

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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FOR USHERS AND THOSE WHO ARE USHERED

Christianity is vastly more than morality. No argument is necessary to prove that Christian people should be subject to the Decalogue. But the religion of Christ requires far more of us than outward conformity to the letter of the law. It requires that the law should be kept in spirit as well as in letter. Indeed, we are told that "love is the fulfilling of the law".

No truly regenerated soul will dispute these matters, yet how many of the Lord's people seem to assume that the requirements of the gospel apply only to the larger things of life! The fact is, however, that the largest opportunity for the display of Christian graces is invariably found in the ordinary levels of life, and among its common things. It is by little acts of unselfishness, by an unobtrusive ministry of kindness, by patient consideration of other people, that we show we are Christians. And many Christian people who would never fail in the larger matters of truth and honesty often fail lamentably in the little courtesies of life.

We have known some very orthodox people who were about as ugly at home as they were orthodox in church; and we have known some who could quite eloquently recommend the principles of the thirteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians to the practice of everyone, who, in the common things of life, were selfishness personified.

We are thinking at the moment of how badly some really good people behave in church. Some have the annoying habit of whispering to others, and of passing remarks about nearly everything that goes on. The habit is not only unchristian, but ungentlemanly, or unladylike. Holiness becometh God's house, and praise ought always to be waiting for Him in Zion. It is evident that people who sin in this particular are altogether in the wrong frame of mind to participate in any spiritual service. Ought we not to prepare ourselves by prayer and meditation for attendance at God's house? Ought we not to behave as though we believed ourselves to be actually in the presence of the King? Ought we not therefore to take up a mental attitude which should communicate itself to our physical posture and general behaviour, as of those who are waiting to hear what God the Lord shall say, in expectation that He will speak peace to His people, and bless His saints with peace?

Another most distressing course of conduct of which many good people are guilty is the selfishness they display in church in refusing to receive anyone's direction as to where they shall sit. In any other public assembly than a church congregation, people are accustomed to follow an usher to the seat assigned. Indeed, when they have paid for a seat in advance, and a seat has been reserved for them, it never occurs to them that they have a right to refuse to accept direction from those whose duty it is to seat the assembly properly. After a somewhat extended experience this Editor testifies that there is nothing that ever occurs in a church assembly that to him is so exasperating as the downright ugliness and inconsideration of some good people, as manifested in this matter.

Ushers, if they are really alive to their responsibilities, will know what vacancies there are in every pew on their aisle; and their effort always should be to distribute the congregation in such a way as will make everyone as comfortable as possible. It is folly to attempt to pack into one pew more than its comfortable complement, so long as room can anywhere be found in another pew. Yet we have seen people almost impose themselves on others' laps rather than follow the usher to a place where a comfortable seat is available. And we have known some such strongly to resent any exhortation to be a little more considerate of other people.

Such people do not mean to be unkind or discourteous. Sometimes their intractability is due to their timidity. They are really more shy than stubborn, and stubborn because they are shy. Yet some of them would profess they have come prayerfully to the service, asking God to bless the message of the gospel to the unconverted, and asking Him further to give them grace openly to confess their faith in Christ. But when an invitation is given to an unconverted person to leave his or her seat, and walk down the aisle to the front of a church, what a tremendous demand is made upon them! They have never done it before. Such people are likely to be just as shy as the church member; and if a church member cannot find grace enough to make him or her willing to follow the usher to the seat to which they are directed, what folly for such an one to ask that grace be given an unconverted person to go still further

What is the remedy? Surely that we should each,

by waiting upon God, and yielding ourselves to the direction of His Spirit, ask Him to make our heart's desire above everything else the glory of God in the salvation of men. We should prepare ourselves for the public service, and in that attitude and spirit come to the house of God. In such case we shall not likely be awkward and unpliant, but willing instruments of the Spirit of God, to be, and go, and do, and say, as He directs.

And what about the ushers? Ought not ushers to prepare themselves for their work by prayer and meditation also? An usher's business is not only to conduct people to their seats: he should seek grace of God that he may be used of Him to usher redeemed souls into the gates of pearl. How much depends upon where people sit! A thoughtful usher will not put three or four earnest Christians together: he will distribute them in as many pews as may conveniently be possible. He should study to know the regular members of the congregation, so that he would always be able to distinguish the stranger. He should try to mix the strangers with the church members so that if among the strangers there should be some who are not converted, he may be sure that in the pew to which he conducts them there is an earnest personal worker. Or if the stranger arrives first, he will endeavour to put some earnest Christian in the same pew.

An usher who properly appreciates his opportunity therefore will be in his place before there is a soul in one of the pews. An usher who arrives at his post of duty fifteen minutes before service time is at least fifteen minutes late, and in many cases half an hour late.

We have written this article for the benefit of all church members, and of all church ushers who may read it. We believe there is no more responsible or influential position in a public church service than that of the usher. We earnestly commend these considerations to the prayerful thought of our readers.

"THE PLOT THAT FAILED"

Reviewed by Rev. Henry Oakley, in "The Witness",
London, England

Dr. T. T. Shields, of Toronto, has kindly sent me an autograph copy of his latest book—THE PLOT THAT FAILED. It is a well printed, and well produced volume of nearly 400 pages. I read most of the chapters as they came through, week by week, in the "Gospel Witness," but I am grateful to have the whole in book form and to have been able to read it, as I did during our days at Eastbourne.

It is the history of the disruption at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, of which Dr. Shields has been the minister for 27 years. Dr. Shields uses his usual painstaking ability and all is as clear as a crystal stream. He who runs may read.

Things theological were running fast on "the down grade" in the Baptist Churches of Canada. Appeals were made by anxious observers to Dr. Shields to try to do something to arrest the precipitation, as it was thought he was the only man among the Baptists who would be heard and whose protest would carry weight. For some time he hesitated, but at length he determined to carry the matter before the Convention of Ontario and Quebec. (We should say before the assembly of the Union of Ontario and Quebec.) There was, of course, from the moment of the suggestion considerable opposition from the authorities of McMaster University, from the official life of The Convention and from *The Canadian Baptist*. Dr. Shields, in proposing the motion of protest,

spoke for an hour-and-a-half and carried practically the whole crowded assembly with him and won a tremendous victory. The few but powerful opponents were, of course, unmoved and many of these were officers or members of Dr. Shields' Church.

A little later, Dr. Shields, greatly daring, emphasized the matter in his pulpit, and a little later still, preached a sermon, which is included in Chapter 18, against the prevalent worldliness among Baptists consequent upon the theological trend. All this culminated in a great anxiety on the part of some of the deacons to be rid of Dr. Shields. They at length at a specially prepared meeting of the Church moved—

"That the pastorate of the present incumbent, Dr. T. T. Shields, cease from Sept. 21st, 1921, but that his stipend be continued for six months, until March 22nd, 1922."

There was a tremendous effort to get this motion carried. Every available supporter was rallied, invalids and non-resident members; the whole Church was canvassed by a committee of 15, yet the motion was lost by 41 votes. This gave the victory to Dr. Shields. He calls it "Waterloo." The final result was, 341 members withdrew from the Church and formed a new Church. It was about one-third of the membership. I have not heard much about this new Church. I am not sure if I know its name. I only know that Dr. T. R. Glover and Dr. L. H. Marshall are among its favoured preachers.

Most of my readers will be inclined to say, "How very, very sad!" And there is that aspect, I know. But it is no other than Christ foretold. "I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The condition of heart that betrayed our Lord may well make war among His servants. That condition of heart is sad enough, we all agree. But that there are those who are ready still to follow Christ to His Cross and stand nobly by Him is a matter for gladness and rejoicing.

It is always a desperate thing for a minister to engage in conflict with his deacons. My experience is that he is nearly always the loser. In my now (alas!) long ministry, I have only known two or three successful resistances. Yet I have known cases where a minister has appealed over the deacons' decision to the Church and carried the Church almost unanimously with him.

I am sure that had I been near to Dr. Shields in 1921, I should certainly have said:

"Do not venture resistance. Resign, and a score of happy ministries will open to you."

That would have been my timid, and perhaps I ought to say, my cowardly advice. But I should have been utterly wrong. Dr. Shields' courageous and sacrificial defence of his position saved Jarvis Street with its great traditions as a centre of evangelical influence in Canada and as a cheer to the whole Evangelical Church the world over. For since that great disruption, Jarvis Church has mounted on eagle wings and is now one of the leading Baptist Churches of the world. Dr. Shields speaks of it as "The little one that has become a thousand!" In membership, finance and Sunday School, there has been an almost unbelievable increase.

This could scarcely have been achieved by a minister of lesser mould than Dr. Shields. Not that God could not have done it for and by a smaller man. He could, of course, but it does not seem His way. He chooses His instruments. Dr. Shields is great every way, physically, intellectually, ecclesiastically and, I believe, spiritually. It must have needed such a giant for such a battle. The physical strain of those terrible days must have been enormous. The demand upon the mind was not less, for he was in opposition to some of the best brains of Canada. And it needed a giant in faith to venture upon such a combat. He was certainly helped by the prayers of many, for during the great meeting of decision a hundred or so non-members were on their knees in prayer that the gospel-ministry might prevail.

The book is far more than the history of a great struggle.

(i.) It is an example of where drift in doctrine soon leads. One of Mr. Spurgeon's contentions in the down-grade days

(Continued on page 7)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"READY TO BE REVEALED"

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, February 17th, 1938.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Ready to be revealed in the last time."—1 Peter 1:5.

Some years ago I had conversation with a very highly esteemed Baptist minister. He was no Modernist: he loved the gospel. But he said to me one day: "Have you observed the new emphasis, even among Evangelicals, that is being placed upon the temporal advantages of the Christian religion?" He then proceeded to discuss the influence of Christian principles, as exemplified in Christian men, upon all phases of human life, making the world a somewhat better place to live in. He said: "When I was a boy, I used to hear preachers exhort people to get ready for heaven. But heaven seemed a long way off; and while it is true that the salvation that is in Christ prepares us for that home of eternal felicity, yet I think there is special advantage in showing that godliness is profitable to the life that now is." I replied: "What you say is partly true. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But what you say of the new emphasis seems to be a very dangerous departure. It is quite possible so to emphasize one aspect of truth as to throw it so out of proportion as ultimately to misrepresent the truth altogether. In our day the emphasis is so strongly placed upon temporal things, that heaven is almost completely obscured and forgotten."

I have sometimes thought it would be interesting could we put someone in every church in this city on the same Sunday at the same service, to take notes of what they hear, and then have a testimony meeting. If that were possible, I think we should find that in many, perhaps in the majority of cases, those who attended would tell you that they had not heard even the remotest allusion to another life: but that the preaching had to do with here and now.

I am old-fashioned enough to delight in thinking of heaven, because I hope to go there some day—and I hope that it will be a little better than this world. We must remember where our Lord, Who was the greatest of all preachers, and the Example of all His disciples, placed His emphasis; that He said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

When our thought is turned in that direction, we find the context of these words, which I have read to you, to be full of comfort. It is inspiring to reflect that we are "begotten . . . again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

I cannot see that this earth is becoming very much better. I wonder if you read that dispatch last evening in one of the papers, containing quotations from recent German authors, including Adolph Hitler himself? I never had a very good opinion of the devil. I believe just

what the Scripture says, that he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. But I am not sure that I ever conceived of the devil himself as being capable of such a book as that from which quotations are made, where men in responsible positions in Germany, speak of the coming war, and say it will not then be a case of the victors and the vanquished, but merely of the survivors and those who have been annihilated. They say that all the great cities of the world must be destroyed, that the brains of any nation will be sure to be found upon the battle field, since the pick of the manhood of the nation will be there, and that in the next war they must plan the absolute annihilation of armies and so effect the absolute subjugation of enemy nations. As to the proportion of the people who escape, it will make little difference whether it be five millions or fifty millions, for if you multiply nothing by a million, you still have nothing! Therefore, the only people in all the world that are fit to remain alive are the Germans! It would appear, however, that even some Germans are not fit to live, and that others of them are safe only when in jail. Of course, there may be a few of us who may not be quite so willing to be annihilated, and Germany may discover that in the future, as in the past. I refer to this only to indicate how very evil the human heart is, and what a hell men would make of this world if God were to withdraw His restraining hand.

But even under the happiest conditions we grow older, and by and by we shall grow old, and the end of life will be reached; for here we have no continuing city. It is well, therefore, to keep our eyes upon the city "which hath foundations", and to remember that we are heirs to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for us.

We heard to-day of the death of two of our members. Some day we, too, shall have gone. Sooner or later they will say it about all of us, if the Lord shall tarry. And it is a good thing for us to know that we have a fortune reserved for us in the hands of the chief Executor of the estate. I have heard of executors frittering away a fortune, so that at last, when the estate was wound up, and the expenses of the lawyers and executors were paid, all the heirs had was the satisfaction of knowing that somebody had desired them to benefit. But this inheritance is "incorruptible, and undefiled", and "fadeth not away"; and the Executor will see to it that the heirs of that estate shall come into possession of their inheritance in due time. The text I have read to you, however, does not speak of the inheritance, but of the heirs.

I.

I ask you, therefore, to think for a few minutes about THAT STATE OF READINESS IN WHICH ALL BELIEVERS STAND, BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

The life of the believer in this world *very often appears to be very precarious*. This world is not kind to us. As we often confess in one of our hymns, This vain world is not a friend to grace, to help us on to God. It never has been; and it is not to us. I looked at the leading article in an English journal, which I had not time to read through, but it began by saying that religion often proves to be very embarrassing, meaning that the man without a conscience, and without any perpendicular relationship, the man who has no fear of God before his eyes, felt a certain liberty to live in a way from which a Christian was restrained. The Christian finds that he is not always welcomed in certain spheres. I suppose that is true. But I would not say that religion is embarrassing to us, but rather that real religion makes the world to be rather an embarrassment. It is inhospitable. There is great significance in the story of the people of God in Genesis, how they were oppressed and held in bondage, and yet they multiplied. And then we read: "in which time Moses was born"—a bad time in which to be born, a day when such a life as this seemed to stand no chance whatever of survival, just when the decree had gone forth to destroy all the male children. But at that inauspicious moment a little life was begun in this world, a new light kindled. Oh, how suggestive! "In which time Moses was born". And that life which seemed to tremble in the balance, which seemed, humanly speaking, to have no chance of survival, did survive, until it was said of him, when an old man of one hundred and twenty years "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated".

Read the closing verses of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. I do not think there is much the Germans could do to us that the saints did not suffer at the hands of the world. And when the tale of all their woes has been told, the inspired writer says, "Of whom the world was not worthy." It is amazing that the children of God should ever attempt to make friends with the world. The world is no friend of yours, my friend: it is no friend of mine, and whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. This world is in opposition to us. We live in an alien realm, as all the saints have done.

And that is not surprising, *because our inheritance is not here*, in spite of all that the modern emphasis would try to teach us, that the function of the Christian religion is to give people a better time in this life. It has never done so heretofore. It has often been the reverse. I believe that the weakness of the modern church is that it is spending all its energy in trying to get the prodigal a better job in the far country, endeavouring to make the far country habitable, and trying to teach men that this world can be converted into a paradise minus the serpent, and minus God. Nothing of the kind! We are not to inherit on this side of Jordan. There were two and a half tribes of those who went through the wilderness, who did not want to go to Canaan: Reuben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were herdsmen. They had cattle, and on what is called "this side Jordan" they saw that the land was very agreeable to them, and they said to Joshua, "We would rather live here. We do not want to go over Jordan". Well, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassehites are a numerous host. There are many people who would like to inherit on this side Jordan. They do not want to go to the Promised Land. They say, "Could I have the good things of this world,

it would be good enough for me." But even if you had the good things of this world, you would outgrow them, and have to leave them behind. Our inheritance is yonder, and while we are here, we are a colony. Our citizenship is yonder, so we must not be surprised if we have no vote here.

I read recently about some very rich people who had surrendered their Canadian citizenship. They got tired of the Canadian income tax, and so they decided to find domicile elsewhere. They went away to a little island, and established residence there, and formed financial corporations where they will "have no income tax to pay." But, of course, for that special advantage they have to forego their citizenship, they have no vote in this country. They would have no right to help kick Mr. Hepburn out, even if they wanted to do so. Perhaps on the natural plane if you gave me a hundred million dollars, I might be willing to surrender that privilege myself. The fact is, we have not much influence in this world. We have not much of a vote here. Generally, when we vote, we lose it anyhow; and people do not pay much attention to what we say. That, of course, is their loss! We talk, and they go on about their business as though we had not spoken. Do you feel chagrined about that? Oh, no; we live in another country, that is where our citizenship and our fortune are. And if they play football with us here, and knock us about, and say all sorts of nasty things about us, and pay no attention to our wise counsel—well, we must endure it, for after all, we belong to another country. The people to whom I have referred may come back to Canada, but they must not stay more than one hundred and eighty-three days, or they would be liable to income tax. It would not be hard to go to the West Indies, Nassau or somewhere else, if one had plenty of money. When Brother Jennings and I drove to Florida a couple of years ago, we crossed the Peace Bridge in the midst of a terrific blizzard, we could not see clearly across the street. The immigration officers looked at us and said, "So you are going to Florida? What in the world are you going there for, to leave such a beautiful climate as this?" Well, what do you want to go to heaven for, and leave Hitler, and Mussolini, and Stalin, and Duplessis—and Hepburn!—behind? I am quite willing to go! I do not find that this climate is so marvellously congenial after all. But we have to be here for a little while. We cannot leave this world when we like, so in the meantime we are held in a state of readiness for something else—we are "kept".

I marvel at it. The wonder of it grows all the time. I wonder however I became a Christian in the first place, and I marvel still more that I have been kept, kept in so many ways. I marvel that I have been kept from doubting the Bible. You say, "It is so worthy of credence." Yes; but many people do not believe it. Many people are so foolish as to become intellectually proud,—proud of I know not what, but they fancy themselves to be superior to the Book! I can find enough of that folly in me to wonder that it did not similarly play the fool. Can you? Sometimes I think I should have made a first class Modernist. I am certain that I should become just such a simpleton had I not been "kept". That is no compliment I pay myself, for a Modernist is seven-eighths of a simpleton. But we have been "kept": "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

If you believe the Bible with all your heart, it is no credit to you. It is only because you are an heir of glory, and God, in His sovereign mercy, not only brought you to Himself, but He has "kept" you. And those who know most of the Book are most conscious of that fact: that it is the voice of God, and that it is because it is the voice of God, and because He keeps us, we still treasure this fountain of wisdom.

If you could break yourself up into pieces, if you could resolve your personality into its elements, and discover of what ingredients you are composed—I read recently of what the human body is composed, the chemical substance, and when it was analysed, it was worth, I think, at the market value, about four cents—if we could similarly analyse our moral qualities, we should discover within us so many tendencies that would lead us away from God that we should marvel the more that we have been kept, not only believing, but kept, in some measure, practicing the religion of Christ. These tempers of ours! These natural dispositions! What miserable creatures we should be, if these native evils had not been subdued by the grace of God, and if we had not been kept by the power of God. But we have been the subject of His gracious power in a thousand ways. We could talk about that for a month, but I throw you back upon your own experience, that you may refresh your memory, and find inspiration for your faith in such a review. How marvellously the power of God has kept us in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation!

This is a bad night. I could not get my car into my drive when I went home at dinner time. I had to leave it outside. How icy! I said to myself, "I fear we shall not have many to-night." We are reduced in numbers only a little; but why are you here? Not because you felt you *must* come. Some did not come. But I rather expect that you came because you wanted to come. But why did you want to come? Because God has kept you wanting. It is because His gracious power has constrained us that our hearts are toward Him, and to the remembrance of Him: by the power of God we are kept.

Someone says, "But it is through faith!" Oh, yes; but why do you believe? It is God's gift in this sense, that He enlightened your mind, and then disclosed Himself to your view, and there was nothing left for you to do but trust Him. Even faith is the gift of God. Why have you faith when someone else has not? Only because God has kept you close to Himself, and would not let you go. In this way He kept you believing.

I have sometimes enquired of some women who have come to see me, "Is your husband living?" "I do not know. He went away, and I have not heard from him in many years. I do not know whether he is living or not." Oh, if our Beloved had withdrawn Himself from us, we should have ceased to believe in Him. We could not long believe in an absentee Christ. It is because He loved us with a love that would not let us go that we have been "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready," in readiness for something. "Ready"?

I called a store the other day, and asked them if they had a certain article in stock. They said, "We could get it for you, but we have not got it in stock." I said, "Never mind; I wanted it to-day." They had not what I wanted "ready". But our text tells us of something that is kept in a state of constant readiness. The saints

are preserved, kept in a state of readiness. They are ready.

Sometimes we hardly know where we are ourselves. A friend of mine told me once that he was in the habit of taking a holiday occasionally in Algonquin Park. And he said, "After I have been there a week or two, I almost forget my own name." Sometimes we are so perplexed that we hardly know where we are. Have you ever been like that, like someone on the wide heaving sea, without chart or compass? We may be lost to ourselves; but not to Him. He knows where we are. And these verses tell us that His saints are always kept in readiness. They are never lost to Him. He never loses sight of us. He knows our whereabouts. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

II.

Now that is where you are, if you are a believer. Ready for something. What for? FOR A FUTURE REVELATION. "Ready to be revealed."

Every true Christian lives a hidden life. We are princes *incognito*; sometimes pretty shabbily attired; sometimes we really do not look the part. But that is what we are. Jewels, if you like, in the rough—very rough, indeed: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." I say that believers live a hidden life: They are hidden *from the world*. The world does not know them, does not recognize them, does not acknowledge them. It has always been so. God's saints have had to travel *incognito*, hidden from the world. When the Prince of Glory Himself came to this earth, they did not recognize Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"; "He was in the world, and the word was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. It never recognized Him as its Creator, as its King. No wonder, then, if we are sometimes appraised as though—well, just as that German writer said: "Multiply nothing by a million, and you still have nothing!" Was not that clever? Don't you feel big? A million times nobody means nobody, or five or fifty millions, do not make any difference. Nobody knows who you are, or what you are. They pass you by on the street, meet you in your place of business, perhaps live in the same house with you, but never recognize that you are an heir of glory.

Believers are concealed, hidden from the world, and *hidden from each other*. What a marvellous thing human personality is after all! How impossible it is for any of us to know each other! Nobody knows the possibilities of a single human soul, the potentialities wrapped up in one human life. Human personality is a mystery at the very best. How much does the human brain weigh?—I forget. Only so many ounces! I read that somebody said that the skyscrapers of New York, and the great bridges, and the great ships were all produced by so many ounces of cerebral matter! Analyse it as you like, you cannot make out how so many things can come from apparently nothing. We think of some who have been evil men. One stands in awe as he thinks of the potentialities of one life,—Napoleon, for instance. In our day we have had such men in a lesser degree. We do not know what they are—yet. But on the other hand, what gracious men there have been! We have had a glimpse from the outside, and they showed what God's saints can do. I have met a few of them.

I once met John G. Paton. I was his host for one glori-

ous day. I drove him one summer afternoon out into the country; had time for a long talk with him. He was a man of seventy-seven then, I think. His work in the New Hebrides had been supported by the Australian Presbyterians; then their funds had been reduced, and they had made a cut in their appropriations, and he was notified that he would have to curtail his work, and give up some of his native workers. He borrowed, on his own security, five thousand pounds, to carry on his work, and then at seventy-seven started out around the world to earn enough to pay it back again. What a marvellous man he was! What an incarnation of the gospel! The very spirit of Christ radiated from him, it seemed to me. I called for him at a home, to take him to the station. As he left the house, he said to his hostess, dropping into his Scotch, "The Lord reward ye. I canna'." What an honour to meet one of heaven's noblemen! I took him out to a country appointment. I was pastor of both a Baptist Church and a Presbyterian Church that summer. That was how he happened to be my guest. I took him to the Presbyterian Church, and there he gave his address, and they took a collection—a very small one—for that great apostle of the New Hebrides. When we started for home again, he turned to me and said, "Well, I thank the Lord for that collection. I do not know whether those who are His children deserve much thanks." They did not know him. He had passed among men, one of God's heroes, unrecognized.

We do not know much about each other. There may not be much that is heroic about us, but we live a hidden life: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." That is why we are here, and that is how He keeps us. Your life is hid.

Sometimes we can hardly recognize that there is anything of value in ourselves, for we are hidden from ourselves. Then we have to cry out as did the apostle Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We feel that we are not at all worthy even to breathe His name, nor are we, nor should we be, but by His grace. And yet that is the wonder of it. There is something in you; if you are a Christian, that is of infinite worth. Read what it says later about the trial of your faith. You are likened to gold tried in the fire. There is a divine quality in every Christian, something that makes us very precious to the Lord. There is a scripture which says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." All His saints are precious. A diamond is precious when it is just taken from the ground, in all its roughness, in its native state. But after the lapidary's labour has been expended upon it, and the last facet is cut, and it is now fitted and ready for its setting in the crown of a king—ah, it is still more valuable. And when God has done His work with us, when the discipline of life is ended, this jewel that has been so carefully kept and preserved, is very precious. Or, change the figure, there is a little babe. You could not buy it for millions. No; but the child grows, and father and mother invest all their wealth of affection in that child, and not only their affection, but their money. No expense is spared, and by and by, perhaps, that son turns out to be a man of parts, a brilliant young man, ready to engage in his life's work. I can almost imagine his father and mother saying, "Is that our baby boy?" He was worth something in the beginning, but after all the years of anxiety and train-

ing, now that he has turned out so well, how proud they are of him! We are the children of a rich Father, and we shall have angels for our servants some day, and we are to possess a vast estate. We are the children of a King; and when He has finished His work in you and me, we are made so ready for heaven that He will not be ashamed to present us to His Father with exceeding joy, we shall be of some real value to the Lord Jesus, then.

"Ready to be revealed"! You may occasionally have had a foregleam of that revelation that is to come in the future. You have seen flashes of it, and you have said of this one and that one: "Really, I did not believe that it was in him. I never dreamed that he could become such a man. But there he is." What a surprise we shall be to each other when we get to heaven!

Were you ever in the Tower of London? Did you ever see the crown jewels there on exhibition? During the hours when the Tower is open, there are always people around. The Tower is a dismal and depressing old place. In one room there is a large glass case containing all the crown jewels. And there are always some men about watching. They wear no uniforms, but they are always around, indistinguishable from others who are there to view the jewels. But it would be folly for a thief to try to steal them. They are carefully "kept." And when the day of coronation came, not one of the crown jewels was missing. They were "ready to be revealed" on that great coronation day, and they were all brought out into the public view, not one missing. The jewels had been "kept" for that day. The jewels were stolen once, but they were soon recovered, and no one has ever dared lay hands on them again. That is an illustration of this text: "ready to be revealed." Let me now finish the quotation of a few moments ago: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

That is a salvation worth while, is it not?

III.

I must close with one other word. We dare not miss this: Listen: "Ready to be revealed"—when? "AT THE LAST TIME." When Christ shall come again? Yes; but that is not what this says. That will be true, for when Christ, Who is our Life, shall be manifested, we also shall be manifested with Him in glory. And when He comes, He will come to be glorified in His saints. What? When He comes, you and I are going to contribute something to His glory. Before an assembled universe, when He comes, He will be glorified in His saints. We shall be ready to be revealed, and the glory which He has given us will make us ready to be manifested with Him.

We have borne scorn here, at least a little, have we not? We ought to thank God we live in a day when it costs something to be a Christian. But the day will come when we shall be revealed, so if they say all manner of evil against you falsely, if the day should come when they should say of us, as they did of the saints of old, "Away with them; they are not fit to live"—even so, we shall be kept for the day of revelation; and in that day He will not be ashamed to call us brethren.

I do not know how you feel, but I at least want to live for that day. I am sure the majority of you do, too.

I do not want to lose the perspective of that day of glorious revelation and manifestation. And the comfort of it is here: "Ready to be revealed", not intermediately, but "at the last time," whenever that is. He said: "They shall be mine, . . . in that day when I make up my jewels". So when that day of revelation comes, *we shall have survived all the trials of life*. Sometimes you fear you cannot get through! You will. Sometimes we are like people on a stormy sea: we have never passed this way before, and we imagine that the poor old tub is going down this time. But it does not. And in spite of all your trials, you will be kept by the power of God, "ready to be revealed in the last time." "But I have had so many trials, and this thing that I am facing to-morrow is the worst of all!" So be it. Sometimes I am amused at the paper of my friend, Dr. Norris. I rather enjoy it, for in it nearly every day is reported as "the greatest day in the history of"—anything! Well, it is far better to write your blessings in the present tense than in the past. Sometimes we are disposed to talk about the greatest trial we ever had. I have heard preachers thus complain. But we shall survive, because we are "ready to be revealed at the last time."

And so, dear friends, it means that *we shall survive all our enemies*. We survive some of them even in this life. But anyway, we shall outlive all the enmity of men: "ready to be revealed at the last time". All our adversaries! "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death". Very well, come death—what then? The believer will be able to cry: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." But thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Ready to be revealed at the last time." We shall have a good time some day. I hope you will not break your ankle going home to-night. But never mind what comes now, or by and by, say, "Hallelujah! I am kept by the power of God, ready to be revealed in the last time." And in that day of glorious revelation we shall share the glory of the King Himself.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou art so good to us. We thank Thee for this assurance of Thy gracious word. Send us away this inclement night with a little more gladness in our hearts, with a firmer faith. If it be night time with any of us here this evening, give us a song in the night, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

THE PLOT THAT FAILED

(Continued from page 2)

was that "False doctrine leads directly to loose living," as he puts it. That is exactly what some parts of this book substantiate. It is not only false doctrine that the Church needs to watch, it is the *life* it fosters and permits. Theatre-going, card-playing, gambling, dancing, with all that these things mean of unhallowed association. We often say in our English way, "Show me a man's friends and I will tell you what he is."

(ii.) This book further affords an example of the *separating power* of a gospel ministry. There is no need for anything like an inquisition. A gospel ministry will very soon separate the "precious from the vile." It begins very mildly.

"We do not exactly like this man."

"He does not appeal to us."

"We cannot get our children to look at him."

"He is altogether too narrow."

"He would sweep us into heaven before we get there."

So they speak and so the separation begins and it is not

only the definitely worldly that are thus affected, but very often those who have been reckoned among the spiritually minded. It is not only a case of "the precious and the vile," but sometimes of "joints and marrow." I have seen in my own experience the deficiencies of apparently spiritual people often discovered by a gospel ministry; dissatisfaction appears where it would be thought there would be utmost approval.

(iii.) Moreover this book is an example of the quickening and rallying power of a gospel ministry. Put the gospel in right hands and there is nothing like it to secure life, union, sacrifice and splendid endeavour. So Dr. Shields has found it to the encouragement and comfort of tens of thousands throughout the evangelical world. The Church renewal of Jarvis Street, Toronto, is a glorious evidence that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not only for the individual, but for the Church.

I know some people will say, "Oh, it is the personality of Dr. Shields that did it." But others say, "There is that in Dr. Shields that would ruin any Church." I have heard it said. But the truth cannot run two ways at one time. The fact is that in Jarvis Street a gospel ministry through Dr. Shields has wrought great and mighty things, a gospel ministry has been marvellously vindicated, and this book is the story of its glorious vindication. In my judgment, every minister should read it, whether he agrees with it or not.

DR. NORRIS' BOOK AND "THE PLOT THAT FAILED"

Both these books tell the story of battles for the Book, of extended wars fought for the right to maintain an evangelical testimony in a free pulpit. Dr. Norris' book tells the inside story of his battle in First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, and Temple Baptist Church, Detroit; and "The Plot That Failed" tells of a similar conflict in Jarvis Street. We still have a few volumes of Dr. Norris' book on hand, which may be obtained for 50c, plus 7c postage. "The Plot that Failed" is bound in cloth, with gilt letters, and is practically given away for \$1.00. Every preacher should read both these books. Read what Rev. Henry Oakley of London, England, says of "The Plot that Failed", in a review contained in this issue.

Send your order at once.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

KAPUSKASING—*Rev. Robt. Brackstone*. In common with all the new causes in the North, Kapuskasing has experienced the truth of the Scripture that they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But the blessing of the Lord has rested upon His word. We quote the following from Pastor R. Brackstone's letter:

"The Thursday night prayer and Bible study services are increasing in attendance and spiritual fervor. Our hearts rejoice to witness the young Christians faithfully attending the services, and loyally standing for the Truth. Last Sunday evening two teen age girls desired to become Christians. Our Sunday services average the same in attendance. Special visitation effort is being carried out. The Paper Mill here has reduced its working week, and we trust that our work will not thus be financially hampered. In spite of difficulties, we are pressing on with unabated zeal. Work hard and trust God is the best programme for pioneer work. We rejoice in the blessing visiting other fields. May there soon be a harvest of souls in every field!"

AMONG OUR INDIAN BROTHERN—*Pastor Melchie Henry*, Pastor of the Medina Church, reports a good Church and Sunday School attendance. He tells of the fruits of one Sunday's work in the following words: "At the close of yesterday's service an invitation was given, and one young man who had backslidden came forward to renew his covenant and to be restored back into fellowship."

"On the way back home yesterday it was my joy to lead to the Lord Jesus Christ, a man seventy-four years of age, who is confined to bed due to injury received from an accident. He promised if the Lord raises him up he will be baptized and come into our fellowship. Thank God 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' Continue to pray for us."

GOOD NEWS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA—The many friends in Ontario of Rev. W. J. Thomson, pastor of Dunbar Heights Baptist Church, Vancouver, and President of the British Columbia Convention, will be glad to have the following good news which we reprint from the "Baptist Bulletin".

"The latest word from our beloved president is that he is still in the sunny (?) south, at 703 Bronson, Los Angeles. For some time he has been suffering from a cold, but is now on the way to recovery from that. He has had the pleasure of meeting old friends and renewing old acquaintances, and while he has not mentioned any particular date, he is expected home early in March."

Readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS will join in wishing Mr. Thomson a complete recovery from his long illness.

REV. ARTHUR LEE IN FRENCH WEST AFRICA—Many of our churches know Rev. Arthur Lee, both for his work as a Missionary and as a Pastor at Mount Albert Church. For the last three years Mr. Lee has been labouring among the native tribes in French West Africa, and expects to return home next May by way of airplane over the Sahara desert to Algiers and thence to France and England. Writing last month Mr. Lee tells of his immediate work in visiting the tribes living along the banks of the great Niger River.

"Within a week or so I expect to go out on trek again for two or three weeks, this time going down the river. I am anxious to make at least two more before we come home. Two Sundays ago I had the joy of baptizing a faithful one, and also of seeing another boldly confess Christ, and to see how he is taking over the teaching on the compound and in one of the villages is encouraging."

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2. First Quarter. Lesson 10. March 6th, 1938.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Lesson Text: John 10.

Golden Text: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."—John 10:11.

I. Christ the Door of the Fold—verses 1-10.

Our Lord frequently taught sublime truths by means of parables (Matt. 13:18, 34; John 15:1). Before setting forth the teaching of this chapter, teachers might discuss the ways of sheep and shepherds. Sheep are defenceless, dependent, and if lost, unable to find the way back. The shepherd must guide, guard, feed and heal the sheep. In Palestine, the shepherds always go before their flocks.

Christ is the only true Shepherd of the sheep of God. The Pharisees who claimed to be God's representatives, and all the other self-styled leaders, were not true shepherds. The rightful owner of the fold may enter by the front door, his authority acknowledged by the porter and by the sheep. Those who attempt to enter by breaking down barriers are false shepherds. Rival leaders had claimed the power to bring the national hopes of Israel to fulfilment, but Christ alone had received the commission from God to save men.

Christ is the only way of access into the Father's fold (Eph. 2:18). He is the door for the sheep, and all who desire to come to the Father must come through Him; He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6; Heb. 10:19, 20).

Those who come to God through Him will find safety, freedom and nourishment. False shepherds would bring harm and destruction to the sheep, but Christ came that they might have life; not merely deliverance from death, but life which is abounding and full, completely satisfying the longings of the human heart.

II. Christ the Shepherd of the Sheep—verses 11-18.

The good shepherd loves his sheep so much that he would be willing to lay down his life, if necessary, that the sheep may be saved from their enemies. He would scorn to run from danger, but faces and overpowers the foe, even though

he himself must die. Christ is our Good Shepherd (Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4).

How helpless are men when attacked by the forces of sin! Like sheep, we have all gone astray (Isa. 53:6), exposing ourselves to the power of Satan who would fain destroy us (1 Pet. 5:8). Christ came to frustrate the works of the Evil One (1 John 3:8), but in so doing, died the death which was due to men (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6), for only by death could He destroy the one who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14).

Many priests of Israel had been as faithless shepherds, caring for themselves, but not for the sheep (Ezek. 34:2-6; Jer. 23:1-4). They served for reward (1 Pet. 5:2), not for love. They fed themselves at the expense of the sheep (Jude 12), not in the least concerned that the sheep wandered from the fold, hungry and helpless, a prey to every foe (Zech. 11:17).

Christ the Good Shepherd has not only perfect love, but He also has perfect knowledge. To a stranger the sheep may all look alike, but the owner of the sheep can distinguish each one from his fellows. The Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Tim. 2:19). The sheep, on their part, will recognize their shepherd; his voice they will hear and obey (1 John 4:6; 5:20).

The fellowship between Christ and His own is like that which exists between Christ and God. It is God's will that perfect unity such as characterizes the Godhead shall ultimately be made manifest in the body of Christ (John 17:21), not an external, material, formal union, but an internal, spiritual, living union. There shall be but one fold, and one Shepherd. The first step toward this union was the gathering together of Jew and Gentile (Isa. 56:3; Eph. 2:14). In Christ all believers become one, for all are baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:5; Rom. 12:5).

The Good Shepherd was sovereign in death, as in life. He gave His life for the helpless sheep (Rom. 8:3; 5:6) in voluntary self-sacrifice (John 2:19; 19:30; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25) at a time and in a manner which He chose. The offering of the Son of God was well-pleasing to His Father (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 10:7); it was the Father's commandment that He should thus die (John 14:31; 1 Pet. 1:19, 20).

III. Christ the Giver of Eternal Life—verses 19-30.

The Jews were in doubt as to Christ; they were unable to understand the mystery of His Person, and desired Him to make a statement concerning Himself. There was no need for them to be in doubt; Christ had already declared Himself. They could not understand His words because they would not. They were unwilling to accept the miracles of Christ as works performed through the power of God. Their hearts were not tuned to the message of God because they did not belong to Him (John 8:43, 47; 18:37; 1 John 4:6).

They who are Christ's recognize His truth and obey His word. They follow His guidance, trusting Him completely. In answer to their faith, He gives them life everlasting, and they are safe in Him forever (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:37). God has given them as a sacred trust to His Son (John 17:2, 12), a trust which will be faithfully discharged. They become one with Him (1 Cor. 6:17), as He is one with God.

IV. Christ the Son of God—verses 31-42.

The doctrine of the Deity of Christ is a stumbling-block among the Jews to-day, even as it was in the time of our Lord. They find it difficult to understand that the Old Testament teaching of the unity of God (Deut. 6:4) does not preclude the truth that Christ, though truly man, was also truly God. Christ showed them that even their own law mentioned the union between God and man when it referred to the judges of Israel as "gods" and "children of the most High" (Psa. 82:6). If those to whom the message of God was sent were called gods, it was unreasonable to speak of the Messenger of God as a blasphemer.

Christ had been sanctified, set apart and consecrated to His ministry (Heb. 7:28), even as the earthly priests had been sanctified for the service of the tabernacle (Lev. 8). God set His seal upon the mission of Christ from the very beginning by words of approval (Matt. 3:17) and by deeds of power.