

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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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ABOUT THOSE WHOM WE HAVE LOVED LONG SINCE, BUT LOST AWHILE

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 17th, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."
—I. Corinthians 15:20.

The whole gospel of redemption is epitomized in the third and fourth verses of this chapter: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." There is not one of us who did not need Christ to die for his sins; for we are all sinners, and "without shedding of blood there is no remission". But as we needed Him to die for our offences, it was necessary also that He should rise again for our justification. The whole work of redemption is accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ, our Substitute and Representative.

I would not say anything this evening that would lead anyone to presume upon the mercy of God by postponing his or her reception of Christ to some more convenient day: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." This Easter season can bring no message of comfort to anyone who does not receive the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and trust Him wholly as his Redeemer and Lord. I would especially speak this evening of the bearing of these great matters upon the life that is to come: for we cannot afford to be indifferent to the great fact that though we are here to-day, we shall not always be here. We may be summoned hence any day or any hour. Therefore we ought, through the appropriation of the righteousness of Christ, and the cleansing efficacy of His blood, by faith, to be prepared to stand before God.

And yet I would offer this word of encouragement to you who think of some who have passed beyond this terrestrial sphere, and concerning whose spiritual well-being you may have some question.

I have known a good many in this life from whose lips I never heard any clear confession of faith in Christ, and

yet in respect to whom I have often wondered whether he or she were not a disciple of Jesus secretly. I remember an authentic story which had its scene in this city. There was a minister of the Anglican communion, a very godly man, a sound evangelical, who believed in the gospel with all his heart, and preached it faithfully as long as he lived. He had a family of children, most of whom were avowed Christians. But there was one son who was something like the rich young ruler in respect to his outward character, an admirable young man, with whose outward life at least it was difficult for anyone to find fault. He had always been respectful to the approaches of his father and mother, but he had never definitely avowed his faith in Christ.

Then came the war, and he enlisted and went overseas without making any profession of faith in Christ. His father and mother prayed for him daily, beseeching God to save his soul, and, if possible, to spare him to return to them. They received frequent letters from him, but no assurance was given them that he had received Christ. But at last a letter came, that told them this story.

This young man was a member of an artillery company. He and his company were fording a river, and the enemy got their range. Presently, as they were in mid-stream, a hail of metal fell about them. It did not seem possible that any living thing could survive—but this young man did. He came through, and at the earliest moment afterward he wrote to his parents saying, "I never expected to live to write this letter, but as death was falling all about me, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all that you had ever taught me of Christ the Saviour flashed before my mind's eye. I saw that He was the Lamb of God, and in a moment I looked—and there came into my heart the assurance that

my sins were forgiven for His name's sake, that I was everlastingly saved. I never expected to be able to tell you, but vowed that if the Lord would see me through, my first letter should tell the story of my salvation."

If that young man had not lived to tell the tale, his father and mother would always have wondered whether he did really trust in Christ; and perhaps it might be one of the surprises of that father across the river to meet with the son who then had preceded him.

So may it be with some here. I do not know whether I have told you the story of an anonymous letter I received from Ireland, from a woman who said, "There is someone in Toronto who, when she has read her copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, mails it to me. Then I read it and pass it on to a friend. That woman has a son in the hospital in Belfast, who would not listen to any religious conversation. It was evident that he did not want to be addressed personally on the matter of salvation. My friend, his mother, adopted the expedient of taking THE GOSPEL WITNESS, sitting at his bedside, and reading the sermon aloud.

"One of the sermons she read to him was that on the text, 'There were also with him other little ships.' He was ill for a long time, but had said nothing about his hope in Christ until a short time before he closed his eyes in death. Then he turned toward his mother and said, 'Mother, do not mourn for me. I am just one of the "other little ships" for whom the Lord Jesus has stilled the storm.' That mother, holding on to that confession, believed that her boy did really look and live."

I could not answer the letter: it was anonymous. When I was in Belfast about four years ago, one night there was a great crowd and a woman came up at the close of the service into one of the ante-rooms and asked to see me. She was robed in black, in deep mourning as some are still accustomed to wear in the Old Land. She gripped my hand, and the tears rolled down her cheek as she said, "I have long wanted to meet you, sir, and thank you for a message which I believe the Lord used to lead my son from death into life." I said, "Tell me about it." She repeated the story, and I said, "You are the woman? A friend of yours advised me of that anonymously. I too will hope that your son was one of the 'other little ships' that at last was brought into the desired haven."

It may be, dear friends, that some of our loved ones who were reticent, who did not make confession of Christ, in the last hour looked and lived. How gloriously simple it is! What a miracle of grace that our gracious God has made it possible for a poor sinner just to look, and let his soul go out to the Saviour; and thus receive everlasting life! Do not presume, however, nor leave anyone in doubt. I beseech you to receive the Lord Jesus now, and then let us be bold in our acknowledgment of Christ, and look to Him as the One Who was our Representative, the Federal Head of a new race, Who so identified Himself with our humanity that He lived a complete human experience, was born as we are born, lived as we must live, died as we must die, and was raised again as our text says, "the Firstfruits of them that slept". Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

You whose hearts are over yonder—and there is a sense in which that applies to most of us—cannot afford to be indifferent to the fate of those who have fallen asleep. So then to my exposition.

I.

THE FIGURE EMPLOYED IN THE TEXT IN RESPECT TO THOSE WHOM WE SPEAK OF AS DEAD, WHO ARE SAID HERE TO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP, APPLIES TO THE BODY, AND TO THE BODY ONLY. This chapter treats of the resurrection of the body. When it speaks of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, it means that their bodies have thus fallen asleep. You remember how our Lord said of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples thought that He spoke of "taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." When He spoke of sleep, He meant the sleep of the body, the death of the body, the severance of the tie which binds the spirit to the body. The body sleeps, that is all.

Nor can we be indifferent even to that fact, for we must all experience that sleep by and by if the Lord should tarry. The Apostle Peter said, "Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Peter did not expect to live to see the second coming of Christ. He knew that he would have to put off this tabernacle, that he was going to die as to his body. The Apostle Paul was assured of the same thing, for he said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." It is not true that the New Testament saints believed Jesus Christ would return at any moment. The entire teaching of the New Testament is absolutely to the contrary. Peter knew that he would die; Paul knew he would die; so did other of the saints know they would die, that they would put off this tabernacle, that they would fall asleep as to their bodies, and that the earthly house of their tabernacle would be dissolved.

But the souls of those whose bodies sleep in death until the resurrection, are not asleep. There is no scriptural warrant whatsoever for that strange doctrine of soul-sleep, that the soul sleeps with the body until the resurrection of the dead. The Scripture teaches the opposite. For example; we have in the New Testament a record of Moses and Elijah appearing on the mount of transfiguration when Jesus Christ went up to the mount with Peter, James, and John. Moses had died, and was buried. The Lord Himself, may I reverently say, was the undertaker:

"The angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there."

He died and was buried. Elijah went home to heaven in a chariot of fire, and carried his body with him. Doubtless it passed through some form of change—with that, we need not concern ourselves now. The point I make is that when Jesus Christ went up to the mount, there appeared unto Him Moses and Elijah, and they talked with Him. They were in a state of consciousness; and Elijah was not Moses: Moses was not Elijah.

Our Lord, Who is Himself the supreme revelation of truth, sketched the picture of the rich man and Lazarus. It is a pre-resurrection scene because the rich man still had several brethren alive upon the earth. They had not yet died nor had their bodies returned to dust. He lifted up his eyes "being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Our Lord put words into the mouth of the man who had died in his sin. Somehow, whatever it was, he was in a state of torment; he was conscious, and was permitted to see Lazarus. He recognized him, as he did Abraham.

You have there three personalities: Abraham, who spoke to Dives; Dives, who spoke to Abraham; and Lazarus who was recognized by both Dives and Abraham—and Abraham's word that Lazarus was even then in possession and enjoyment of his "good things". Of such little importance was the poor stricken body of Lazarus, that there is not a word in the record about his funeral: "It came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried."

You have the cases of these five specifically mentioned in the New Testament as living in a state of consciousness in the realms beyond: four of them in bliss, one in torment.

Then further you will remember that after our Lord dismissed His Spirit, He was raised again, but not until the third day. We do not know very much about the intermediate state, but I think there is scriptural warrant for believing that those who died in faith in the Old Testament dispensation and before the supreme Sacrifice for their atonement had been offered, were in some state which was different from that into which believers enter at death to-day. When our Lord died, He went and preached to the spirits in prison, and when He was raised again we are told that He led a multitude of captives captive, and received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also. Thenceforth believers are said to enter into the presence of Christ at death: "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better"; "To be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

That is the clear teaching of Scripture; and I cannot conceive of a man like the Apostle Paul, who lived so strenuously, so abundantly, who had learned the secret of living, and enjoyed every minute of life even when he was most distressed—I cannot imagine Paul's wanting to be done with it all and to go away to bed somewhere and sleep until the resurrection. Yet he did, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." He wanted to go for his own sake, because he had had a glimpse of paradise; he had seen something of the ineffable glory of it all, and was impatient to be gone, and to be with Christ; but he said, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He was willing to remain and do his day's work, and to await God's time of translation. But with that glorious view he described the passage of the soul from this life to the other as an entrance into a larger and richer and fuller life.

We need not sorrow for those who sleep in Christ. They need no sympathy from us. They have gone into a larger and fuller life than it was possible for them ever to know amid the limitations and circumscriptions of the life below.

The resurrection of the body is not necessary to identification and recognition beyond. If that were so, friends departed in Christ would not know each other until they were re clothed, until this mortal should have put on immortality. Sometimes we think of those who have left us, and we say, "They will have met So-and-So by this time. They will have entered into fellowship with others of our loved and lost, redeemed by blood who are now in the presence of God."

I was at the cemetery this afternoon, and someone called me by name and told me she was a relative of Mrs. Lillie, one of our glorified saints whom many of

you remember. What a lovely soul she was! How we missed her when she left us: how we miss her still! I never think of her as being dead. I know that she is not. I know that she has gone to a more abundant life beyond. I believe we have scriptural ground for believing that the redeemed spirits of the departed, all of them with Christ, will know each other there even this side of the resurrection, before they are clothed with resurrection bodies.

How do I know? I go back to the cases I have cited. Moses knew Elias, and Elias knew Moses. I do not suppose for a moment that when they came down to the mount of transfiguration it was necessary for the Lord to say, "Elias, this is Moses; Moses, this is Elias." They had met each other, and had had fellowship with each other in the life beyond for a long, long time. I was going to say for years, but yonder there is no time. When Dives spoke of Lazarus, it was not necessary for him to say to Abraham, "I mean that man." He knew who Lazarus was.

It is quite possible to recognize personalities apart from the physical form in which they appear. I have met people after years of separation whom I knew with some degree of intimacy years before, people who were young when I last saw them. I have met them later when grown to maturity, with families perhaps. I have had them come to me and say, "You do not know me?" For a moment I have been puzzled, but have said, "Now wait a minute. Do not tell me who you are. Talk to me for a minute or two." I have listened, then frequently have said, "Let me have another handshake: I know who you are now." There is something there that distinguishes the ego, the personality, from all others.

I am sure I am within the mark when I say that I have known people who could not possibly disguise themselves from me. I care not how they should dress, or what paint and powder they may assume: give me five minutes' conversation with them, and I should know them. The Lord never made any two of us alike. A friend told me that he said to a certain preacher, rather an eccentric man, "Every time I think of you I thank God for you—and then I take time to thank Him that there is only one of you!" That is quite reasonable. Ours is a God of infinite variety. Our faces are as varied as our circumstances, and He Who never made two blades of grass exactly alike, or two flowers exactly similar, has saved us from monotony by giving us different faces—and I suppose it is a fact that one of a sort is all the world could stand! Even the famous quintuplets are all different, different in form, different in disposition, different in mental capacity, different in that which is inseparable from each, the personality that distinguishes and differentiates the one from all others.

That thing, the soul of a man, persists beyond the grave, and quite apart from the resurrection, we shall be able to identify each other there. I find that a great comfort, for if the Lord should call me some day before His coming, as He may, I should not like to think I should have to wait for the resurrection before I could identify the friends who have gone before me. And if some of you should come afterward, I should not like to think we should not know each other. We shall know each other yonder quite apart from the resurrection. Personality persists in the life that is beyond.

But *what are the redeemed doing?* Would you like to

know what engages the thought and energies of those who have gone before? Sometimes we find a man who has been conspicuously useful in the service of the Lord, and he is cut off in his prime, a man like Spurgeon, the greatest of all preachers, whose life was terminated at fifty-eight. Why was he taken? Why is it that some of the maturest and most Christlike people are taken off before they have reached the late evening time? We know that the angels exercise a ministry toward the redeemed—but who are the angels? Not those who have been washed in the blood—"Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." They are sent forth to "minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." That is true, and yet I think we may well conclude from the teaching of Scripture that the spirits of the redeemed even now, while their bodies slumber in the dust, are not confined to a state of inactivity.

Have you ever noticed in the last book of the Bible the exchanges between John and the angel who showed him these things: "He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." And again in the twenty-second chapter: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Here we are told that the angel who was the medium of divine communication, who was John's guide, as he witnessed these stupendous events which are to mark the consummation of the age, said, "I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

Who was he? He was anonymous, but he was of John's brethren. He belonged to the prophets. Perhaps it was a Jeremiah, a Daniel, someone who had attained to a higher spiritual stature by the grace of God, and who now in that realm beyond was commissioned to exercise this great ministry. But said he, "I am not to be worshipped. I am only one of yourselves who keep the sayings of this book."

Spurgeon once said, speaking to a great company of ministers, "Brethren, shall we some day have a pulpit amid the spheres? Shall we have voices so strengthened as to be able to reach attentive constellations? Shall we be the messengers of the God of grace to unfallen worlds that will be wonderstruck when they hear the story of redeeming love? I think so, for it is written that 'now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' This planet, selected as the theatre in which God would display His greatest glory, makes His redeemed people to be His messengers and witnesses to an attentive universe, even to angels and principalities and powers, to spiritual intelligences innumerable—to these in God's good time the whole church of the redeemed shall minister to the praise of the glory of His grace."

What a high vocation is ours! Dry your eyes, mourning friends. It may be that the one whose presence you miss has been translated to a higher, a larger, a more glorious service, not being inactive, but like this angel of the Revelation, made by God's grace a witness to Him, and to His glory in heavenly places.

I think we have Scripture for believing that even now, this side of the resurrection, the departed saints exercise just such high and holy ministries.

II.

Notwithstanding, JESUS CHRIST, BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD, WAS THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT. The revelation of God in Christ is to the effect that God will not be defeated in His world. The salvation provided for us in Christ, as I have told you a thousand times, is not for part of a man: it is for the whole man. It is for his spirit, that part of his being in which God peculiarly dwells. It is for his soul, or mind, all the powers of the mind with which God has endowed His human creatures. Christ came that these might be redeemed and sublimed to higher and holier uses in this life and in the life beyond. And even our bodies—it is no accident that our lot was cast in a material world, and that He gave us these physical bodies. It was through the body sin entered. Sin came in by the basement door, and the whole temple was destroyed. But Jesus Christ came to redeem it all, that this mortal might put on immortality, and this corruptible might put on incorruption; "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

That is the gospel. Therefore did Jesus Christ wrap Himself with human flesh and become Deity Incarnate, God manifest in the flesh. He died as a man in the flesh, and was raised again in some mysterious sense in the same body, and yet a body that was different. And in due time He departed, carrying that spiritual body with Him, which He said had flesh and bone, and which could be handled. While in that body, He ate a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb. I do not understand that. There are many things I do not understand which I believe profoundly on the basis of what I do understand of the Word of God. With that human body, He went back to God, and carried a part of this material world with Him, purified, holy as God is holy, into the presence of God, a pledge and prophecy of His ultimate victory over sin, death, and the grave.

If He is the Firstfruits, *some day we shall have bodies something like His* because the firstfruits of the harvest do not greatly differ from that which follows. The resurrection of Christ is a type, a symbol, a prophecy, a promise of the resurrection of the believer. Some day these redeemed spirits will take their bodies again—"Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It is written, "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body"—or, the body of our humiliation, if you like; though they are vile enough sometimes—"that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

So then the promise is that those who have gone before, and we who must follow after, if we are redeemed

by blood, shall have glorified bodies, bodies like unto the body of Jesus Christ.

Will you follow me a moment? The body in which Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection was, in some respects, different from the body in which they had seen Him before. It was the same in identity, for it was not possible for the Holy One to see corruption. And that holy body of His, that was ever separate from sin, was never allowed to dissolve into dust. It never became a prey to the worm: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." The body of Jesus Christ did never see corruption, but it was raised a spiritual body. He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." In the Bible we read, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." I will not be dogmatic, but I think we may well, without danger of detraction from any truth of the Scripture, at least indulge the hope—if you like, the fancy—without being oracular about it, that the spiritual body will be animated by spirit, not by blood. All our trouble is in the blood, so the doctors tell us. "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

The blood is the seat of corruption generally, if not always; and when Jesus Christ died on the cross I believe there flowed from His five wounds the last drop of His blood. He laid down His life, all of it, that He might take it again. When He "shewed himself alive" after His resurrection He had flesh, and He had bone, but no blood. Was it that that body was animated by spirit, and not by blood? Is it thus that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption? I do not know, but I suggest it to you. I rather like to think it may be so myself, that we shall be animated by the very Spirit of God, independent of blood conditions. At all events, we shall be different.

Are you sorry for that? I am not. I think we shall be free from pain by and by. I have seen people go down to death, and I do not want to see them in exactly the same body. I have seen the strong man waste away until he was a mere shadow of what he had been. Do not tell me that my gracious God will send him back to me like that! I want him to come back bearing the image of the heavenly not the earthy. The Bible says when he comes back his body will be fashioned like unto His glorious body, free from all pain and limitation. "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time." There are many things in this world pleasant to look at: there are some things that are not. There are some people—but I have said enough! We are none of us very attractive. If there is an affection in the heart, we can put up with each other's appearance.

How terribly some of our men were disfigured physically during the war! What a trial when they came back home! Sin has disfigured us terribly. These bodies limit us in all our service. The Firstfruits of them that slept was the Lord Jesus. We shall be like Him; we shall know each other as to our personalities, and as to our bodies. There is a grain of wheat, mature, dry, old. We bury it. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." It may be wheat, or some other grain; but it is sown a natural body. Did you read it? "So also

is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." So will it be, by God's grace, in the resurrection of the dead. And you remember what a splendid servant—and I say it without irreverence—the body of the Lord Jesus was. I do not know how He did it, but He was able to appear wherever He wanted to appear. He came through the shut door, appeared at the lakeside and got breakfast for the disciples after His resurrection. That spiritual body of His, by which they were able to identify Him, was the instrument of His power.

How do you feel to-night? "Pretty well, if it were not for this back of mine", someone says. I saw an advertisement not long ago that ran like this, "What is the good of a million dollars if your feet hurt?" "I am well except for one thing!" There will be no exceptions by and by. These bodies will be absolutely at the command of our redeemed spirits, and God will be glorified, not alone in our spirits and in our minds, but in our bodies too; and we shall have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

III.

This simple sentence, and I will send you away. What is the message of the gospel? Listen! How many "ifs" there are in our chapter! If—if—if—if! But triumphantly He exclaimed, "But *now* is Christ risen from the dead." "Now is Christ risen from the dead!" It is a fact. He is risen, and has taken part of this material creation with Him into glory. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"—what for? "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." I nearly always read at the graveside, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

That is the hope of this world—the hope of the individual, the hope of society, the hope of the whole world: that He lived righteously, died vicariously, rose victoriously, ascended representatively, and will return conqueringly, to claim the possession of the inheritance purchased with His blood. May He make us all partakers of His grace, for His name's sake.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee for this redemption. Some of us, poor sinners as we are, by Thine infinite grace, have been made partakers thereof. Should there be any here this evening who do not know Christ, ere they close their eyes in sleep constrain them by Thy Spirit to surrender themselves to Christ, so that they, with us, may rejoice in this glorious hope. For His name's sake we ask it, Amen.

MISS ELIZABETH POOLE

Miss Elizabeth Poole, who was for perhaps half a century or more a member of Jarvis Street Church, is now in her ninety-sixth year. She has long been one of our most loyal and appreciative WITNESS readers, and when in the routine work of the office a reminder of the date when the renewal of her subscription would be due, was sent out, it was returned with the subscription and the following notation:

"Miss Poole is in her ninety-sixth year. While she cannot read THE WITNESS, it is so much like an old friend she cannot give it up."

Miss Poole has always been loyal to Jarvis Street, and in full sympathy with the stand we have taken for the truth. We send her our most cordial greetings.

SEMINARY CONVOCATION, MAY 5th

The annual Seminary Convocation will be held in Cooke's Church, Queen and Mutual Streets, Thursday, May 5th, at 8 o'clock. Last year we had the privilege of having the minister of Cooke's Church as our Convocation speaker, this year we are again indebted to this neighbourly church for the use of their building. The special speaker will be Rev. Robert Dubarry of Nimes, France, President of the Evangelical Union of French-speaking Baptist Churches. Mr. Dubarry has already won a large place in the hearts of our people, and students and faculty alike look forward to his presence with us on this great occasion. Mr. Dubarry has given a number of addresses to the students during his stay in Toronto and they find increasing delight in his keen discernment and spiritual insight. We are confident of a great address from this far-sighted European Baptist leader, and extend a cordial invitation to all our friends to share this occasion with us.—W.S.W.

THE SEMINARY NEXT YEAR

We have been reviewing the courses which the Seminary offers, in preparation of the new Prospectus we are issuing. More than ever, we believe that this school provides a thorough training for the kind of work which the New Testament pastor and missionary is intended to do. We have no frills, no fads, nothing, indeed, that is not immediately useful to such a man of God. For instance, a student working here four years takes, with others, nine courses in doctrine, seven in Old Testament, and seven in methods of Christian work. No man need apply who is not serious about study. We would grow oaks, not mushrooms!

In its eleven and a half years the Seminary has proved itself in the teaching it has given and in the work its graduates and former students have done and are doing across this country and in other lands, home and foreign. A diploma from this school means—means much.

But the measure of a student's success here depends on several factors. First, we place the recognition of a divine call. Without that the way is too long, too hard, and the tasks ahead altogether discouraging. We name health next, and one of our entrance qualifications is "doctor's certificate of general good health and physical fitness for hard study." Third, we set the work he does. Laziness, in this realm, is a capital offence! Our list is not complete, but fourth we put the help the teachers give. They lay out the job, superintend the doing of it, and review the results. As much as possible they encourage independence in the student. There is no bottle-feeding, nor spoon-feeding; a man must carve for himself! The instructors offer suggestions as how to do it most efficiently.

We should also mention as a major factor in a student's success the background he brings with him, especially his knowledge of the Bible. Some come who have had a long and rather intimate acquaintance with the Word, and they are always at an advantage. To be sure, the more a man brings with him, the more he takes away.

At a Faculty meeting this week the staff have made fresh plans for next term. Some who read these lines are planning to attend, or at least hope that the way may be opened for them to do so. May we suggest that such write to us

as to the best ways to get ready for the Seminary. Others who read these words know of young men and women who are planning to prepare for full-time Christian service. May we ask our friends to send us the names of these, that we may forward them the new Prospectus giving full particulars of courses and regulations.—W.G.B.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

ORDINATION OF PASTOR J. H. WATT. Despite very inclement weather, a fairly large company gathered at the Courtright Baptist Church on Friday, April 8th, at 2.30 p.m. to meet with the Council whose duty and privilege it was to conduct the examination of Pastor J. H. Watt of the Courtright and Wilkesport Baptist Churches, with a view to the setting aside of God's servant in a public manner for the work of the gospel ministry. The Council was composed of twenty delegates from the following of our Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, viz., Jarvis Street, Toronto; Essex; Wheatley; Gospel Centre, Calvary, Windsor; Temple, Sarnia; Courtright; Wilkesport; and Chatham, together with Rev. E. Hancox, and Mr. Robert Watt of Owen Sound, brother of the candidate. The Courtright Church expressed itself as being entirely satisfied with this Council, and then Rev. G. F. Watts of Wheatley was appointed Moderator, with Rev. E. C. Wood of Chatham as Clerk.

Pastor Watt's statement of his conversion, call to the ministry and views of doctrine were listened to with great interest, and examined with care. In all of these Mr. Watt was most clear, concise, and convincing. Questions were freely asked, and answered, on almost every section of doctrinal truth, and at the close of the examination, Council, on motion of Rev. F. W. Dyson, seconded by Rev. E. Hancox, unanimously agreed to fellowship Brother Watt in the entirety of his statement, and to proceed with the ordination service during the evening.

Recognition must be given to the excellence of the provision of the ladies of the Courtright and Wilkesport Churches with regard to the supper served. Well over one hundred sat down to a sumptuous and daintily prepared meal, which even enhanced the already well-known hospitality of this "household of faith".

We were most happy to have with us on this memorable occasion Rev. Robt. Dubarry, president of the Evangelical Association of French-speaking Baptist Churches of France, who at the opening of the evening service led us to the Throne of Grace in prayer while commending our brother to the glorious ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture was read by Pastor H. MacBain, and Mr. Robert Watt sang to us of the grace of God. The charge to the candidate was given by Rev. E. C. Wood, while Rev. J. Fullard delivered the charge to the church. Rev. F. W. Dyson led in the ordination prayer after which Rev. E. Hancox preached the sermon from the text found in John 20:19-22. A most enjoyable, instructive, and blessed day was brought to a close by the pronouncement of the benediction by Rev. J. H. Watt.

E. C. Wood, Clerk of the Council

WESTERN CONFERENCE. The bi-monthly conference of our Union Churches in the South-western district was held at Chatham on Thursday, March 31st. These gatherings are always times of rich fellowship in the Word, and with the saints; and this was no exception. A good representation from the other churches was on hand to listen with deep appreciation to messages from Pastor J. H. Watt of Courtright and Wilkesport, and Rev. J. Fullard of Essex. Brother Watt spoke in the afternoon, and basing his message on Heb. 1:1-3, set forth the manner in which God speaks to saint and sinner. In the evening Brother Fullard brought us an inspiring, and searching message from I John 4:8.

Our next conference is to be held in the Windsor Gospel Centre on May 24th, in conjunction with a Young People's Rally. Any who would like information relative to this meeting are invited to write the pastor of the Chatham Church, Rev. E. C. Wood.

NORANDA, QUEBEC—Rev. Stanley Wellington. Brother Wellington reports a steady advancement in the various branches of the work in Noranda. The Church recently held their annual business meeting, and the report is most encouraging. The per capita giving of the church approximates \$60.00 per year. The building debt has been reduced to a little over \$300.00, which they hope to pay off this summer.

Brother Wellington further writes as follows: "There is a splendid spirit of fellowship among our members, and a growing spirit of prayer. The average attendance is up considerably which indicates that we are reaching a number of new folk. Best of all, the Spirit of the Lord is present in power, giving us blessing in conviction of sinners, conversions, and restorations. In the future we plan to have a baptismal service when several will follow the Lord in His appointed way."

Some miles from Rouyn is situated a little Protestant colony. One of the settlers who is a Baptist has been holding services in the various homes, and the Lord has blessed the community, and he says that each time there have been souls saved. He hopes to have the joy of baptizing some of them in the near future.

BRISCOE STREET, LONDON—Rev. R. D. Guthrie. "We had a good day Easter Sunday," writes the Pastor, "when I baptized five believers at the evening service. One of these was a fine young married woman who was led to Christ at our Young People's meeting. We have not had an organized Young People's until recently, and this is the firstfruits of their efforts. At the communion service Sunday evening, three new members were received into our membership."

EMMANUEL, VERDUN—Pastor T. D. M. Carson. We reprint the following paragraphs from the "Seminarian", the paper of the students of the Toronto Baptist Seminary. The writer is Pastor T. D. M. Carson, a former student who is now pastor of the Verdun Church:

"The need for French labour is great and pressing. A Frenchman who has been working among the French-Canadians for more than twenty years, said recently to us that there were scarcely more than a dozen preachers doing evangelistic work among French-Canadians, and the souls are three millions. May the Lord open our eyes to see that at this moment all fields are needy.

"Perhaps you would like to know something of what I am doing about French. I have a friend who lives ten minutes by bus from Verdun, who speaks no English—so I must speak French. I have now several with whom I can have conversation as often as I may, who speak little or no English. This is at present my practice ground. Sometimes I do as much as eight hours a week of conversation alone."

Mr. Carson secured a speaking knowledge of French in the classes of the Seminary. For several years he won the French prize. Those who in other years made this prize possible will feel a thrill of satisfaction as they read the above article from his pen. May we add that complete provision has not yet been made for this year's French prize. It will be necessary for interested friends to act quickly, as the Convocation will take place on May 5th, in less than two weeks.

TRENTON—Pastor William Hall. The following brief report from Pastor William Hall at Trenton brings cheering news of progress in the work on this field: "The work here is going along very well at present and we are having showers of blessings. A number have come forward and made a profession in Christ these last two or three Sundays, five in all, so we praise God for them. I covet your prayers for the work here."

Northern Work. From one of our pastors in the North comes the following account of how God is working. This report is a call for special prayer that those whom the Lord has moved to search the Scriptures may find eternal life.

"I am happy to report that God is moving. A husband and wife, both French, and therefore Roman Catholics, have displayed great interest in the Bible. The wife has attended our services several times and has brought her two children to the Bible School. This woman has read the Bible until the early hours of the morning, discovering the anti-Christian position of Rome in the light of the Word. Her husband, made his eyes sore reading the Bible so much. This lady, along with another Roman Catholic lady, who has also been searching the Scriptures, came to see me without my solicitation a few days ago and sought my help to explain the Word to them. We spent several hours in this profitable study. They came again one evening and stayed until nearly midnight, the Bible being the sole theme of discussion. They invited me to their home and until late at night the Bible was again studied. They seemed convinced that the Word is

true and Rome is false. For reading the Bible and leaving the Roman Catholic church they have been persecuted and false stories have been circulated about them. This woman has witnessed the truth of the Word to other Roman Catholics. I believe that if this husband and wife definitely accepted Christ as Saviour it would be the beginning of great blessing as well as renewed persecution, but we are becoming seasoned to the latter. The fact that the Lord directed them to us thrilled us beyond measure. These people are going to face the priest with the Word when he calls. Pray that they will overcome him by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb."

BRITISH COLUMBIA. Rev. E. V. Apps, a graduate of Toronto Baptist Seminary, has recently accepted a call to the Marpole Regular Baptist Church, British Columbia.

Rev. W. J. Thomson of the Dunbar Heights Baptist Church has returned from Rochester where he underwent an operation, partly restored in health. It will take time before he can fully resume his duties.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, WINNIPEG. At the end of August, Rev. H. C. Poole, pastor of this church, accepted a call to the First Baptist Church, Hemet, California, a church that had recently separated from the convention. Mr. Poole had been pastor of this church for four and one half years, rendering faithful and earnest service. During his pastorate the Lord added to the church about forty souls, most of whom were admitted by baptism.

Since Mr. Poole's departure the church has been without a pastor, but regular services have been conducted as usual, with supplies from the Winnipeg Bible Institute, Dr. Salter of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and Mr. F. J. Carter, a graduate of Toronto Baptist Seminary, and others. During February, Rev. E. Erickson, whose evangelistic work in Saskatchewan has been greatly blessed, occupied the pulpit and conducted two weeks of special services which proved a great blessing to all who attended. We request the prayers of GOSPEL WITNESS readers for the Lord's work in this corner of His vineyard.

LONG BRANCH—Pastor B. Jeffery. For two weeks the Long Branch Church enjoyed great blessing under the ministry of Rev. Robert Guthrie, pastor of Briscoe Street Church, London. Throughout the campaign, the attendance was large, but on the final Sunday evening more than two hundred people were crowded into the building, and some had to be turned away. Some twenty-five persons professed faith in Christ or were restored to the Christian life, and the whole membership of the church was blessed.

One man was gloriously saved for whom prayer had been made for more than three years. A whole family, mother, father, and two children, came to know Christ. Another man and wife who had sat under Pastor Jeffery's ministry at East York Mission, later moving to Long Branch, accepted Christ during this campaign.

A LETTER FROM REV. M. HENRY OF MEDINA INDIAN CHURCH "The two weeks of special services came to a close Sunday evening, April 3rd. From the very first service the attendance was encouraging, and at the close of the campaign the results have been most gratifying. Under God, the success of these services is due to two human instruments. Rev. J. F. Dempster, and our faithful Deacon Howard Beaver. Mr. Beaver led a few members every day of the campaign in house to house visitation, and over eighty homes were called on. This figure may appear small, but when one considers the manner in which these homes are visited, I think we shall change our minds. In each home a short service is held in this manner: hymn, prayer, testimony from each member of the family (where possible), a short gospel message, a closing hymn, and a closing prayer. This would require about half an hour at the most.

"The Pastor is convinced that Brother Dempster was sent here of the Lord. He seems to have been the man to meet our problems, and fearless in the proclamation of the gospel which makes men 'new creatures in Christ.' Permit me space to thank the Trinity Baptist Church of Niagara Falls, Ontario, for sacrificing the ministry of their pastor that we might benefit from his services. We recommend him to Union churches for special services. The results of the meetings are: eight conversions, and three renewals. Continue to pray for us."

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 Second Quarter Lesson 18 May 1st. 1938

THE PRIESTLY PRAYER OF CHRIST

Lesson Text: John 17.

Golden Text: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
—John 17:4.

Christ At Prayer: Our Encouragement and Example.

This prayer of Christ our High Priest, has been recorded for the comfort and also for the instruction of all believers. On this occasion Christ prayed aloud in the presence of His disciples, thus bringing blessing and strength to them through His intercession, at the same time giving them an example of true, acceptable prayer.

As Christ prayed for His sorrowing followers, so does He now pray for all His own (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1). He abides in perfect fellowship with the Father (John 8:29), and His petitions are always heard (John 11:42).

Christ left us an example that we should follow in His steps. In the first place, notice that He prayed unselfishly; the words "they", "them", and "these" occur frequently. So should we intercede on the behalf of others. Again, the words of Christ are fragrant with the spirit of adoration, love, thanksgiving and holy fervour. Prayer is an attitude as well as an act.

The key-word of the prayer is "glory".

I. Christ At Prayer For Himself—verses 1-8.

"Glorify thy Son."

It is helpful to study the words in each section of our Lord's prayer from the standpoint of their orderly arrangement.

The Person Addressed—"Father".

The Petition—"Glorify thy Son".

Its Purpose—"That the Son also may glorify Thee".

Its Basis—"I have glorified Thee".

Jesus our Saviour addressed God as "Father". He was the unique Son of God; His relationship to God is altogether different from the relationship which any other one bears to God (John 1:18; 20:17).

The hour which would see the culmination of the earthly ministry of Christ was now at hand (Compare John 2:4; 7:8; 12:27), hence the words "The hour is come".

Christ prayed that the Father might bring glory, praise, honour and majesty to the name of the Son, in order that the Son also might magnify the name of the Father. Full well the Saviour knew that He was to glorify His Father by following out the Father's plan for Him, a plan which involved suffering, sorrow, shame and death (John 12:23-28; 13:31, 32). Having tread the valley of humiliation, He would be received once more into His Father's presence, clothed with His eternal glory (Luke 24:26). Christ lived, died and rose again, in obedience to the Father's will (John 4:34). Are we willing to pray that the Lord will bless us in order that we may glorify Him, even though it be by identifying ourselves with Christ in His death (Phil. 1:20)? The cross of Christ in which we should glory involves death to self-glory, self-interest and self-gratification (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).

Christ pleaded His own merits as the basis of all these petitions. He had glorified God on the earth by finishing, up to that moment, the work which had been given Him to do, and He urged His obedience as the ground of the petition that He might glorify God by completing the work of redemption. His mission had consisted in bestowing upon the elect the life of God (verses 2, 3), by manifesting the name, the character and the power of God (verses 6, 26), and by giving the words of God (verse 8). God delights to have us plead the merits of His Son and the promises of His

Word as the ground of our approach to Him. "Do as Thou hast said" is an appropriate request.

Christ was able to announce the success of His work: the chosen ones had come to know God (verse 3), had kept God's word (verse 6), and had recognized and received Christ as the messenger of God (verses 7, 8).

II. Christ At Prayer For His Present Disciples—verses 9-19.

"I am glorified in them."

The Person Addressed—"Holy Father".

The Petitions—(1) "Keep them in thy name"; (2) "Sanctify them in the truth".

Their Cause—(1) "These are in the world"; (2) "They are not of the world".

Their Basis—(1) "I kept them"; (2) "I sanctify myself".

Christ is the gift of God to the world (John 3:16), and believers are regarded as the gift of God to Christ (verses 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). We are Christ's inheritance (Eph. 1:18): "we were made a heritage" in Him (Eph. 1:11, Revised Version). It is the will of God that we should contribute to the glory of Christ, that He might be glorified in us (Eph. 1:12-14; 2:7; 3:10; 2 Thess. 1:10).

Since the disciples had been given by the Father to the Son, they were beloved for the Father's sake, and had been safely kept (John 6:37). The Greek word translated "keep" signifies "to guard from loss or injury". None of the disciples had been lost save Judas, who was not among the number of those given by God to Christ, but was "the son of perdition" (John 6:70; 13:2, 27; Psa. 109:8; Acts 1:20).

The Saviour besought His Father to keep the disciples for His own name's sake (Psa. 23:3), left alone as they would be in a hostile and wicked world. Separation, not segregation, is the Master's plan; He would have us remain pure in the midst of impurity, kept from the evil of the world and from the Evil One.

To His "Holy Father" Christ prayed that His followers might be made holy (Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:15), that they might be sanctified by the Word (Psa. 119:9; John 15:3). It is the will of God that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18).

III. Christ At Prayer For The Future Church—verses 20-26.

"That they may behold my glory."

The Person Addressed—"Righteous Father".

The Petitions—(1) "That they may all be one"; (2) "That they may be with me".

Their Purpose—(1) "That the world may believe"; (2) "That they may behold my glory".

Their Basis—(1) "We are One"; (2) "Thou lovedst me".

After praying for Himself and for the disciples in their personal relationship to God, our Lord thinks of the disciples in their service of witness to the world. Countless multitudes would believe upon Him through their testimony. Christ appointed the Church as His weapon in the world-conflict between good and evil. Those who had been made righteous were to declare to sinful men the Gospel of righteousness through faith in Christ. Therefore our High Priest prays that the "Righteous Father" would prepare them and equip them as He sent them out into the world (John 20:21).

All believers are one in the sense that all have one Saviour (Eph. 4:3-6), and all are members of His body (Rom. 12:5). It was the Lord's will that there should also be unity in spirit in that group before Him (Acts 2:1; 4:32). That same unity should characterize each local Church (Phil. 2:2), in order that the testimony may not be hindered by strife, bitterness and jealousy. Then the world will believe our message. Ultimately the members of His body will be reunited with their Head; they shall be perfected into one (Eph. 4:11-16).

On the Mount of Transfiguration the three disciples, Peter, James and John were granted a brief glimpse of the essential glory of Christ, the glory which pertained to His Deity. The manifestation of His glory on that occasion was but a foregleam of the full revelation of His majesty at His Coming (2 Pet. 1:16-18). We, too, shall share that glory (Rom. 8:17-21; Col. 3:4; 2 Thess. 2:14).