

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 16, No. 41

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 17, 1938

Whole Number 822

PESSIMISTS VERSUS OPTIMISTS

Pessimists and optimists and their respective philosophies of life, and of the circumstantial elements and situations of which life is made up, are frequently named in juxtaposition and contrast. For example, returning once on ship from England we shared the table of a South African diamond magnate, a very wealthy man. We recall his telling us of a definition of the two which had greatly interested him. He had heard that an optimist was one who did not care what happened so long as it did not happen to him; and a pessimist was described as one who had lived too long with an optimist!

Perhaps everyone who reads these lines will recall other contrasting definitions, but we are contemplating the religious aspect of these two opposing attitudes toward life, and we find an illustration of it in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, in the story of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. The importance of that miracle may be appraised in part by the fact that it is recorded in each of the four Gospels; and the four narratives are complementary to each other. John at one point particularizes a little more than the others, in that he specifically names those who were perhaps the mouth-pieces of the disciples in general when they replied to the Master's proposal that the multitude should be fed.

The question, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat", was submitted to Philip. It was not asked because the Lord was in need of Philip's counsel, for He already "knew what he would do". The question was put only to "prove" Philip.

Life for all of us abounds with problems and interrogation marks, and we are often hard put to it to find an answer. We can none of us throw stones at Philip, or say that he was wanting in an average measure of ordinary faith. The fact is, Philip was a good man who had some achievements to his credit. He was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, so that the three were probably well known to each other before they were called of the Lord. It is recorded of Philip that he "found Nathanael", and nothing in his record indicates that he was wanting in loyalty or love to his Lord.

But even good men fail in some emergencies; and Philip seems to have had a well-developed faculty for discovering difficulties, and estimating incompetencies. Later in this same Gospel, when Jesus Christ said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know", we find Philip answer-

ing, "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" As a result of his somewhat querulous objection our Lord replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" One may quite justly assume that Philip was not naturally inclined to look upon the sunny side of things.

In the circumstances before us he estimated the multitude and the probable cost of providing them with bread. Apparently the possibility of a miracle, of the special exercise of divine power in the premises, had not occurred to him. It was evident also that he had not rightly gauged the dimensions of grace. Philip's proposal was to give every one of them "a little". There are people whose ambitions and aspirations never exceed such a standard; erstwhile prodigals that would linger in the servants' halls, being devoid of any spiritual imagination. They could not picture the festive banquet scene when the fatted calf had been killed, and the father's household had begun to be merry.

Furthermore, Philip was a mathematical expert, an animated numbering machine—but more expert at subtraction than multiplication. Hence, in his view, it was beyond the competence of the disciples to supply even "a little" to everybody. We have had experience with two church treasurers at different times who were professional auditors. They were made treasurer, each in his turn, because of his professional expertness; and they were the most depressing church officials we have ever known. They had been trained in the science of looking for trouble, and both were expert in finding it! That is to say, they had developed an auditor's imagination. Their imaginations never functioned in any other direction—but they could always imagine a deficit. They could never prepare a budget for any but "a little"; and they could never imagine an income in excess of "two hundred pence". Even when the figures in their annual reports organized themselves into a choir to sing the Hallelujah Chorus, they each tried to stop the anthem by suggesting that some of the figures might easily have been absent from the record, and that would have made a Hallelujah impossible.

Philip is bad enough as a treasurer: he is worse as chairman of a finance committee. He is so shut up to the mechanics of his numerical science that it is difficult for him to anticipate a miracle, or to be happy about it

if a miracle is performed. Philip was a natural pessimist, saved from despondency by sovereign grace.

Mark tell us that our Lord said, "How many loaves have ye? go and see." Thus they were commissioned to discover and estimate all available resources. Philip could estimate their incompetency, with a lightninglike calculation: he did not need to "go and see". But there was one man who became the spokesman, and was able to say, "There is a lad here." Philip was readier to discern a Nathanael without guile than a lad with a basket. Philip had an eye to actualities: Andrew to potentialities. There are people who never see a lad.

Some years ago this Editor saw such blessing in a church of which he was Pastor that the church had to be enlarged to between three and four times its original capacity. When the enlarged building was completed, a magnificent brussels carpet covered the entire auditorium, and the circular pews with their quartercut ends were all in place, and everything was spick and span, and on the Saturday night before the opening, the ladies were there setting up palms and flowers, preparing for the grand opening day. Many men were there too, among them an old man, and a man in his middle or later thirties, husband of one of the ladies. He said to the old man, "Well, Mr. So-and-So, are you going to shut me out tomorrow?" Said the old gentleman, "Why should I shut you out, Bert? I do not understand." The young man replied, "But you shut me out when the old church was opened." "Surely not", said the old gentleman. "Oh, yes, you did", said the younger man, "nobody was more interested in that new church than I was, and I came bright and early to get in and get a good seat; and you were at the door. I was only a little boy, and as I came to the door you were standing there, and you said, 'You cannot come in; we have no room for boys to-day.'" Said the old gentleman, "Surely, I did not say that, Bert." "Oh yes, you did", said the younger man. "Well", said the older one, "I had forgotten all about it." "Perhaps you had, but I have never forgotten it, and never shall forget the disappointment I felt that morning."

The older man was a typical Philip, readier to groan than to glory at any time, one who had no eyes to see a lad, who could not estimate the potentialities residing in a lad with a basket on his arm.

Of course we know the story of the five barley loaves and two small fishes. That is the material aspect of it—and that is not to be ignored. A lad may have little of this world's goods, only a few pennies perhaps; but who knows what his financial resources will be when he is fullgrown? A Chinese evangelist spoke one evening in our church a few years ago. He was a truly godly man, with a fine sense of humour. He told us how some churches complained that they could not pay their bills, and resorted to all sorts of tricks in an effort to make ends meet. "But", he said, "when the Lord Jesus needed money for taxes, he sent Peter fishing, and catching the fish, he caught the money too. And", said our Chinese friend, "if churches would busy themselves catching fish, they would still find money in the fishes' mouths; for when a man is soundly converted, his pocketbook is dedicated to the service of the Lord."

Which, being interpreted, means that a lad with his loaves and fishes may become very useful to a church, and to the missionary enterprises of the church, even in a

material way. But what of the other potentialities of a lad or a lassie? What hidden talents are there? Who but God can estimate the potentialities of any human personality?

Our readers are familiar with the story of the conversion of Robert Moffat, the solitary fruit of a minister's labour for a whole year; and will remember the story of Elder Philip who complained that 'only a boy' had joined the church in a whole year. But that boy was Robert Moffat. Spurgeon was a lad when he was converted, but when his five loaves and two fishes were consecrated to the Master's service, what a multitude were fed! William Jay was only a lad when he first preached in Bath, and won the hearts of all the congregation—particularly of the reverend deacons who feared to let him go into the pulpit, when as an emergency supply sent because there was no one else—when permitted to minister because even the two hundred pennyworth of bread was too far away to be obtainable—and announced as his text, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

Is there any greater work in the world than bringing lads and lassies, with their baskets, to the Master? And where shall we find the optimist *par excellence*? The superlative, the supreme, the sovereign Optimist? Let Him speak to us, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

ROMAN CATHOLIC INTOLERANCE

Many Roman Catholics are in the habit of boasting, in the company of Protestants, of the tolerant and broadminded spirit of their church. The other day, for instance, a member of the House of Commons for Quebec City drew an idyllic picture of Roman Catholics and Protestants in his riding passing each other of a Sunday morning, each group on its way to their different churches, but always holding each other in mutual respect, and living in perfect accord in spite of diverse religious persuasions. Another text for a similar homily was recently provided a leading French-Canadian daily by the announcement that the Catholics in the archdiocese of Quebec number 511,454, out of a total population of 518,400; the non-Catholic population, Protestant Jews and all others, numbering only 6,946 or less than 1½% of the total population. The paper referred to took advantage of this announcement to hold up Quebec City with its overwhelmingly Catholic population as a bright and shining example of Catholic tolerance and good will toward the Protestant minority.

Such affirmations of peace and harmony have a strong appeal to undiscerning nominal, Protestants, who have only opinions where they ought to have convictions and who therefore believe in a religious *laissez faire*. But protestations of this sort must be examined in the light of history and experience. For example, the French-Canadian Roman Catholic member of parliament who delivered the speech on tolerance above mentioned, made it the pretext for an appeal for government assistance to a forthcoming Catholic Eucharistic Congress to be held in Quebec! And as an illustration of how tolerant and broadminded the practice of the Church of Rome is in this overwhelmingly Catholic

(Continued on page 6)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, January 27th, 1938
(Stenographically Reported)

Lecture Text: Luke 24:33-36

I suppose there are few professing Christians who have not at some time or another in their Christian experience, passed through a cloudy and dark day. There are not many people who have lived continuously on the mountain top. Most of us have had experience of the valley. Occasionally we sing a hymn to the effect that we "feel like singing all the time", and I suppose that while we sing it, we feel like singing. But most people have had the experience of the children of the captivity who hanged their harps upon the willows, and wept when they remembered Zion.

It is imperative that we should have a definite experience of divine grace, and be assured in our hearts that we have passed from death unto life. But there is necessity for carefully watching one's spiritual health, for maintaining a proper spiritual diet, and finding for ourselves proper spiritual exercise, so that we may not faint by the way.

Sometimes I allow my mind to go back over the years, and think of a number of people who, for a while, have run well, but who soon were hindered. It is well that we should watch and guard our spiritual health. I think a legitimate use of scriptural standards by which we may be able to measure our spiritual state and progress in divine things, is very necessary. And so from time to time it may be wise for us to consider whether it is still with us as in the months past when the candle of the Lord shone upon us.

We are accustomed in this chapter to turn our thought to the great fact of the resurrection of Christ; and that is its primary use. And yet, though we believe and know He is risen indeed, I think we may turn over this narrative in our minds for our spiritual profit in other directions; for there is a sense in which the children of God may sometimes lose sight of their Lord, where they may have to complain as did the spouse in the song: "My beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."

I.

I have read to you the story of these TWO GLOOMY DISCIPLES WHOSE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST HAD BECOME BUT A MEMORY; not a very remote memory it is true, but still it had become only a memory. He was gone from them, and they could have said, as did Mary at the Sepulchre: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

I am afraid it is not uncommon for the Lord's people sometimes to lose the sense of His immediate presence. Theoretically, of course, they believe all that they ever believed, and yet there steals in upon the soul an uncomfortable sense of separation and distance between the soul and the Lord.

Do you remember the woman who was greatly troubled? She said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." But there was a great throng between Him

and her, and she found it difficult to push her way through the crowd. I suppose that most of us in the stress of the daily duty, as the incidental things of life, the little things, crowd us, find they become as a great throng. We are jostled, and made to feel that somehow or another we have got without the charmed circle, and we cannot see the Lord, by faith, as clearly as once we could.

These people had had a real experience of fellowship with Christ. They had known Him, and apparently had known Him with some degree of intimacy. But now something had happened, and He was gone from them. Not in precisely the same sense as in their experience, but it comes to us sometimes, as when the telephone is out of order, the medium of communication seems to be broken. We have not the same sense of nearness to God that we had. Have you ever had such an experience? I remember to have read somewhere a great saying of Mr. Spurgeon. Very few people could say it. Talking very intimately with a friend, who was very close to him, of their common interest in Christ, he said that he thought he could honestly say that for twenty years during his waking moments, he could not recall that he had ever been once without a sense, a consciousness, of the immediate presence of Christ. How many of us could say that? In the kitchen, in the office, on the street, in the shop, whatever we may be doing, and wherever we may be, just to be able to say that we feel and know that He is at hand, so that we can exhort our souls,

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Not always do we feel that to be true, even though by faith we may say it.

The two disciples of the chapter talked about the things of God, and yet they spoke of the Lord without any sense of exaltation, without any special experience of gladness. They loved Him. There was not any doubt about that. But they had lost Him for a while, and though they talked about Him, exchanging views, and expressions of their own feelings and moods, though they talked with one another about Him, they were sad. It is possible for the Lord's people even while talking to Him, and about Him, and allowing the mind to dwell upon the things of God, to lose a little of the gladness of it, to miss a bit of the joy of it. We have all known people of whose genuineness as Christians no one who knew them could have any doubt, who yet were not infrequently rather sad. Honesty compels me to plead guilty to that defect myself. Of course, you may be above it? You may never get down in the dumps! You may never get into the doldrums as David did, when he said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines:" but I doubt it!

These two talked about the things of God, talked about the person of Christ, and yet they were without any real gladness. Have you ever done that? Do you ever read your Bible as a duty? Do you say, "I am afraid I have not much appetite to-night, but I will read a few verses"? Do you occasionally engage in prayer without any sense of exhilaration, but, well, just as though you should say, "If I cannot pray, I will at least say my prayers"? I am afraid there is not one here who does not know too well what I am talking about. I do not think I am speaking beyond your experience, am I? I expect you have all had it, and it is rather anomalous, when Christians walking together, and talking about Christ, speak about Him sadly. It is surely most grievous when we must talk about the church, and about the work of the Lord, and the ways of the Lord, and speak of these things with sorrow in our hearts, and without any sense of buoyancy and delight! That was the mood of these people. Count it not strange, my dear friends, if such moods come upon you sometimes. Many have conversed thus sadly while on the pilgrim road. But blessed be God, "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Thus they walked and talked, and as they did so, *they were joined by a mysterious Person*, Whom they were unable to recognize, and yet they did find that as they talked of the things of God, they felt their hearts "strangely warmed".

It is good to talk about these things, even though that is all we can do, even though when we talk about Him He may seem to be not very near to us. We must talk about Him however we feel.

These people were attracted to the scriptures. If you have lost Him, there is one place where you are more likely to find Him than anywhere else. Walk in the flowered paths of the garden of revelation where the bushes sometimes burn with fire, and are not consumed, and where strange voices are heard; and even though you do not see Him, even though you may not renew your fellowship immediately, you may enter into that strange heart-warming experience that has a tendency to dispel the gloom somewhat, and bring back at least a memory of days of summer, when flowers appeared on the earth, and the birds were singing, and the voice of the turtle were heard in the land.

And so they came at last to the place where they abode. It had been a gloomy day. Did you ever have a gloomy day like that? Did you ever come to evening time, and feel—well, that this has been rather a wintry day, "a cloudy and dark day" when you seemed to have lost the perspective of life, and all sense of proportion, and it seemed as though you were being shut in to darkness, as the day drew to a close, and there seemed nothing left to do. You said, "We may as well go home, and try to forget our sadness in slumber." They had met with Somebody by the way, and they offered Him the hospitality of their humble quarters, because they said, "It is well on to nightfall, and there is nothing more to do, or be said, and you may as well tarry with us for the night."

I have to acknowledge that I have had many a day like that, and many an evening too. One could not say that it was without some points of light, some little touches of glory from another world; but like those cloudy days when there is a break in the clouds for a moment, the patch of blue was soon obscured again, and we said, "I hoped it was going to clear up, and

that we were going to have a bright day, but it is just as dark as ever." And so the day ends, or nearly ends. but there is a scripture which says, "It shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." Sometimes our Lord comes in a way that reverses the natural order of things. It seems as though just when the night is dropping down we are given a bit of the morning; for He Who entered into darkness at midday for us, sometimes brings us a little bit of the brightness of noon even at midnight. He has a way of making all things work together for good to those who love Him. And if, at the end of the day you are too disappointed and weary to think things through, perhaps before you rest you can show a Stranger a kindness. As He breaks your bread, He may banish your gloom and crown the weary day with glory.

They said, I suppose, among themselves, "We do not know Who He is, but it would be courteous to invite Him to break His fast with us, just to come in for the evening meal." Whittier speaks of "the dear delight of doing good". There are occasions when as we set about some common ordinary duty, we discover the blessing that has eluded us through all our philosophic study.

The difficulty with these people was that *there was something as yet they believed not*. If only they had been able to comprehend a certain great truth that is cardinal to everything upon which all spiritual blessings hang, without which there can be no blessing, then they had brought brightness to themselves, or at least through the medium of faith, the morning had dawned upon them. But they did not believe that yet, because, you see, in their meditation upon the Word of God, and the promises of God, they admitted a certain disappointment. They said, in effect, to the Stranger, Who talked with them, "There was a time when we opened the Book, and we saw there before us a programme of glory so full of promise, so full of prophecy, that we said, 'Now we shall have it! Soon we shall realise it.' We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Ah, it is a sad day when we have to write our experience of faith in the past tense, when we have to say:

"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?"

Perhaps some of you can look back to the beginning of your Christian life when it was given you to see that you were but children in the faith, and you said to yourselves, "Some day I shall grow up. Some day I shall have strength. Some day I shall be able to do some mighty thing for the Lord. I am not going to be a drone; I am not going to be a dwarf or a dullard in the school of Christ: I am going to be a diligent student; I am going to grow up into Him in all things."

Did you say that? Oh, what ideals we have cherished in the Christian life! How valiant we were going to be! How abundantly fruitful! And then perhaps when the days have passed, we have had to say, "We trusted,—we hoped—once!"

I met a man here not very long ago, and he said to me: "I think I can say honestly that I have tried to apply the principles of the Christian religion to everyday life. I have tried to carry them with me into business, and I have said, I will not let down the standard. I will be what a Christian ought to be. But sometimes I have been forced to ask the question: "Is it in vain we have set the standard so high? Are these ideals of the Chris-

tian life impossible of realization? Are we all doomed to disappointment?" He told me of someone whom he knew, who had the habit of exaggeration, and he said, "I am ashamed to say it yielded me a little comfort for I said, 'Aha, he is not getting to the mountain top any faster than I am. He is dropping down too.'" Oh, how often we have had to say "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel. Once I conceived of Christ as One Who would come into my life, and make me wholly a conqueror, but I fear I have not always realized the victory." You have said that, have you not?

II.

Thus do we reach sometimes the shadows of the evening; and perhaps, as almost the last act of the day **WE FIND OUR EXPERIENCE REVITALIZED BY A NEW VISION.** For as that Stranger received their hospitality, and took the bread and brake it, and gave thanks, suddenly they found *He had come back to them.* Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He was a Memory no longer, but a present and vital Reality. And He does come back to us, my dear friends. We have His promise that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.

But how may we be sharers of that vision? How did that vision come to them? We retrace our steps to discern the psychology of it. *They allowed their minds to dwell upon the things of God, and they talked about the Scriptures, and about the Christ of the Scriptures.* Do you wonder sometimes, when you turn to your Bible, where to begin? Do you ever say to yourself, "Oh, I wish I knew my Book better! I need something just now. I need a word of direction and comfort and inspiration. I wish I knew where to look for it!"

Let me offer this suggestion: Do not look for it: *look for Him,* and just as surely as you find Christ, you will find everything you need. If you turn back to Genesis, that may seem to be a long distance away, but you may find the living Christ walking with you in the pages of Genesis. Oh, I give it as my testimony, I have found Him many times as real to me in Genesis as in any book of the New Testament! The main thing to remember is that in all the Scriptures, Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, everywhere, we shall study them to no profit if we do not look for Him.

There is another thing to be remembered. *The real reason for their gloom was the Master's absence.* That is what occasioned it. That was their trouble. Their hearts were going out after Him. They did not know where He was. Do you remember the saying of the spouse in the Canticles: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" And then she cries out again, as though somehow through the fog she knew he was not very far off, but she could not see Him, and she said, "Draw me, we will run after thee." That was the occasion of her sorrow. He was absent. That also was the cause of the sorrow of these people.

Now as Christians, our difficulties do not lie, primarily in our circumstances, nor primarily in our physical state—of our mood or anything else. I believe if we could only analyse our moods, so as to resolve them into their elements, when you and I get into the dumps, it is because we have somehow lost the sense of the immediate presence of God. Therefore, instead of complaining of

our circumstances to ourselves, or to others, and trying to account for our want of gladness, by these things, we should recognize, as did these people, that our distress and despondency were due to the fact that we had lost Him. The moment you and I begin to feel our loss, He is not very far away. And if that be the case, and we begin to search after Him, even to talk about Him, He, Himself, will draw near. He has promised that He will be found of us when we seek Him with our whole heart.

And so through the Scriptures He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself, and when later they saw Him, they understood their strange warmth of heart. "Why", they said, "how stupid we were not to recognize that it was He. We ought to have recognized Him when He began at Moses and all the Scriptures, and expounded to us in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Have you not often read your Bible in such a way that the Lord Jesus has drawn near, and you have known that He was expounding it to you? I am afraid some people depend too much upon their preacher. I fear some people are tempted to depend too much upon the hearing of addresses, and the hearing of sermons, and upon the help of some human expositor. I have read a few books which have brought blessing to my soul, but it has been my experience, both as a Christian and as a minister, that I have never had such joy in anything in life as when I have been alone with God's Book, and Jesus Himself has drawn near, and without anyone to help me, save the Spirit of God, my heart has burned within me, as I have stood in awe of that Book, as did Moses when the bush burned with fire—almost afraid to breathe, lest one should lose something of the voice that was speaking. Oh, that we could live with Him like that, and so live with His Book! For I am sure that if we long for Him, and love Him, and beg Him to come near, and search the Scriptures to find Him, He will come, and we shall see Him, and know of a surety, from our own experience, that Jesus is alive. He will cease to be a memory, or His resurrection a rumour—He will be a reality and His resurrection a power.

Well, that was to be my first point, but it will, have to be my last one too.

III.

I wanted to show you this, that when their experience of Christ had receded into a memory, and then had become once again a Reality, He vanished out of their sight; **THEIR WHOLE OUTLOOK ON LIFE WAS CHANGED.** Their whole attitude toward life was altered. I can imagine their walking wearily along the Emmaus road from Jerusalem, feeling very tired and ready for rest, and saying when they reached home, "Oh, it is good to be here!" But when they had seen Jesus, they arose that same hour saying, "Come on; back to Jerusalem we go." They had never returned to Jerusalem that night if they had not seen Jesus. They would have been too tired. They would have had no disposition to go. But all they had to do was to see Jesus; then there was no thought of bed, or rest, or silence. They said: "We must seek the society of the others who loved Him."

We cannot reasonably complain of a want of hearers. Notwithstanding, still more had been here this evening, had not some lost touch with Christ. Those who have thus lost sight of Him would rather retire than return

to Jerusalem. The day is over. What is the use? Too cold! But when once Jesus is seen they say: "Oh, now that we know about Him, we must find others who love Him, to tell them we have seen Him." I have known people who have said: "We can stay home, and read our Bibles, and get as much good as by going to church." I do not believe it. In the majority of instances, those who thus speak and who stay at home do not read their Bibles. If they read their Bibles, they would learn that they are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Again and again have I heard some of you quote: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Yes, when we have seen Him we discover we cannot either praise or pray alone—we shall exhort others to magnify the Lord with us, and we cannot be satisfied without others helping us to exalt His name.

You are bound to seek someone else to help you magnify the Lord when once you have seen Him. It is instinctive to the new-born soul. After Peter was let out of prison he went straight to the house of John Mark, just as the dove returned to the ark. When Peter and John were let go, they went to their own company. That was only natural. They always do.

When these two got back to Jerusalem they found the eleven gathered together, and others also. And what was the subject of their discussion? Only one thing—"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

I was shut in last Sunday evening, and I heard a man, on the radio, announce a prayer meeting. He said, "This is the most important meeting of the church, and I invite you all to come. I invite everyone who hears me on the air to come. I want all my friends to come. And I am going to see at this prayer meeting how many friends I have in Toronto. If you are a friend of mine, you will come to prayer meeting on Friday night." Well, I do not want *you* to come to prayer meeting on my account. That would be a poor reason for anyone's coming. I will tell you why some people do not come. They do not expect to meet with Christ. These people said: "He is risen; we have seen Him; we must go and tell somebody. We know it is a fact." And when they got there, they found the eleven, and others; they had all flocked to the same centre, to tell the same thing. Christ is the Magnet, the Centre of gravity. It is to Him we come if we are Christians.

And even as they were talking, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." He is never absent from the place where people gather in His name, He always gives peace.

I used to have a friend—I shall not mention his name; you know him, too,—who was very like his Master in many ways, and as a human friend he was very dear to me. I loved to be with him. It did not make any difference what we talked about, his presence had a soothing, comforting effect. There are some people who set you "on edge". You know that, don't you. I bear them no ill-will, but I have known people from whose presence I would gladly fly away. There are dispositions and tempers, which give no one peace. But there are others who, if they only smile, or shake hands with you, by so doing warm your heart and make you to say, "I am glad I met him." I wish we could all be like that, but there is only One Whose presence is a healing balm, Whose every word breathes peace. The Lord Jesus never comes without saying, "Peace be unto you." Only

to be in His presence, to be where He is, by faith to see Him, is to be at peace. May we more than ever, seek to abide in Him.

Let us pray:

O Lord, bless to us this meditation upon Thy Word. Thou knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are dust. We so soon get to the end of ourselves. Because we are weak we grow tired of the hills we must need climb, and are bowed down beneath but a little burden that we ought to be able to carry easily had we but the strength of God. But Thou knowest that it is sometimes true even of us, that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Forgive all our waywardness and wilfulness. Forgive us for the sadness of our countenances, when they ought to be like the morning. Why art thou cast down, oh, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. Be Thou, O God, the help of our countenances. Help us to be the reflectors in our measure, and as Thou shalt give us grace, of Thy good cheer. Help us that we may ever be messengers of peace to weary troubled souls, and that so we may make life a little easier for some, who, perhaps, wearily but still faithfully plod along the upward way. This we ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

ROMAN CATHOLIC INTOLERANCE

(Continued from page 2)

archdiocese we reprint the following dispatch from the parliamentary correspondent at Ottawa of the *Toronto Telegram*.

By J. H. Fisher

Yesterday, T. C. Douglas, of Weyburn, asked Mr. Lapointe to explain why Superintendent Gagnon, of the R.C.M.P., in Quebec City has prohibited the distribution of the New Testament in that city. Just that.

It goes back to 1933 when a city by-law was passed forbidding the distribution of books or pamphlets without written permission of the chief of police. Then came the famous padlock law reinforcing the by-law. Late last year a Baptist mission under Rev. Ernest Anex sought permission to distribute the New Testament and received the following reply:

"Following our conversation of to-day, I am sorry to tell you that it is impossible to give you my approbation concerning the New Testament, which I return to you herewith."

When Mr. Anex protested, the Quebec chief replied: "I am not going to give you any reason, and I have nothing to learn from you. My career as a police officer and the course I have followed are sufficient for me to judge of the situation. What I have written to you must be sufficient for you if you know how to read."

In the House yesterday Mr. Douglas asked Mr. Lapointe, who is the Departmental Minister responsible for the R.C.M.P., if this is the attitude of his officers.

Give Mr. Lapointe credit, he can always find an answer. yesterday it was to the effect that Superintendent Gagnon was not speaking as an R.C.M.P. officer, but in his role as the reorganizer of the Quebec City police force, and was acting under city instructions.

Outside of Red Russia there is no country in the world to-day where it would be considered a crime to distribute the New Testament from door to door. And yet it is so in Canada, the land of the free! The studied insolence of this police officer's letter to a Protestant minister is worthy of Stalin's *Ogpu*, or Hitler's secret police, but its spirit is utterly contrary to the high honour and glorious traditions we associate with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That it is possible for such a sad state of affairs to obtain in this Dominion ought to fill every Protestant Canadian with such indignation as will lead him to resolve to do his utmost to put an end to this intolerable condition.—W. S. W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 First Quarter Lesson 9 February 27th, 1938

THE BLIND MAN CURED

Lesson Text: John 9.

Golden Text: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."—John 9:25.

I. The Marvellous Cure—verses 1-7.

In some quarters it is a common practice to attribute affliction and suffering to the presence of sin in the individual or in those associated with him. Affliction may be sent as chastening or discipline (1 Cor. 11:29, 30), but not necessarily so. When trouble comes, we should not conclude that God does not love us (John 11:5, 6), or that He has cast us away (Isa. 41:9; 48:10), but we must remember that God desires the affliction to be the occasion for a manifestation of His love and power, that it may redound to His glory (John 11:4; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7).

The works of God were to be manifest in the blind man through Christ (John 5:36). For the sake of the disciples, the Saviour spoke in terms of human limitation. The day represents the time of opportunity for labour. The night was approaching for Christ in the sense that the period of His personal ministry upon the earth was drawing to a close. As He laboured earnestly and incessantly, so should we (John 4:35; 2 Tim. 4:2).

In order to see well, two conditions are necessary; namely, good light and good eyesight. A man whose vision is unimpaired cannot see in the darkness, nor can a blind man see in the light. The same principles apply in the realm of the spirit. Spiritual perception is impossible till the truth be illuminated, and till the heart and mind be enlightened by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14). Christ came as the Light of the world, to reveal the truth of God to men (Psa. 36:9, and also to anoint their eyes and quicken their hearts to comprehend it (2 Cor. 4:4-6).

Christ exercised His sovereign will in the manner of the cure, as well as in the fact. He used material means—the clay of the ground and the water of Siloam, and restored the man's sight instantly, while others were healed differently (Matt. 9:29; Mark 8:24, 25). The man was asked to exercise faith in the word of Christ (Luke 17:14) by washing in the pool of Siloam, an act which illustrates cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ (Zech. 13:1; Titus 3:5; Heb. 9:22; 1 John 1:9).

II. The Cured Man and His Neighbours—verses 8-12.

The neighbours of the man born blind questioned his identity, for the change wrought in him was so great (2 Cor. 5:17). Our associates will soon know when Christ has transformed our lives.

The man's simple, straight-forward testimony (Mark 5:19) induced his neighbours to desire to see Jesus. It should be our joy to speak to others about the Saviour Whom we love, that they may long to go to Him (John 1:41, 42; 4:39).

III. The Cured Man and the Pharisees—verses 13-34.

The Pharisees were curious to know the manner in which the cure had been effected, but their interest soon centred in the Person Who had performed it. As usual, there was a division among them in regard to Christ (John 7:43).

The intimidated parents vouched for the identity of their son, and for his former condition, but they were unwilling to take the consequences of an open confession of Christ. Many refuse to follow their convictions through the fear of man (Prov. 29:25; Acts 5:29), thinking that the cost would be too great. They forget that the cost of not confessing Christ is greater (Luke 9:25; Matt. 10:32, 33).

The hostile Pharisees attempted to cast reflection upon the character of Christ, but the one who had been healed of his blindness had just one answer to every word of criticism, and his honest testimony could not be gainsaid (1 Pet. 2:15). His very presence among them, and his joyful acknowledgment of the change which Christ had wrought in his condition, were more powerful, perhaps, than an eloquent sermon would have been. Let us tell men that we who were blind

can now see, and that we who were lost are saved in Christ.

The Pharisees implied that one who followed Christ was not loyal to the ancestral leader, Moses. They failed to realize that if Moses had received His authority from God, so also had Christ been commissioned by God. To the healed man this miracle was indisputable proof that the one who performed it must be from God.

Faithful testimony does not always result in the conviction and the conversion of the hearer; he may become angry. The truth is often unpalatable to the guilty heart, and the rejection of the message may lead to hatred of the messenger (Isa. 29: 20, 21). This was not the last instance of men being cast out of the synagogue because of their loyalty to the truth. Many have suffered like persecution for Christ's sake. We must be true to the Lord, regardless of consequences.

IV. The Cured Man and the Son of God—verses 35-41.

Though men revile and persecute, God will reward His own true disciples (Matt. 5:10-12; Mark 10:29, 30; 1 Pet. 4:14), if not here, in the hereafter. Christ sought and found the outcast.

The man who had been blind now beheld for the first time the One Who restored his sight, and recognizing Him, perhaps, by His voice, addressed Him as Lord. He already knew that his Healer must be a Prophet from God, and his quest for further light met with instant response. The eyes of his understanding were enlightened, and he was given faith to see in Christ the Son of God. He confessed Him with joy, and worshipped Him as God.

Men cannot behold the light which Christ brings and remain unchanged. They who see not, yet desire to do so, will be shown the truth, as was the man born blind. Those, who, like the Pharisees, pose as having superior wisdom (Rev. 3:17, 18), and close their eyes to the revelation which God can give, will remain spiritually dead. That being the case, their sin lies not in the fact of the absence of light, but in the act of disobedience to the light (John 3:19; 15:22).

"Light obeyed means increased light,
Light refused, darkest night;
And who shall give the power to choose,
If the love of light we lose?"

PASTOR JACK SCOTT ACCEPTS THE CALL OF FORWARD BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO

Pastor Jack Scott was graduated from Toronto Baptist Seminary in May, 1937, and has been for three years the Pastor of the Belleville Baptist Church.

Mr. Scott was deservedly popular from the beginning of his Seminary course. A man of fine address and attractive personality, gifted with a happy sense of humour, and real ability as a public speaker, he was early recognized as having a bright future. He made a fine record in the Seminary. He is wholly devoted to Christ and His gospel, and we are sure that to the end of the chapter, wherever he ministers, he will know nothing save Christ and Him crucified.

Mr. Scott has done excellent work at Belleville, and is highly esteemed by all who know him. It was this Editor's privilege to preach for him on one occasion. The service was held in a commodious building, and was conducted by Mr. Scott. We remember distinctly feeling a deep sense of gratification as we observed with what dignity and quiet, reverential force the entire service was conducted. It was the only opportunity we have had of seeing Mr. Scott "in action", and we felt that he was endowed to an unusual degree with qualities that would ensure his effective leadership in any sphere to which he might be called.

We congratulate the Forward Church on having secured the services of so able a minister—and sympathize with the church in Belleville in their loss. Forward Church, however, will provide Mr. Scott with a very much larger sphere of opportunity, and we feel that a preacher of Mr. Scott's capacity is wholly justified in seeking to invest the powers he has where they will yield the largest returns to the glory of God and the good of his fellows. We prayerfully wish for Mr. Scott and the Forward Church a long, fruitful, and happy, union.

REV. CHAS. FISHER TO BE ASSISTED BY MR. JOCK TROUP

Both names at the head of this paragraph are well known to GOSPEL WITNESS readers. Rev. Chas. Fisher, M.A., is Pastor at Lansdowne Hall, West Norwood, London, England, successor to the later Fuller Gooch; and is known to our readers as a contributor to THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Mr. Jock Troup is the famous Scottish evangelist, who a few years ago was greatly used of God in revivals at Wick, Scotland, and Yarmouth, England; and who is now Superintendent of the Tent Hall at Glasgow. Mr. Troup—better known as Jock Troup—will hold a series of evangelistic meetings in Lansdowne Hall March 6th to 20th. We make this announcement to enlist the co-operation in prayer of all our readers. Remember Jock Troup and Mr. Fisher, the church at Lansdowne Hall, and the neighbourhood, from this forward. We shall hope to publish some report of these services later.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

BOBCAYGEON—*Rev. M. B. Gillion.* A series of special evangelistic meetings was held at Bobcaygeon Church, and at its outstations at Eden and Quiggley's Settlement, from January 25th to February 11th. Pastor J. H. Watt of Court-right, was the special preacher. There were good congregations in spite of inclement weather, and six professed salvation. Considerable visitation work was done, and much blessing experienced in all these places.

KIRKLAND LAKE—*Pastor J. B. Cunningham.* The Lord is giving us a measure of blessing in His work here. Except when the weather has been bad, our congregations have kept up well. We are encouraged to notice an increase in the attendance at the morning services, which we have found the hardest to build up.

We are glad to report that the Lord is blessing our Sunday-school work. The teachers and some of the young ladies are active in visiting the scholars and prospects. Just a week ago we were pleased to have about eight new scholars come, through the work of one of our teen age girls who gives great promise of becoming a mighty servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At Christmas we held a congregational supper in connection with our Sunday-school work and invited the parents of the scholars to come. We served about seventy people, and many of those who were present never go to church. So we were pleased that they heard something of the gospel while they were there.

We are still sowing the seed of the Word, and we are confident that the Lord will soon give us the increase. The Lord is doing a visible work in the hearts of many, and we rejoice in seeing this measure of blessing.

Every Friday evening the Young People of the church meet in one of the homes for Bible study. We have been studying the Gospel of Luke, and are pleased to see the interest they are taking in the Word of God. Some of them are bold to witness for Christ when the opportunity comes, and therein we rejoice."

GERALDTON—*Pastor G. B. Hicks.* Pastor George Hicks writes from Geraldton that a lot has been purchased and the friends there are looking forward to having a building of their own. This will be the first building erected in the North by any of our new causes. Mr. Hicks tells the story thus: "Praise the Lord, we have a lot of our own now, and it was bought with cash—the entire amount being given within eight days of our final decision to buy. Now, the next thing is to get a church building on the lot—a much greater undertaking than the purchasing of the lot. Yet it is not one bit more difficult for God. As it is not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit, in His time we shall have a building too. I hope you good friends down there will not think because we have bought a lot and paid for it so soon that we are rich! We are not, but it is amazing how far a little from a number will go. We individuals are starting to save our pennies again, for the next move. We found the bottom of the barrel was still there after we paid for our lot.

"The extremely cold weather has hurt our attendance somewhat but it has not stopped our progress in the least. Our hearts were made to rejoice a few weeks ago at Bankfield, when during the invitation two of our Sunday School boys

raised their hands in expression of their desire to accept Christ. One of these lads especially, seemed quite clear in his decision. May God help us all to win many of the children for Him before their hearts are hardened by sin and entangled by habits which are a great hindrance to their accepting Christ.

"The prayer meetings are keeping up in spirit and numbers. We are starting to study the first book on Church History, the Book of Acts, at these services. We are looking for great blessing in this study."

ABOUT THE GOSPEL WITNESS—From the North comes a letter in French from a French Canadian Colporteur who is engaged in distributing gospel literature in the areas being opened up to colonisation. This brother writes: "Dear brother in Jesus Christ: I subscribe to THE GOSPEL WITNESS with joy in order to have spiritual food for myself. The whole flock is nourished from the shepherd's pasture, and thus is fulfilled the miracle of Jesus Christ, Who broke the bread to feed the whole multitude. May His divine Word be spread abroad through the world."

We commend the example of this brother to others. THE GOSPEL WITNESS is itself a missionary, and it pleads the cause of Home and Foreign missions and other good causes as well. We urge the members of our Union churches to follow the lead of this hard working French Canadian Colporteur: subscribe to THE GOSPEL WITNESS for yourself and for others, and thus lend THE GOSPEL WITNESS your personal support in its great mission.

REV. ROBERT DUBARRY IN JARVIS STREET

It had been expected that we should not have the opportunity of hearing Mr. Dubarry until April, but he was able to pay us a surprise visit. As we had but little more than forty-eight hours' notice, we were unable to make any general announcement of his visit. However, a fine congregation assembled Thursday evening, February 10th, and we had a most enjoyable service.

Mr. Dubarry is at present in Detroit, whither the Editor will go to-morrow (Thursday) night, to confer with Mr. Dubarry and Dr. Norris in arranging Mr. Dubarry's itinerary.

We print this announcement for the information of our sister-churches of the Union, to let them know that we had no opportunity of announcing the service in a general way because we did not know until Tuesday evening that Mr. Dubarry would be in on Thursday morning. We hope he will have the opportunity of visiting all our Union churches in Ontario and Quebec during April and May

Only 42 Days to the Year's End

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