

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A LOVERS' LUNCHEON AMONG THE SHEAVES

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, May 1st, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Boaz said unto her; At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."—Ruth 2:14.

You may have observed in the works of certain authors that the hero of the tale in each book bears certain marks of similarity to all the others. For instance, I remember years ago reading the works of Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson. Interesting tales they were, and profitable too; but in each one of them, as I now recall, there was one outstanding character around whose exploits the story was woven. He was always a masterful person, a man about whom there was an element of mystery, but a man of strong will and resolute purpose, accustomed to having his own way. Combined with his masterfulness there was always a very pronounced quality of benevolence when he was clearly known. So the lover of the tale was described as a man accustomed to mould others to his will. Though there were minor points of difference, in almost every book one found a similar character, whether it was St. Elmo, At the Mercy of Tiberius, or some other work.

The Bible, while it is one Book, is made up of many books, and is really the work of one divine Author. In every book, from Genesis to Revelation, the discerning mind can quite easily trace the outlines of the same Character. It has always the same story to tell, a story of Him Who is the Lover of our souls.

The Book of Ruth is no exception. It is a book which, properly read and understood, is full of the gospel. While it is literal history, and as such is historically true, there is in it a prophetic element which points to the complete unfolding of the divine purpose of grace in the person of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Most of us are familiar with this charming story. The history of a man called Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, forms the background upon which is portrayed the lovely figure of Ruth.

Difficult days came to the people of Israel: there was a

famine in the land. Elimelech emigrated with his family to the land of Moab. After some years of residence there, death struck. Elimelech died, and Naomi was left a widow with her two sons. Later the two sons married women of the land, one married a woman called Orpah, and the other a woman called Ruth. They were both daughters of Moab. After some years death struck again, and the two sons of Naomi died. She was left now a stranger in a strange land, a widow with her two daughters-in-law. Proverbially, for some reason or other, that relationship is seldom supposed to be a very happy one. It was otherwise in this case, however; and both these young women seemed to have become passionately attached to their husbands' mother.

Then Naomi "heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread", and partly from economic necessity, and partly perhaps because she was homesick for her own country, she determined to return to Bethlehem. Her daughters-in-law announced their intention of accompanying her, and they started on their journey. Naomi pointed out to them the seriousness of their course, and suggested that perhaps it would be more profitable for them to remain in their own country; but they both followed her for a time. Then Orpah yielded to the persuasion of her mother-in-law and turned back again to Moab. Naomi turned to Ruth and said, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister." You are familiar with the classic reply of Ruth the Moabitess, so full of music and of poetry, and of the most passionate loyalty and devotion: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I

die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." When Naomi saw that Ruth was stedfastly determined to accompany her, she ceased from further protest; and together they came to Bethlehem.

Apparently Naomi had not greatly changed in her appearance. She was soon recognized by some of her former neighbours. They said, "Is this Naomi?" The name, Naomi, means pleasant. She said, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara (which means bitterness): for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" They left her therefore to her grief.

Then these two women began to cast about to discover how they could live, and provide food that was convenient for them. I want you to follow their fortunes with me this evening, that we may see something of the hand of divine Providence, and incidentally as we glance through the story, we may learn something of the methods of sovereign grace in bringing the individual soul into personal, loving, and lasting relationship to our divine Boaz, the one and only Redeemer.

I.

Here is a pathetic picture of A WIDOW AND AN ALIEN FEELING OUT AFTER LIFE. What did this young widow do? There was no factory in which she could go to work; there was no possibility of her selling things from door to door. The main business was to get food. She said to her mother-in-law, "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter."

It is a very graphic picture of the state of many a soul in our day. There had been a time when Ruth was full of hope, buoyant in spirit; when she had looked forward to a long and happy life with her husband. But the shadow had come upon her; death had taken her husband from her side. She was left alone, poor, without means of sustenance, disappointed and disillusioned—an almost despairing soul. The world is full of people like that to-day, people to whom life offers no promise of fulness or plenty, or any kind of pleasure. There is danger indeed of our becoming cynical, of our adopting the language of Naomi, saying, "Do not call me pleasant any more; do not expect me to smile. I have nothing to smile about. Do not ask me to rejoice: there is nothing to fill me with gladness. Call me Mara. I have tasted of the bitter springs. I have lost everything. There is nothing much left to live for, and yet I suppose I shall have to drag on a weary existence. I cannot lie down and die, but I do not know what to do. I have found no satisfaction anywhere."

That is true of some literally, as it was with Ruth, as to their material circumstances. There are millions of people in the world to-day who, but a few years ago, were possessed of a comfortable living, and who supposed want would never visit them. They supposed they would always have sufficient. Now they are to be found, men in middle life, with everything gone; women whose husbands have been snatched away by death. The world is full of widowed hearts. It may be questioned whether ever in the world's history there were so many people bitter of spirit, not knowing which way to turn.

This young woman went out to glean. You may yet say that life is not quite so hard in the end as it appears

to be. A gracious God may have something better in store for you. It may be there are fields in which you can glean. It may be that yonder there is Someone Whom as yet you do not know, Someone Who is a mighty man of wealth, Someone Who has it in His power to enrich you, to enlarge your life, and to crown you with lovingkindness and tender mercy. Little did Ruth know whither she was going when that morning she kissed her mother-in-law and went out, saying, "I will do the best I can; I will try to bring something home in the evening."

Hear how the story reads: "Her hap was"! It just happened that she found herself in a certain field which belonged to a certain man of whom she had never heard, of whom I suppose, in her fondest imagining, she had never dreamed. She was a stranger, an alien in Israel's land, a marked woman—perhaps about as unwelcome in the harvest field as are the Jews in Germany. "The Moabitish woman", they called her. Tremblingly, as the man in charge of the reapers came, she said, "Would you let me follow the reapers among the sheaves, and pick up a little, just the barley that is dropped?" And he, having compassion upon her, gave his consent. So she gleaned among the sheaves after the reapers.

It is not long until the character of the story, the hero of the tale, appears. He enters his field and says to his foreman, "Whose damsel is this?" "And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, it is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house." Boaz looked upon her. What he saw, I do not know: there is no telling what he saw. But he spoke kindly to her, saying, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn." Ruth bowed herself, full of surprise, a very modest woman: "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband . . . the Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Whereupon something sprung up in the heart of Ruth—not that she had a personal interest in this great and wealthy man, oh no! But there was just a little brightness, one of life's good days had dawned. Perhaps she said, "I wonder? Will the tide turn after all? Will Bethlehem be kinder to me than my own country?"

Have you met with that Someone yet? You are not a Christian, but you were full of dissatisfaction and disappointment. You did not know where to go, or what to do, so you went to church. You said to yourself—not in that language, but in principle: "I will go and glean after the reapers. I have not much religious interest, I do not know anything about it; but for want of something better to do, I will go." You went somewhere, perhaps into a mission. You may have come to Massey Hall. You were on the outside of things, saying, "I do

not know what this man is talking about." Your interest was not continuous, but when you left it was with a few ears of barley; you had gleaned among the sheaves. You said, "I rather liked that hymn they sang. I have not heard it for a long time. It may be there is something in it after all." After you went away, all week it followed you, it sang itself in your heart,—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

Perhaps it was a prayer; you heard just a sentence. Someone talking to Someone, about someone; and you began to wonder if anyone was talking about you. It was only a sentence, asking help for someone who was poor in spirit, for some widowed soul. I do not know whether she is here to-night or not, but one who is now a member of the church had reached the end of the road. One of our workers called to see her. Life had been so full of bitterness to her that this man called just in time to prevent a terrible tragedy. She got a few ears of barley, enough to keep her soul from absolute destitution, though as yet she had not met with Boaz. She only gleaned in the field. Now she knows Him!

Oh my Christian friends, you must not shut God up to your particular method of doing things. He has His own way of dealing with Ruth the Moabitess. You came from a Christian home. You were trained from your infancy to believe the Book, until at last it became comparatively easy for you to yield yourself to its teaching, and to receive Christ. But there is someone else to whom the Book has always spoken in a foreign language, who says, "I do not understand it. I do not know what you are talking about when you speak of salvation, and the blood of Christ, and the abounding grace of God. I come from Moab's land. I know nothing but widowhood and disappointment and despair."

There was One, a Stranger, Who touched the eyes of the blind man, and asked him if he could see anything. "I see men as trees, walking." What a strange thing! That was all he could see—but something had happened. Translated into the language of this story, he was gleaned among the sheaves, and a full reward was yet to be given him. The Lord God of Israel, under Whose overshadowing and protecting wings he would yet learn to trust, was working with him. May it be so with someone, some brokenhearted, despondent soul this evening.

Lunchtime came, and the reapers laid aside their sickles and gathered somewhere, with the sheaves about them, for lunch. Then the master of them all appeared, and took his place with the reapers. As this Moabitess began to eat with them, he, the mighty man of wealth, took some parched corn and, with his own hand, gave it to her. The gleaner may have been envied by the reapers then. He had taken knowledge of her. He had marked her. He had an interest in her. "She did eat, and was sufficed." What a meal! Not in many a day—perhaps never before—had Ruth received a morsel of food that was quite so delicious to her taste.

Has Someone taken knowledge of you? Have you ever felt that in spite of all seeming accidents, all the afflictions to which you have been subject, all the privations and apparently irreparable losses—somehow you felt at last as though a mysterious Hand had come into your life, and touched you? You said, "I wonder what is

happening to me? I am not 'getting religion', am I? At all events, the clouds are not so low as they were. It seems as though Someone else were thinking and planning for me." If you only knew, you would have sung the last verse of our opening hymn with new interest and significance:

"Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall:
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

Did Boaz touch Ruth's hand as he passed her the parched corn? He can do it, this Boaz of ours, this mighty Man of wealth, this glorious Lover of our souls. He can touch us, and fill our souls with life and health and all the ecstasies of heaven. Take the morsel at his hand. Some of us are coming to the feast to-night. We shall sit with our Beloved; He will take a morsel and give it to us saying, "Take eat; this is my body which is for you."

When the meal was over, Ruth went back to her task; and then the master said to his reapers, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." And they did so; and after the lunch hour Ruth found that she was gathering plentifully. She gathered up these "handfuls of purpose".

Have you had them? Oh, have you had them? In sheer desperation, did you lift your heart to some sort of God? You did not know who He was, but you cried out to Someone, "I do not know what to do, or where to go. Help me, oh help me." From the day you acknowledged your own impotence, and sought a Power not your own, you found that the gleaned was a little more profitable, that there were "handfuls of purpose" here and there, there was Someone taking account of you.

Conversion is not always like a flash of lightning. Sometimes it is a very gradual process. Sometimes, when at last the Lord Jesus has dawned upon the soul, he has to look back over years of providential direction, until he learns to say, "I know now the reason for the funeral in Moab's land. I know now why I was led in such and such a direction, and how I happened—how I happened to do a certain thing." "Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech." All fields belong to our Boaz. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And how He loves to enrich those who come to Him!

Let me tell you what happened that evening when Ruth went home and told her mother-in-law about it. Before she could tell, Naomi said, "Why, Ruth, where have you gleaned to-day? The fields were not very cleanly reaped. Someone—why, Ruth, someone must have taken knowledge of you; someone must have given you something." Then Ruth told her story, how she had reaped in the field of a man called Boaz; how he invited her to sit among the reapers, and how at the noonday meal he had himself given her a portion. "And after that, mother"—I think Ruth called Naomi, mother—"I found that the gleaned was good and plentiful. I have come home laden with grain." Naomi said, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen . . . it is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they

meet thee not in any other field. Boaz has a purpose concerning you. I believe he has a personal interest in you. You had better keep close to him."

Naomi told Ruth what to do. Of course, it does not fit in with the modern story at all. At this point the Book of Ruth varies entirely from current human history, for the next chapter is the story of the courtship—and if you will believe it, it was not altogether one-sided! The woman helped a little! That is unusual! They never do it! All the story-books say so! They are like a little tot that comes to our Sunday School, a very interesting little girl. She and I are very good friends. Some Sunday mornings when I try to greet her she says, "Come and get me"—but I notice she does not go very far away! She does not make it particularly hard for me to get her! That is about what our story tells us, that Ruth did not make it particularly hard for Boaz. That is not orthodox romance! Ruth ought to have been a perfect icicle, living apart, quite remote, difficult to approach, so that Boaz would have to come on his knees. So the story-books say. I should not be surprised, however, if the real truth of the matter is that the reason the Bible puts it otherwise is that the Bible has a habit of telling the truth! I rather expect that that is how it usually happens, in part. Why should it not?

And our gracious Lover will forgive you if you begin immediately to respond to His affection. Do not run away from Him. Do not be foolish enough to think you ought to do so. There ought to be a mutuality about this matter. You remember the Psalm: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Why should it not be so? It ought to be so. Let Him love you into fellowship with Himself.

Ruth came home again, and this time she was more heavily laden than before. She had still larger treasures. She told her mother-in-law that she had had a conversation with Boaz, and that Boaz had told her that he was her kinsman, but not her next of kin. He said unto her, "It is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I . . . But if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee." Naomi knew that language, and she said to her daughter-in-law, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."

I wonder if there is someone here this evening who is saying, "I wish that Someone about Whom you have been talking, Who put out His hand and enriched me just a little, would come again. I wish I could be sure He would carry His benevolence through to a successful issue, but I do not know whether He will nor not." I do! The Character of my story is never defeated, and when He puts His hand to a task, He never stops until it is done. Listen: "Having loved His own, He loved them even unto the end." We had it in our lesson this morning. At the end of life He said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

II.

And NOW THE SEQUEL. Ruth responded, but it was all of grace on the part of Boaz. Ruth had nothing to pay, nothing to plead. A stranger, a widowed soul, poor as she could be; yet the rich man took account of her. And her mother-in-law, with a true instinct, said, "The

man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." And so Boaz went up to the gate and sat down in the gate of the city and waited as the people passed by. He was looking for someone. Presently he saw him and said, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself: for I cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was a testimony in Israel."

Boaz called the elders to witness, and, having performed this ceremony, said, "I redeem the inheritance of Elimelech, and purchase Ruth to be my wife." The transaction was sealed: So to speak, the marriage license was issued; and in the presence of all the people, Boaz became Ruth's redeemer, and she became his bride, and the heir of all Boaz' wealth. She had entered into an inheritance that was subject to no encumbrance.

That is the gospel. When "the world by wisdom knew not God"—which means that God gave this human nature every opportunity to redeem itself, saying, "Save yourself if you can. The first Adam, our kinsman, and all that was of the flesh failed utterly, absolutely—when "there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save", His own eye pitied, and His own arm brought salvation. He paid the price, cancelled the indebtedness, wooed us to Himself, and betrothed us to Himself in an eternal covenant, saying, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." There is nothing any of us needs so much as the story of Jesus and His love.

Will you respond to Him? Will you yield yourself to Him?

As for you who are Christians: when we come to the Table of the Lord to-night, let it be very sweet to us. What a marvellous privilege to sit with Him! You remember what the spouse said, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." What a lovely thing it is to have fellowship with Jesus, to sit at the banqueting-table of the King! With no servitor to minister to us, but to be sure that with His own wounded hand He will give to us the bread of life. May the Lord satisfy us, every one, with the fulness that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, once again for the matchless story of the love of Jesus Christ. If there be a weary, despondent soul here this evening, we pray that Thy grace may reach such an one, that new life and new light may dawn; that such an one may be inspired with new courage, new hope for the future. Make this a happy hour for us all; for Thy name's sake, Amen.

PREPARATION FOR REBUILDING

Our friends everywhere, we are sure, will be desirous of having some information as to what we are doing toward the rebuilding of the church. The architects and the Building Committee have had several conferences, and the architects and the Chairman many more. Plans are gradually being worked out with a view to reconstructing the auditorium on the same lines as the old one except for such alterations as are necessary to meet present-day building regulations. In these matters, however, we should be under grace if we were not under the law, for we are determined to secure the utmost degree of safety for any congregation worshipping within the walls in future.

But even when plans are matured and finally adopted, it will take weeks to elaborate the working plans after that, so that there is no possibility of contracts for reconstruction being let earlier than the first of July. Meanwhile a gang of expert wreckers are at work removing all the charred timbers of the roof, and, in short, taking down everything that would have to be taken down before reconstruction could begin. This, we hope, will be completed within another week or thereabout.

A FINAL MEETING WITHIN THE OLD WALLS— MAY 24th

The Pastor made a daring announcement on Sunday. He told the people that he began his pastorate in Jarvis Street on May 15th, 1910, and that his twenty-eighth anniversary therefore would fall on exactly the same day of the month and week this year. But he proposed that its special observance would be postponed until the 24th of May, which would be a holiday. He then added:

"I am going to be bold enough to ask you to make me a present on that day. A friend in England sent me recently a copy of a circular issued by Mr. Spurgeon in which he told the people of the church that the Tabernacle needed redecoration, that it would cost about a thousand pounds, and that on a certain day before going for a brief holiday he would be in his vestry all day, when the members could come and bring him their gifts, and give him an opportunity of shaking hands with them, and bid them good-bye before going away.

"I thought that was a very good idea, so I am going to follow Mr. Spurgeon's example. I shall be in the church parlour of the old building from about 10.30 in the morning until 1.00 o'clock, and then from 1.30 to 3.30, on May 24th, and during that time you may bring me your gifts. And I am actually going to tell you what I want, and how much it will cost.

"When the valuers were at work seeking to discover the extent of our fire loss, they consulted with a certain company as to the value of the pulpit furniture destroyed, and they said that the replacement of all the pulpit furniture would cost about \$1,200.00. So I am asking you to bring me on the 24th of May at least \$1,200.00 for the pulpit furniture in the new church. If more than \$1,200.00 should come in, all that is over and above that amount will go to the Building Fund. If a sufficient amount is brought in to pay for the pulpit furniture, we will have a little plate made and put upon the pulpit, stating that it was donated to the church, through the Pastor, in celebration of the twenty-eighth anniversary of his pastorate.

"By the 24th of May the building will have been made

absolutely safe at every point, so at half-past three we shall gather within the walls of the old building. We will have a small organ moved in, and we will have a service of prayer and praise; and the Pastor will give a short and final address in the old church before it is handed over to the builders. Announcement of this will be made through the press, and all friends of Jarvis Street within reach of Toronto will be invited to share this service with us. The floor of the gallery will be safe, so that there will be room for a large company of people—standing; there will be no seats."

The large protecting fence around the front of the building, and on the Gerrard Street side, makes three entrances inaccessible, so we shall ask all friends to enter by the Gerrard Street door of the B. D. Thomas Hall, and then turn to the left in the hallway and pass through the old Beginners' Department into the parlour where they will find the Pastor, and then they may proceed across the corridor and into the main building.

Many Jarvis Street friends outside of the city will probably desire to have a part in this offering, and we shall welcome any contribution that any of our friends may be able to send us toward the refurnishing of the pulpit. We need so many thousands of dollars to meet all our requirements that every extra dollar we can get will be most welcome. Remember the date—May 24th.

At the service an offering will be taken, not with a view to asking more from those who have already presented their gifts to the Pastor, but with a view to gathering up "the fragments that remain" from any who come to the service and who may not meet the Pastor personally. For this occasion, we would ask our friends who plan to come and present their gifts, to put the gift in an envelope, sealed, with their name and address, and the amount contained in the envelope, plainly written on the outside. We request this for the double purpose, that we desire to know the name of every donor, and the name on the envelope will be an announcement of the name; and we desire also to have both name and address in order that every individual gift may be acknowledged.

"GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE"

Jarvis Street Church has many friends scattered over the world. We frequently feel that we should like to share with our readers many of the letters which we receive. We have therefore made a selection of four recently received. The first we print comes from

A Distant Part of Canada

This letter breathes a beautiful spirit, and shows how the Lord's children love to have a part in His work. How greatly would the work of the Lord prosper if all professing Christians were characterized by a like spirit! Great multitudes are; and it is through them the Lord gets most of His work done. Here is the letter, which speaks for itself:

April 21, 1938.

"Dear Miss Stoakley:

"I am enclosing a small gift for the Building Fund. After reading Dr. Shields' appeal in last week's WITNESS I feel I should like to do a little toward raising God's house once again. Even though a mite, yet if all would give the little, it would mount up. I do not get any extra money other than Old Age Pension, and my son who is now working is giving me \$5.00 per week; but of course I have to care for him out of that. That is where my tithing money comes from. One son pays my taxes, but my boys and girls always give me

something for my birthday and Christmas, and often buy things I could do without; so I asked them to give it to me in money so I could get anything I needed, so that is what they did this time. I am sending \$10.00 of it toward the Building Fund. How it makes me wish I could send a substantial sum! But God knows all about me, and He will bless my small effort which is given gladly and freely for His cause.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) _____

A Toronto Letter

The second letter comes from a lady in Toronto who has been a GOSPEL WITNESS reader for a number of years, but is not a member of Jarvis Street Church. We greatly appreciate her generous gift, and this further evidence of the real fellowship we have with many Presbyterian friends. The second letter is as follows:

Toronto, Canada,
April 21st, 1938.

"Dear Pastor Shields:

"I am deeply grieved over the loss of Jarvis St. Church, and should like to add my gift with others at this time of special need.

"I have been a reader of THE GOSPEL WITNESS for a number of years, and enjoy it very much. I am a Presbyterian; and am praying that sufficient money may soon come in to rebuild the church. I am enclosing a cheque for \$50.00 for the Building Fund.

Yours truly,

(Signed) _____

From the Emerald Isle

The third letter we print is from Ireland. THE GOSPEL WITNESS has many friends in that lovely land, in whose fellowship we greatly rejoice. We are most thankful for the generous gift of this Irish reader of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Following is the letter:

Antrim, Ireland,
March 23rd, 1938.

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"I must say I was moved to tears when I received THE GOSPEL WITNESS containing an account of the fire. Although I am so far away and never saw it except in a picture, I had got to love it. I have been feasting on the good things which issued from it for almost twelve years. The church is burned—but praise the Lord, He remaineth the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Hallelujah!

"I am praying that He may reveal Himself to you in a very special way at this time—and may the later house be even greater and grander than the former. I am delighted to be able to add my mite to the raising of it up again—and may you be long spared to send forth the pure, unadulterated word of God is the prayer of,

Yours very sincerely in the Lord,

(Signed) _____

(This letter contained five pounds.)

From London, England

The fourth letter is from London, from friends who, when we visited London for the Spurgeon Centenary, very generously transported us from place to place on many occasions in their car. We recall the happy fellowship of those days, and are most grateful for their generosity in sending us \$10.00 for the Building Fund.

Dulwich, S.E. 21,
April 14th, 1938.

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"I have delayed in writing to you, but nevertheless my wife and I are deeply grieved to hear of the loss by fire of your church. We heard the sad news in the first place from our mutual friend, Mr. Fisher of West Norwood.

"It called to mind the similar disaster to Spurgeon's Tabernacle. We have read with much interest your various articles in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and admire your courage and zeal in arranging for rebuilding operations to be put in hand. We should like to be associated with you, and have much pleasure in enclosing a draft for \$10.00.

"We look forward to seeing your weekly paper, and we shall follow with the greatest interest all developments.

"May God continue richly to bless your labours, notably in Toronto, but to the larger fellowship through the influence of THE GOSPEL WITNESS; and may you continue to have health and strength to carry out your arduous duties.

"With cordial Christian greetings,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) _____

We have deleted the names and identification marks from these letters because we have not secured the permission of the writers to publish them.

Another note has reached us from the veteran Deacon of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, Mr. William Olney. Mr. Olney has probably done more preaching than the majority of living ministers, and has been greatly used of the Lord in evangelistic work. We are sorry to hear of Mr. Olney's illness, and hope later to receive news that the operation to which he refers is wholly successful, and that he has made a rapid recovery. Mr. Olney's note follows:

Hill View, 50 Champion Hill,
London S.E.5, England,
April 2nd, 1938.

"Dear Brother Shields:

"Warmest sympathy from self and brother on loss of your tabernacle. Now comes the test of faith in Jehovah Jireh. He will be faithful to His name.

"I go into hospital to-day for a third, and we expect, final and successful operation. I take as companion with me amongst other books, your 'Other Little Ships'. Dr. Graham Scroggie's year's supply at Spurgeon's is progressing with divine blessing.

Yours affectionately,

(Signed) WM. OLNEY."

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol 2 Second Quarter Lesson 20 May 15th, 1938

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Lesson Text: John 19.

Golden Text: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."—John 19:30.

I. The Mock Homage: Behold, Your King!—verses 1-3.

Compare Mt. 27:27-30; Mk. 15:16-20.

There is something terrible in the scene of the Saviour standing in quiet dignity in the Praetorium, while taunting enemies swarm around, deriding Him. He is decked with mock emblems of royalty—a purple robe, a crown of thorns, a reed sceptre and a soldier guard. Insulting cries replace the shout of honour, and savage blows take the place of the kiss of homage.

Grace Incarnate suffers these cruel indignities in silence; the sheep is dumb before the shearers. But the time will come when sinful men, unmoved by the *patience* of the Lamb, must endure the *wrath* of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16). The King Whom they refused to acknowledge will come in power and great glory, clothed with a scarlet robe and attended by His saints (Isa. 63:1-4; Ma. 24:30; Rev. 19:11-16). Stern justice will be meted out, and all will be compelled to bow the knee

before Him, and to confess Him Lord of all (Isa. 45:23; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:13).

II. The Unjust Trial: Behold, the Man!—verses 4-15.

Compare Mt. 27:22-26; Mk. 15:12-15; Lk. 23:20-25.

Study the characters who play the chief parts in this tragic drama. Pilate moves back and forth, now addressing Christ Who stands in the Judgment Hall, and now appealing to the people without. His actions are symbolic of his vacillating sympathies and tendencies, for at one moment he sides with the people against Christ, at the next with Christ against the people. He is a man without scruple, conscience, principle or conviction. He is an opportunist, a time-server. He would escape responsibility if he could (Lk. 23:7; Mt. 27:24).

Pilate mocked the people, bullying them, yet fearing them. Convinced that the charges against the Saviour were without foundation, he attempted to arouse their sympathies and sense of honour, but in a half-hearted manner which gained no response.

The Roman Governor derided the Christ, and appeared boastful before Him, yet in reality he feared Him, and the more so when reminded of His claim as the Son of God. Unconsciously he gave expression to a prophetic utterance: "Behold, the man!" The word "behold" as used in verses 5, 14, 26, 27 is an interjection, not a verb. The meaning is: See, here is before you the man! (Compare John 1:29). Christ was indeed *the Man*, the perfect Man, and at the same time, the Almighty God (Heb. 2:9, 10).

The merciless throng, roused to a high pitch of excitement and anger, unmoved by any appeal to their higher feelings, were insistent in their demands that Christ be crucified. Urged on by their leaders, they brought successive civil and religious charges against the Saviour, saying that He was causing sedition, that He had broken their laws, and that He claimed to be the Son of God (John 5:18; 10:33; 8:53; Mt. 26:63, 65). When Pilate continued to hesitate, they finally obtained their will by appealing to his personal fears (verse 12).

Christ bears Himself majestically, a Victim, yet the Victor. He does not stoop to answer Pilate's rude question as to His origin, nor is He anxious to defend Himself. A survey of the records of the Passion of Christ reveals the astounding fact that, although He was the chief Person concerned, very few words escaped His lips, and these were spoken to vindicate His Father's glory, and in the interests of others—His disciples, His loved ones, the dying thief, and His enemies. The silence of Jesus was interpreted by Pilate as an insult. But Jesus met that boastful claim of power by a declaration of the authority of God. Human government is but an expression of the Divine will (Rom. 13:1; Acts 4:27, 28).

In the background of the picture are the High Priest, and the religious leaders of the people (verses 11, 15). Christ attributed to Caiaphas "the greater sin", because, instead of recognizing the Messiah, he had handed Him over to the civil powers.

III. The Cruel Death: Behold, Your God!—verses 16-37.

Compare Mt. 27:33-56; Mk. 15:22-41; Lk. 23:33-49.

Three crosses were silhouetted against the Eastern sky, and that of Christ was "in the midst". He is ever pre-eminent (Col. 1:18). That cross is the central fact of all history. It is indeed true that

"All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

The proximity of the other two crosses to the cross of Christ suggests some lessons. Christ died *for* sin, the repentant thief died *to* sin, and the unrepentant thief died *in* sin. One represents salvation *revealed*, another salvation *received*, and the third, salvation *rejected*. "One dying thief was saved that none might despair, but only one, that none might presume."

The inscription, written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, sets forth the fact of the universality of Christ's death; He died for all mankind. These were the three great languages of the day: Hebrew the language of religion, Latin the language of government, and Greek the language of culture. Christ was the High-Priest, the King and Wisdom (Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30).

Many Scripture prophecies dealing with intimate details were fulfilled during those last twenty-four hours, and they indicate that Christ was accomplishing the will of God for

the redemption of the world. John mentions four of them; the lots (Psa. 22:18), the vinegar (Psa. 69:21), the unbroken body (Ex. 12:46; Psa. 34:20), and the pierced side (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7).

Christ shouted with a loud voice of triumph, "It is finished". He had completed the work given Him to do (John 17:4); He had paid the full price of redemption, and had borne the weight of the iniquity of the whole world (Isa. 53:6; John 1:29). Still sovereign, He dismissed His Spirit. Behold, your God! Our salvation was purchased with the blood of God (Acts 20:28).

The blood and water which flowed from the wounded side of Christ were symbolic of the two-fold cleansing which His death made possible. The blood, which has been called "life in solution", speaks of cleansing from the guilt of sin (Lev. 17:11; Rev. 1:5), and the water of cleansing from the power of sin through the quickening energies of the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:8; John 7:38). Blood and water were prominent in the Old Covenant, as in the New (Heb. 9:13-22; Mt. 26:28).

IV. The Tender Burial: Behold, the Lamb of God—verses 38-42.

The entombment of the Son of God was proof that He actually died. He was the Lamb slain (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8).

The relentless foes of Jesus had now departed. The loving hands of disciples and ministering women prepared the precious body for its resting-place.

The sepulchre was new; no other man of woman born had died as He had died. He was God manifest in the flesh.

He had been associated with the poor in His birth (Lk. 2:7; 2 Cor. 8:9), but He was with the rich in His death (Isa. 53:9). He is the Saviour of all who believe, regardless of estate.

GOSPEL WITNESS SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINE

The Testimony of the Apostles Concerning Christ the Son of God

JUNE 1st, to DECEMBER 31st, 1938

Edited by Dr. Olive L. Clark

LESSON I.—June 5th—THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Lesson Text: Acts 1. Golden Text: Acts 1:8.

LESSON II.—June 12th—THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Lesson Text: Acts 2. Golden Text: Acts 2:33.

LESSON III.—June 19th—THE FIRST APOSTOLIC MIRACLE.

Lesson Text: Acts 3. Golden Text: Acts 3:6.

LESSON IV.—June 26th—THE FIRST PERSECUTION.

Lesson Text: Acts 4. Golden Text: Acts 4:12.

LESSON V.—July 3rd—THE SIN OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

Lesson Text: Acts 5. Golden Text: Acts 5:3.

LESSON VI.—July 10th—THE FIRST DEACONS.

Lesson Text: Acts 6. Golden Text: Acts 6:8.

LESSON VII.—July 17th—THE FIRST MARTYR.

Lesson Text: Acts 7. Golden Text: Acts 7:56.

LESSON VIII.—July 24th—THE MINISTRY OF PHILIP.

Lesson Text: Acts 8. Golden Text: Acts 8:35.

LESSON IX.—July 31st—THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Lesson Text: Acts 9. Golden Text: Acts 9:6.

LESSON X.—August 7th—PREACHING IN THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS.

Lesson Text: Acts 10. Golden Text: Acts 10:33.

LESSON XI.—August 14th—THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.

Lesson Text: Acts 11. Golden Text: Acts 11:26.

LESSON XII.—August 21st—PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

Lesson Text: Acts 12. Golden Text: Acts 12:11.

LESSON XIII.—August 28th—PAUL AND BARNABAS SENT FORTH.

Lesson Text: Acts 13. Golden Text: Acts 13:2.

LESSON XIV.—September 4th—THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN LYSTRA.
Lesson Text: Acts 14. Golden Text: Acts 14:10.

LESSON XV.—September 11th—THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.
Lesson Text: Acts 15. Golden Text: Acts 15:18.

LESSON XVI.—September 18th—THE CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.
Lesson Text: Acts 16. Golden Text: Acts 16:30.

LESSON XVII.—September 25th—PAUL PREACHING IN ATHENS.
Lesson Text: Acts 17. Golden Text: Acts 17:28.

LESSON XVIII.—October 2nd—PAUL PREACHING AT CORINTH.
Lesson Text: Acts 18. Golden Text: Acts 18:9.

LESSON XIX.—October 9th—THE RIOT AT EPHESUS.
Lesson Text: Acts 19. Golden Text: Acts 19:20.

LESSON XX.—October 16th—PAUL'S FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS.
Lesson Text: Acts 20. Golden Text: Acts 20:32.

LESSON XXI.—October 23rd—PAUL SEIZED IN JERUSALEM.
Lesson Text: Acts 21. Golden Text: Acts 21:14.

LESSON XXII.—October 30th—PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE MULTITUDE.
Lesson Text: Acts 22. Golden Text: Acts 22:15.

LESSON XXIII.—November 6th—PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.
Lesson Text: Acts 23. Golden Text: Acts 23:1.

LESSON XXIV.—November 13th—PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE FELIX.
Lesson Text: Acts 24. Golden Text: Acts 24:16.

LESSON XXV.—November 20th—PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE FESTUS.
Lesson Text: Acts 25. Golden Text: Acts 25:8.

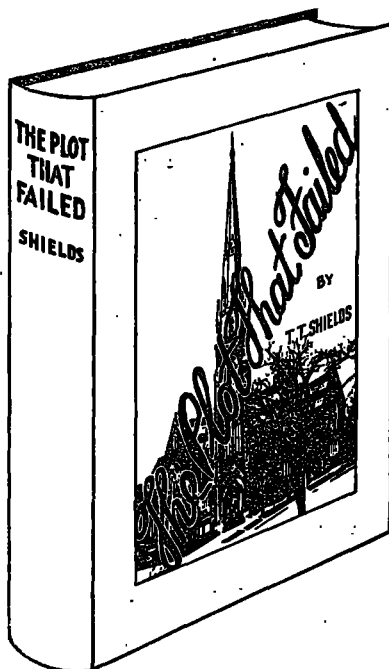
LESSON XXVI.—November 27th—PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE AGRIPPA.
Lesson Text: Acts 26. Golden Text: Acts 26:19.

LESSON XXVII.—December 4th—PAUL SAVED FROM SHIPWRECK.
Lesson Text: Acts 27. Golden Text: Acts 27:23.

LESSON XXVIII.—December 11th—PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME.
Lesson Text: Acts 28. Golden Text: Romans 1:15.

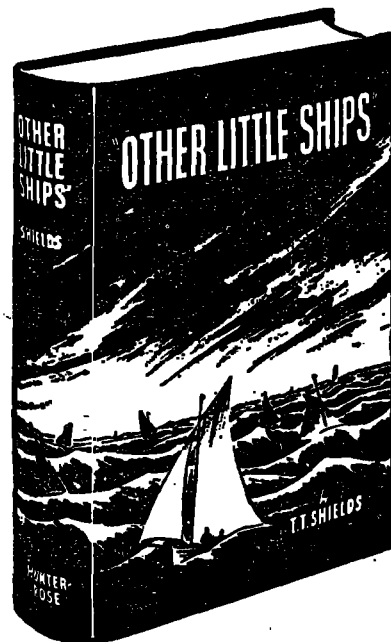
LESSON XXIX.—December 18th—THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOUR.
Lesson Text: Luke 2:1-20. Golden Text: Luke 2:11.

LESSON XXX.—December 25th—THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN.
Lesson Text: Matt. 2:1-12. Golden Text: Matt. 2:2.



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