratic offices of the Denominational machine! But yet with a difference of method and approach.

The Southerner was like a light-weight boxer, who was very quick on his feet, and sharp with his hooks and uppercuts; he was all over his opponent and then back again in his corner, smiling and enjoying the fun! The harder the fight, the more he smiled, and the more he seemed to enjoy himself. On the other hand, the Northern "sun" was a battling bruiser of the Carnera type, giving tremendous body blows, and lunging in with heavy rights and lefts straight from the shoulder, like ancient battering rams! Or, to change the metaphor, Frank was like a combination of gattling guns and machine guns, with his one, two, three, four, five, six, seven up to seventy, or so; firing from the most unexpected positions and always getting the enemy quickly on the run. While T. T. was like the Big Bertha, pounding away round after round every hit telling, and making a hole or a lump somewhere.

Now it was most instructive as well as entertaining to watch these two giants at the game they both like best. Each thought the world of the other, and they rejoiced when it was possible to secure the services of each other, to illuminate their respective platforms (i.e. where they played their best games). Whenever this "sun" shone, the other went out of commission temporarily, (went into a state of eclipse), and hid its light under a bushel. Thus when Dr. Shields went to Texas, Frank was not in eruption; and when the Texas Tornado visited Toronto, the Northern Lights were not working! Nature says there must not be two queen bees in one hive, nor two kings in one state, nor two suns shining on one cabbage patch.

The Texas Tornado doesn't belie his name. Short, staccato sentences shoot forth, like flashes of lightning. He's off like the wind, and then pauses to get his breath, while the audience has time to catch up! Then off he goes like a rocket again, with another long pause to survey his hearers, and study the impression he is making. The further he goes, the hotter the pace, and the shorter and snappier the sentences. Humour, sarcasm, pathos, and sentiment come tumbling out with not the slightest concern for style, or studied phrase. Every metaphor under the sun, and the most vivid slogans and catch-phrases ever invented, or manufactured on the spot, chase one another like water tumbling over Niagara.

But watch Dr. Shields. How slowly he begins! What measured periods he adopts! What full weight he gives to every word, and every syllable of every word! And what depth of meaning he puts into his superbly chosen words and phrases! After he has been going for about fifteen

minutes he begins to warm up, and the words flow more freely; but it is the majestic sweep of an Amazon, and not a tumbling waterfall. His face speaks; his head shakes (he sometimes resembles a lion shaking its mane!) and the deep diapason voice bellows forth the great pent-up forces of his heaving chest. When he has reached top gear, and has got into his proper stride, effective declamation, sarcasm, or challenging summons to action, all alike break forth from one whose forceful presence and terrific vehemence compel either hearty agreement, or bitter disagreement; for whatever else he does, he raises an issue, this "best loved and worst hated man in Canada"!

But see—a wonder appears on the earth! These two "suns" agree to publish their auto-biographies, or to tell the world the story of their doings, *at exactly the same time!* One has already published "The greatest annual Church Report of Modern Times", so the other dedicates his book to "Members of the most loyal Church in the world." Suns, like dictators, *must* keep their end up! But how can they do it without clashing? Why, quite simply. Each agrees to do for the other, what he knows he would like to do for himself, but daren't. So T.T.S. says Frank Norris' book, "On the Inside History of Two Churches", is the best book ever. If ever he were imprisoned on a lonely island, he would be quite happy if only he had a copy of Frank's gloriously grand book, along with his Bible. "We question whether any book outside the Bible was ever published so full of inspiration and suggestion and explicit direction to Sunday School workers . . . as this latest book by Dr. Norris". Thus he praises it to the skies, and urges everybody to buy a copy, and give one to their ministers, and put them in railway trains, and public rooms at hotels, and on all bookstalls.

Then along comes Dr. Norris who is not always slow in the uptake, and republishes this pretty little bit of propagandism in the world's greatest newspaper ("The Fundamentalist", edited by the said Dr. Frank Norris), with the beguiling, and absolutely disingenuous caption,

"The Editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS is known for his CONSERVATISM (my hat!) All the more valuable therefore is his testimony."

Come along, Frank, what can you do for Dr. Shields, on the principle that "One good turn deserves another", and also on the other principle of action, viz. "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours"! "Leave it to me" says the Southern luminary, for I can reiterate Caesar's words, and make them my own, "No friend ever did me such kindness, or enemy such injury, but I restored him fourfold." And we didn't need to wait long! All the superlatives that Norrisian language possesses, with hyperboles and italicised emphasis in red runners across the page, combine to tell the thinking world, the whole world, through the pages of "The Fundamentalist" that at last genius has outstripped itself. Titan has been eclipsed; Demosthenes, Plato, Aristotle, possibly even Solomon, are back numbers; nay, every orator, statesman, strategist, philosopher, that this old world has ever known is a cold, burnt-out star, in comparison with the mighty luminary of Canada! And along with the first galley-proof of this article in the *Fundamentalist*, which is sent off post haste to Toronto to show T. T. that he has done his bit, to the best of his ability, there is an apologetic note, saying that he doesn't feel satisfied with his feeble attempt, could Dr. Shields add something more to the point, which he will publish in his next issue, to "try to make good his ineffectiveness". It only remains for Dr. Shields to reprint Dr. Norris' review of his book, in the pages of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and the circle will be complete. When this has been done, both these "suns" may settle down to "the trivial round and common task" of doing something else that in due time they will be able to set before a wondering world, under the form of Biography No. 2, or as an Appendix to Biography No. 1.

After this long turn of leg-pulling, may I say how very much I would have enjoyed to be in your company when you had your recent talk together and my name was up for discussion. It would have been nice to be warmed by the glow of two "suns", and the light would have been sparkling!

After all that, are you not "raring to go" for Dr. Norris' description of "The Plot That Failed"? We are? What became of that galley proof?

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE SIGNS AND MEANS OF REVIVAL

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 6th, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."—Romans 1:16.

There are times in the midst of winter when, were we to judge by the sight of our eyes, and by everything that belongs to the world of the senses, it would be easy to persuade ourselves that never again should we see the summer golden, bright, and glad. And yet it is written, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." To those who wait for it, the spring-time really comes at last; and to those who have eyes to see, many signs of its coming may be discerned long before the trees put forth their leaves.

Some years in late winter we have been visited by one of the worst storms of the season, when the mercury seemed determined to find the bottom of things; but if the ice be carefully examined, it will be seen that it is growing old, it begins to disintegrate long before there are any buds or other signs of Spring's glorious resurrection. Winter gradually loses its grip; the streams begin to run; and we discern a new vitality in the atmosphere. By and by there is a bud here and there, then more buds, then leaves and blossoms. In the springtime when life begins to show itself in every direction, I have stood and looked about, and said to myself, Can it be possible that this part of the world in which I move but a few weeks ago was held in the icy grip of Winter? But Spring comes at last.

These things provide an analogy to conditions in the spiritual world. The history of the Christian church has been a history of successive winters and springs, with succeeding summers, and the song of harvest. It has indeed been a record of successive revivals. God seems, in the spiritual world, to have His times of visitation just as truly as He has in the natural world.

Religiously, we have come through a long, hard, and bitter winter. Some of us can remember better days. We remember when first the enemies of the gospel proposed some slight modification of its standards, some little dilution of its doctrines. There was a tendency to discount some of its teaching, and for a while an attitude of compromise, as though they would say to us—and did in effect indeed—"If you will surrender this or that, we will consent to your keeping something else." But the enemy became bolder, and by and by, gradually more openly, began positively to deny, not only the doctrines of Scripture, but the authority of the Scripture itself. Later they proceeded to an open and complete repudiation of its authority, and an entire rejection of its supernatural content—and indeed of its unique divine authorship.

But I believe there are signs that the springtime is coming. I do not mean to say that Modernism has abandoned its chief positions, but here and there one hears acknowledgments from some of its chief protagonists, that after all it has failed. They acknowledge that it has made the fields barren and the granaries empty. In

some quarters they recognize and acknowledge the moral and spiritual paralysis which it has everywhere effected. Even leaders among them admit that in a comparison of the fruits of Modernism with the fruits of Evangelical orthodoxy Modernism appears to a disadvantage—yet they do not abandon their modernistic position. Modernists in general, are like the man in search of the principle of perpetual motion: they acknowledge it lacks one wheel! They are still looking for the wheel. Or they are like the evolutionist who is still in search of the "missing link"—and does not know that he is looking for an interminable chain of links. But there is at least a reluctant acknowledgment that Modernism has accomplished little, if anything, for the good of the world.

Then, quite apart from religious leaders there are others, men of business, men of affairs in various departments of human life, who openly admit that human wisdom has reached the end of its capabilities. In the face of the moral bankruptcy of the world, they admit that mere man has reached the end of his resources. On every hand we are being told that unless God helps us, the world is lost. To some that may seem to be a new discovery. There are people who, by microscope, can discern the infinitesimal, or by telescope, that which is infinitely removed from them, and thus behold objects hidden from the naked eye. And some people, by the aid of spiritual microscope and telescope, long ago recognized that without God the world was lost. But now there are people who tell us the only hope of the world is in religion: that God must do something.

But what God? What God do they want? The God of the Modernist, the Rationalist, the Evolutionist? If only in such imperceptible and age-long processes as the Evolutionist recognizes this old world has hope, then we are of all generations the most miserable. If we are shut up to a God like that you and I will have been forgotten for millenniums before a revival can come.

But they do not mean a God like that: they mean another God, a God Who can do something quickly; and to such an unknown God they inarticulately pray. Many people who are not Christians pray, and some people who are not Christians have their prayers answered! Mr. Spurgeon, when a very young man, said that he was sure God had heard his prayers before he was converted. Some reverend deacon, who was a bit of a theologian, came to him and said, "Do you not know, sir, that it is impossible that one who is not a Christian should receive an answer to prayer?" There was a dear old mother in Israel who elbowed him out of the way, who said, "Leave the young man alone. Do you not know that it is written, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry'?" There are a thousand cries that arise from a world in travail, that are inarticulate, perhaps divorced entirely from any spiritual intelli-

gence, but born of an urgent need, asking God to do something.

But what God? What must He do? The God that Modernism said did not exist, is now expected to do the thing that Modernism has been telling us God never does—namely, break in upon human life, and do for poor bankrupt men what no one but God can do. We need a God to Whom the princes are as nothing, and Who esteems the judges of the earth to be but vanity.

There are signs of revival in other directions, religiously—in Germany for example. You say, "In Germany? I thought Germany had become wholly pagan." Karl Barth was expelled from Germany, but he has taught many in Germany to think religiously, and to turn back again to the God revealed in the Word. Who would ever have expected that a man like Pastor Niemöller, who had been a submarine commander in the Great War, would become a preacher, and say to German Naziism, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." It is quite within the bounds of possibility that Protestantism may find even in Germany a rebirth amid the fires of persecution. God has frequently interposed in just such unusual circumstances.

I think the same is true in France. A very discerning writer tells us that while among French Protestants, many of the older men still cling to theological liberalism, the younger men, students and pastors, are almost unanimously turning, not to institutional religion as represented by the Roman church, but to a sovereign God such as Calvin conceived the Bible to reveal.

Many ministerial fossils who died in middle life, and missed burial, have been telling us what the young men want. It is not the young men, but the older men, in this and other countries, who have been blind leaders of the blind. Thank God, He is raising up young men who will not follow them.

On this Continent, at least this may be said: Modernism is much less blatant and oracular than it was. It is stepping a little more softly. The man who sets himself up as a prophet, whether in things eschatological or things economical, whether his prophecies project themselves beyond, or have to do with the ordinary affairs of this mundane sphere, fortunately by the mere lapse of time, is proved to be either false or true. And Modernism has shown itself to be a false prophet. It has done nothing. Now it is less concerned with spiritual values. Modernism in the universities of Canada and the United States is turning to crassly, grossly materialistic considerations, and developing in many instances a Communistic school. But many who were at heart disciples of Christ, and were carried away by someone's dissimulation, are being brought back again to the old faith.

I think I discern a movement too in another direction. There was a time not so very long ago when we were visited with a plague almost as bad as Modernism. There were springing up everywhere ultra-spiritual cults calling themselves by evangelical names, which substituted for the spiritual gospel—how shall I put it, a religious emotionalism, a religion that was carnally grounded, akin, psychologically to the dance of the Dervish, and other Pagan orgies. But the star of Macphersonism is waning, and we hear less nowadays about these strange movements that were going to give us all perfect bodies and many tongues over night. There seems to be, on the part of Evangelicals, a gradual swing toward a saner view of the religion of Christ. I believe there is a re-

vival on the way. I hope to see it, and to have some part in it.

Can we say, therefore, as did the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth?"

I.

How shall I DEFINE THE GOSPEL with any degree of freshness in this place? We have never had any other story. We have indeed become quite behind the times, and been content to be called old-fashioned and esteemed "unlearned and ignorant", for we never have had any other story than the gospel of saving grace. But even so, we do well to hold fast to our profession of faith without wavering.

Only in a word or two shall I set forth this aspect of my subject. The gospel of Paul was simply *a message which had its centre in a divine Personality*. It was the story of a Man Who was both God and Man, divinely begotten, Whose life was a parenthesis in the eternal circle, Who came out of the unknown and manifested Himself as God; and took upon Him our sins, carried them to the cross and atoned for them, and Who was buried and rose again, and returned to the Father. Around that tremendous transaction the whole gospel message gathers. The story is the story of Christ crucified, implying His supernatural birth, and death, and resurrection.

But Paul's gospel was one which not only had Christ for its theme, but *the Holy Ghost for its power*. Simple as a child did this great scholar endeavour to be. To the Corinthians he said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." He knew that the mere message of Christ and of salvation in Him, unaccompanied by the resident and regnant Spirit, would be without effect.

Moreover, Paul's gospel always had *the salvation of the individual as its end*. Christ the Saviour, the Spirit of God the Regenerator and Sanctifier, and the end of it all, a soul recreated, justified, sanctified, and glorified at last in the presence of the Holy One.

No man could ever have imagined such a story. No human mind could ever have conceived such a possibility. To all but those who are stone-blind spiritually, the gospel of the grace of God bears the mark of its divine origin upon it everywhere. It must have come down from heaven, because earth never produced its like. The gospel must have come from God, because man, at its best and highest has never been able to produce anything in any degree comparable to it.

II.

This unique message, promising the deliverance that men have always needed—and need to-day as much as ever—is from God; and OF THAT GOSPEL THIS APOSTLE DECLARED HE WAS UNASHAMED.

There were people in his day who looked with longing toward the truth of it, and in their hearts believed it, but who were yet afraid to commit themselves to all its implications. There are such still, people who are ashamed, fearful of being known as evangelicals.

Sometimes I read the newspapers with a feeling of amusement when a blind correspondent attempts to discuss religious matters. They write of a certain man that he is not exactly a Fundamentalist, or an Evangelical: he is tinctured with it—but of course that species is extinct!

Some of these men are like the sparrows that hop about on the ice in my garden with a chirp and an air that would say, "We are the only things alive." I have some tall oaks, and sometimes I fancy I can hear laughter among the trees, and can almost imagine the oaks becoming animate and vocal, and saying, "Poor little chirping things! We lived long before you did, and expect to survive you by many a year." There are people who are afraid to be called evangelicals, ashamed of the gospel. They would not like to take the responsibility of an absolute denial of it. In case of emergency, they would like to keep up a nodding acquaintance with it if by any chance it should turn out to be true; but in the meantime, while the tides are against it, while winter is here, they are not quite prepared to commit themselves to all the potentialities of spring.

Paul never apologized for the gospel—I use the word in its modern sense; in its etymological sense his entire ministry was a continuous and consistent apology.—He boldly declared it. We in this place do not apologize for it. I think we can say we are not ashamed of the gospel. I know what they may say about us—but what matters it? I hope that those of you who believe the gospel believe it proudly, with a holy pride. I am not concerned about the attitude of the modern so-called intellectuals: we are going to have our innings.

Did you ever see a game of cricket? Half your life is gone if you have not—and what is more to the purpose, did you understand it when you saw it? I have seen a team go to bat and knock up a fairly good score, and I have seen the final pair return when the innings was over, one of them, the man who was "not out," with his bat under his arm, and, taking off his batting gloves—what did he make?—fifty, seventy-five, a great score! I saw that once when W. G. Grace was on the other side. I was but a little boy, but I saw him play. I have seen W. G. Grace beat the other side "off his own bat," and ultimately stumps were drawn with Grace and another still "not out."

Evangelical Christianity is "going to bat" again before long. It is going to have its innings. God will raise up other men than Karl Barth and Niemoeller in Germany, and others elsewhere. The day will come when the gospel will not be at its present discount in religious circles. It will always be at a discount among carnal men, of course. Paul was not ashamed of it, but defended it against all its enemies. I would not hesitate to say to all the modernistic theological professors in the institutions of Toronto and elsewhere, with all their proud boasting, "You are a lot of religious simpletons. You have nothing to your credit. You have done nothing with all your teaching".

III.

Said Paul, "THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION to everyone that believeth."

Paul had had an experience of it. The gospel, to him, was not a mere formula, not an experiment, but an experience, something that had entered into his very life. Some people talk about the gospel as though it were the gentlest, softest thing in the world. It is not. The gospel is the power of God—and that word is the word from which we get our word, dynamite. The gospel of the grace of God is dynamite. Any man who has any sense will not take a hammer to a stick of dynamite. The gospel is the dynamite of God. Paul knew it because it had proved itself dynamite in his own life.

There never was a prouder man than Saul of Tarsus; but when the message of the gospel found entrance to heart and intellect, and the light from heaven shone upon him, he fell to the dust; his *pride* was entirely demolished; it broke him, destroyed that natural pride of his. It always does.

There never was a man more prejudiced than Paul. His mind was stored with antagonisms toward the gospel. And yet when the gospel came it destroyed his *prejudice*. We need that to-day. You say, "How shall we overcome the religious opposition to Evangelical Christianity?" We cannot overcome it, but I believe that God will rend the heavens and come down and make bare His mighty arm once again, and release His power in the lives of men and we shall see once again the dynamite of God. Then we shall see the critics running for their lives—or for their reputations. Even the mountains will flow down at His presences, as when the melting fire burneth.

Paul saw in it more than that: it was the power of God "unto Salvation". Paul had the clearest possible conception of the function of the gospel. It was to recreate the creature who had corrupted the world, and following the recreation of His human creature God was ultimately to recreate the whole world. Said Paul, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"—not by legislative, socialistic schemes, but by the direct application of divine power to human life, and ultimately to the whole created order. That was Paul's conception—not a reorganization, not a mere regimentation of existing elements in human nature, nor a reorientation of human life, but the introduction into human affairs of a power that is divine, that first of all will make a man a new creation, and having made him a new creation, will ultimately set him, appropriately circumstanced, in a regenerated world. If not before, we shall see it inevitably, at the return of the Lord. It is a glorious programme, the programme of the gospel.

Paul's confidence in it was justified by every page, every era, of the church's subsequent history. The gospel has always been the power of God unto salvation. I can see many men and women in this congregation to-night whom I have seen made new creatures. They are not the men and women they once were. They are new creatures in Christ Jesus. They have been so made by the gospel which is "the power of God". And I would say to all my Modernistic friends, I challenge you to produce one example, where your philosophy of religious negations has ever made a man a new creature. It never did: it never can—and therefore it never will. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." It has proved so, and will prove so again.

I trust many of us here this evening can take that position because we have had an experience, if not as deep or high or full as that of the Apostle Paul, notwithstanding an experience that is just as real. Sometimes I think we fail in not giving our testimony. I give you mine. If you were all to rise in your seats and tell me that the gospel is not true, if you were to take sides, shall I say, with the world's scholars, whatever opposition you should present, I am confident of this, that it would not cause my faith to waver for a moment. And I will tell you why: I know! I know! I KNOW the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation". It has proved itself to be so in my own experience.

And many here this evening could give the same testimony. You do not hold the gospel as a theory: it is part of your life. It is one of the things of which you are more sure than of the things about you. It is indisputable. It is axiomatic. It is the thing that has demonstrated itself to be true. You can say, "I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED." It is "the power of God unto salvation."

IV.

"TO EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH." To everyone. First of all "to everyone"! "To every one"! People are not converted *en masse*. The gospel is designed to save people one by one. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The gospel is an individual matter. The gospel makes individuals, puts upon the individual the responsibility for his own action. God deals with us as individuals. He has done so from the beginning. He comes to everyone and says, "You." "You." "Every one of you." There is no exception. No matter who your father and mother may have been, what your circumstances, your birth, your education—"Every one of you." It involves an individual personal decision, we must each believe for himself or herself. "To every one that believeth," "To every one" who yields himself or herself to the truth of the gospel, it is "the power of God". Every one who accepts the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, by which we are made partakers of the divine nature, who rests upon them, and who so believes—I cannot tell you how, but I do know that to every one who believes, the gospel proves itself to be "the power of God unto salvation".

There may be someone here to-night who would say to me were I talking with you personally, "There are things that I cannot abandon. There are powers within me that I cannot contend against successfully. There are chains by which I am bound that I cannot break." The old nature is very much like that fallen bridge at Niagara Falls. What a nuisance it is! What can they do with it? How are they to get it out of the way? I was not surprised when I read that they had distributed charges of dynamite, and that then a man turned a switch—and one section went down into the nearly two hundred feet of water below. Human life is a wreck like that old bridge, just a tangled mass of girders. How can we get the old out of the way, so as to build a new life? By the dynamite of God. "The gospel is the power (dynamite) of God." It will blow things up, and break things that no human power can break:

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me."

Will you say it this evening? Trust Him, and you shall prove, as millions of others have proved, that this Saviour has been given power to forgive sins, and to grant you an eternal salvation.

Let us pray:

Bless, O Lord, to us our meditation. We pray Thee that Thou mayest be pleased to visit the vine of Thy planting, and to send to the professing church throughout this troubled world a real revival of religion pure and undefiled. Save us all here in this building to-night, and all who later shall read the simple message. Bring, we pray Thee, glory to Thy great name. Turn the hearts of Thy people, back to Christ. Teach us all to pray, Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with Thee. Hear us for Christ's sake, Amen.

TO JARVIS STREET MEMBERS

Have you replied to the letter of the Deacons of the church, of January 26th? If not, will you please reply by next Sunday.

TO WITNESS SUBSCRIBERS

If you have not already replied to the annual GOSPEL WITNESS letter, we should appreciate it if you would make an effort to do so at as early a date as possible.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

VERDUN—*Pastor Thomas Carson.* Last week this column told of a special evangelistic effort being made at the Verdun Church. This week we share the following joyful news. The first week of the series with the pastor preaching was one of rich blessing. The second week Pastor J. Scott of Belleville was the preacher, and the fruits of the Spirit's working were evident to all. On Tuesday evening a young man and a young woman came forward to confess Christ, and several others requested baptism. On Thursday evening a young girl came forward and was followed shortly after by her mother who wanted to make public her own faith in her Saviour. Friday a message directed specially for Christians saw two, who had been the subject of much prayer, renew their vows.

Mr. Carson writes: "We shall forever praise God for the ministry of Brother Scott in our midst. Friday evening saw the largest attendance of any meeting since I have been here. Mr. Scott said publicly that he had never found an easier place in which to preach, and that he was conscious of a deep spirit of prayer. We do praise God for this. The fact is that we had reached the end of the rope and continued prayer was our only hope. May God give us grace to lay hold on this privilege first of all!"

TIMMINS—*Rev. H. C. Slade.* In Timmins we have been favoured with good congregations at all services, and it is not unusual to have to open the side doors into the prayer room to accommodate the people Sunday evenings. On the first Sunday evening in the New Year there were seven baptized on profession of faith in Christ. Our Sunday School is increasing and this we believe is due under God to the efforts of Pastor, teachers and workers. A week ago we had three hundred and seventy-seven in the School, for which we are grateful. We have had to make some alterations in the basement of the church building in order to obtain more room for the School. The Church Prayer meetings held on Wednesday and Saturday evenings have been very well attended. A medical doctor residing now at Porcupine called on our Pastor to see what could be done with regard to holding gospel meetings at that place, which is about ten miles distant. Mr. Slade went out one Sunday and held a meeting in the afternoon, which was very well attended, the hall being filled almost to capacity. Since then some of the brethren of the church have been going out each Sunday to preach the gospel, and the people seem anxious for the continuance of the meetings. This place is near Pamour, Ontario, where two members of our church reside, and there are also a number of people residing there who know not the gospel. We trust the Lord may use our efforts to the saving of some souls in that district.

Although cut off from broadcasting their evening services, the Timmins church continues to broadcast every Sunday morning. Twice a month a French-speaking member of the church uses the radio to preach the gospel to the many French Canadians in the district. We covet the prayers of all God's people in behalf of the work in the North, not only in Timmins, but in every place where our brethren are preaching the Word.

BRISCOE ST., London—*Rev. R. D. Guthrie.* The Sixth Anniversary services of Briscoe Street Baptist Church were held on January 23rd. The Pastor preached appropriate sermons, and there was special music by visiting brethren.

The Bible School is recovering the ground lost during the infantile paralysis epidemic. Increasing attendances at the Church services crown the untiring efforts of a faithful band in the house to house visitation campaign. A new endeavour in the church life is a Young People's Society which meets every Friday evening for Bible study, so that they may be equipped for the Lord's service.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 First Quarter Lesson 8 February 20th, 1938.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Lesson Text: John 8.

Golden Text: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—John 8:12.

I. Christ the Light, Revealing and Reproving Sin—verses 1-11.

Christ probably spent the night at Bethany, as was His frequent custom, returning to the temple early in the morning, sitting down to speak to the people (Matt. 5:1; 23:2).

The Scribes and Pharisees sought occasion to accuse the Saviour of wrong-doing. To uphold the law of Moses by counselling punishment for the sinful woman would be equivalent to setting aside the customs of the Romans (Compare Matt. 22:15-18). Should the Saviour advise an action contrary to the Mosaic law, the Scribes considered that He would then be under the necessity of giving up His claim that He came to fulfil the law.

The law gave the witness the duty of casting the first stone (Deut. 17:7), but not one of them was willing to perform an act which would imply perfect innocence (Matt. 5:28; Rom. 2:1). The scorching light of the holiness of God exposed the sin of their hearts (John 3:19, 20); the accusers became the accused; they departed, ashamed and condemned.

Christ is holy, and also gracious; He hates sin, but loves the sinner (Rom. 3:26); in wrath He will remember mercy (Hab. 3:2). He pronounced no sentence of judgment on this occasion (John 3:17), but He commanded the woman to sin no more. As God, He was absolutely holy (verse 46), and could not look upon sin with any degree of allowance (Hab. 1:13).

II. Living in Light or Dying in Darkness—verses 12-32.

Teachers of junior classes will probably find this section the most suitable one for boys and girls. Emphasize the truth of the Golden Rule Text, illustrating the principle stated by reference to Holman Hunt's picture "The Light of the World" (Rev. 3:20; Luke 2:32; 1 John 2:8). The pillar of light given to guide and protect the children of Israel (Exod. 13:21; 14:20) was transitory and temporary, but Christ abides as the light for ever.

Light is associated with the sun (Mal. 4:2), with power, heat and life. Light is a symbol also of the holiness of God (1 John 1:5). Light makes things appear as they really are (Eph. 5:13), and Christ as the Light of the world revealed sin, revealed God, and revealed the way of salvation. The one who follows Christ will be able to walk in the light of knowledge, power, holiness and life, while the unbelievers must walk in the darkness of ignorance, weakness, sin and death.

The Christ Who came to earth as a Saviour (verse 15; John 12:47; 1 Tim. 1:15), will one day come again as Judge (Acts 17:31). He will not judge according to appearances, but according to the standards of righteousness (verse 16).

The treasury was in the Court of the women, the most public part of the temple, near which was the room in which the Sanhedrin Council met. Though His enemies could hear His words, they were powerless to lay hands upon the Lord, for His hour had not yet come.

The unbelieving Jews could not go with Christ into His Father's presence. Solemn indeed were His words to them: "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins". The word 'he' is in italics in the Authorized Version, showing it does not appear in the Greek. See also verses 23, 58 and 13:39. Christ spoke of Himself as the eternal self-existent God (Exod. 3:14; Deut. 32:39; Isa. 43:10, 11). Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1 John 5:1; Rom. 10:9, 10), but whosoever will not believe in Him, turn to Him and live, will abide in darkness, dying in his sin, separated from God for ever.

At the time of the crucifixion of Christ (verse 28), there were unmistakable signs that Jesus was in truth the Son of God; the darkness, the earthquake, the rent veil of the temple, and the patient suffering of the sinless Saviour (Matt. 27:54). But, above all, Christ proved His Deity when He arose from the dead.

Through leaving His heavenly home to dwell for a time among men, Christ enjoyed unbroken fellowship with the Father because of His constant obedience (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). He would have believers abide in Him, obey His word, and thus become disciples indeed.

True freedom is always ordered freedom: it is deliverance from the thralldom of ignorance and sin. Christ, the Truth Incarnate, alone can set men free. "Liberty is Christ's livery" and His service is perfect freedom. They who are His vassals are victors.

III. Children of Light or Children of Darkness—verses 33-59.

These Jews were proudly boasting of their liberty and of their ancient lineage. They regarded the bondage to Egypt, Babylon, Syria and Rome as a temporary condition only, and the people as a whole refused to acknowledge any man as conqueror. In reality they were slaves, under the domination of sin (Rom. 6:16). Christ has authority to set men free because He is the Son, and a son possesses higher privileges than does a servant (Gal. 4:1-7, 30, 31; 5:1; Heb. 3:5, 6). A slave would not have the power to liberate another slave.

In answer to their boast as children of Abraham, Christ pointed out that natural descent would not win them approval with God (Rom. 9:7, 8; Matt. 3:8, 9; Gal. 3:7). They were not acting as children of Abraham, whose chief characteristic was faith (Gal. 3:6). They would not believe Him, love Him, or hear His words.

As a matter of fact, believers become children of God (John 1:12), while unbelievers remain children of Satan (John 3:8-10; 5:19). The children of light (1 Thess. 5:5) receive their life from God, while the children of darkness, wrath and disobedience are energized by the Wicked One (Eph. 2:1, 2). They exhibit his characteristics of hatred of the truth and the desire to lead men to destruction. Satan brought sin and death into the world by persuading Adam and Eve to believe a lie (Gen. 3:4; Rom. 5:12).

Instead of honouring Christ, thereby honouring God, as did Abraham, the Jews cast reproach upon Him (verses 41, 48). We need not be surprised if our message be not heartily received by the unsaved, for their minds have been blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4), and they know not God.

The patriarch Abraham rejoiced in the prospect of seeing the day of Christ (Luke 10:24), for he believed the promise of the earthly manifestation of God (Heb. 11:13). Abraham also saw the promise fulfilled. Not that his life on earth was contemporaneous with that of Christ, as the Jews understood the Saviour's words, but Abraham had not died so as to be unconscious; his spirit lived on (verses 51, 52; Mark 12:26, 27).

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