

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

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

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BOLTS WITHOUT NUTS

The other day we observed a certain machine of excellent quality and dignified appearance that ought to have sped almost silently along the road, but was noisy enough to merit the title of "a rattling good machine". When the hood was lifted, a perfectly good bolt was found in its proper place, but it had no nut on it. The part of the machine that the bolt should have held tightly in its position, was loose and rattling because of the nutless bolt.

By some strange but untraceable association of ideas, the nutless bolt suggested certain sermons and articles which are splendidly written, finely proportioned, of stout material, but because they have no nuts, are useful only to make a rattling noise. They hold nothing in its place, nor help in any way in the establishment of the truth. The Preacher long ago said, "The words of the wise are as . . . nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." But many of the "words" of reputedly "wise" preachers "fasten" nothing. We fear they are not nails at all, nor even tin tacks.

What do we mean? We have a sample before us in an article in a very ably edited and influential paper, entitled, "The Demonic and the Divine Spirit." The article is full of good things. So far as it goes, it seems to us that it is substantially true. But it is a bolt without a nut. What sane man, for instance, could object to this:

"If we take the word *intoxication* in the wider sense, suggested by its derivation, Greek *toxicon*, the poison in which an arrow, *toxon*, was dipped, this contrast is presented to us to-day. Men are being *poisoned* by false ideas and wrong ideals, as well as nourished and refreshed by the truth and grace of Christ. But the term which is current in Continental writings, and is being adopted by some writers in this country is 'demonic'. The injustice, cruelty and violence, which are spreading like a pestilence over the world, seem inexplicable by human nature, character and conduct, and appear to disclose some power or powers of evil that have gained control of men, and are inciting them to this extraordinary wickedness."

But then the author proceeds to unscrew the nuts in these words:

"I am not here going to discuss the question whether there are or are not powers of evil that can take possession of men and use them as their tools. But such an explanation has its practical danger and its theoretical defects. It may tend to weaken the sense of personal responsibility; men may excuse themselves as puppets

without self-control, and cast the blame on the powers which control them."

How much simpler would it be—and how much more effective—to accept the plain and unmistakable teaching of scripture, that there is just such a personal and malignant spirit as the present vicious state of human society seems to suggest; for after all, does not that go to the very core of the question of human responsibility? To admit the doctrine of a personal devil is only to give point to the scriptural admonition, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We have our choice of yielding to the demonic or to the divine Spirit. Surely it must be admitted that it is possible to yield to one or the other: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Many examples of unclinched nails in modern religious teaching, come to our mind. We read recently, for instance, the summary of an editorial entitled, "The Master Spirit of the Ages." The report describes the preacher as saying:

"He (Jesus) is the Master Spirit because He deals adequately with our sin by making us hate sin."

It is quite true that the Lord Jesus teaches men to hate sin, but of what advantage is that if we stop there? A leper may hate his leprosy. A cancer victim may hate the cancer that is sapping his life. But where is the remedy? Why will men persist in taking the nut off every New Testament bolt? Why not dispense with Jesus altogether if we cannot take Him as the Bible represents Him to be? If the preacher reported had gone farther and said that Jesus is the Master Spirit of the ages because "the blood of Jesus Christ, his (God's) Son, cleanseth us from all sin", his "words" would have been wise, and would have fastened something.

This modern teaching reminds us of a story of an old lady at the time of the Great War, who enquired of some humorous aviator what would happen if, when at a great altitude, an aeroplane should run out of gas. The aviator replied, "Why, it would have to stay up there! There are no gas stations from which to refuel." He then assured the old lady that this sad fate had befallen many an aviator!

The defect of such modern teaching is not in what is said, but in what is left unsaid. Their words are aeroplanes which start somewhere, but never arrive. This is the "caution", the "tolerance", the "open-mindedness", the "neutrality", of the modern spirit. It is unfashionable to be positive about anything. The multiplication table may be sufficiently established to justify the founding and conduct of a bank or a governmental exchequer upon its principles; the alphabet may be sufficiently comprehensive and complete to provide the elements of countless millions of books on all subjects—but the Bible must not be taken for what it is, the full-orbed revelation of principles which govern the moral universe. Hence we must account for Hitler, Mussolini, Japan, and Russia, by some other means than by saying that they derive their inspiration from Satan!

The mind of the Modernist seems to be habitually critical, so that he cannot take even the smallest package of truth from the divine store-house without rejecting the wrapper or the string with which it is tied. He prefers to use a bolt without a nut. And yet the best and stoutest of bolts, without a nut, may be less effective than an ordinary nail securely clinched. Men seem to be so fearful of being charged with the folly of orthodoxy, so much afraid—if we may inoffensively resort to slang—of being regarded as "nutty", that they avoid nuts altogether!

For ourselves, we are bold enough to assume the substantive in the adjective, and even actually to declare that behind the demonic there are real demons, and behind the satanic, a real Satan; and further, to insist that the demonic and satanic in human life argue the reality of demons and of Satan, and therefore make it absolutely necessary that we call in the help of the One Who is "stronger than the strong man armed", and that the hope of the individual, of society, of the nation—of the world—is to be found alone in the sovereign grace of a sovereign Lord.

THE HABIT OF COMPLAINING

It is no part of a Christian's duty to condone sin, or to be tolerant toward any kind of evil; but there is a vast difference between faithfully rebuking a wrong-doer with a loving desire to bring such an one to a better frame of mind and to a righteous course of action, and the taking up of a critical, fault-finding attitude toward some people in particular, and everybody in general.

The fact is, we are all faulty, and anyone of discernment will have little difficulty in drawing attention to our faults. So far as most of us are concerned, fault-finding is quite unnecessary since our faults are sufficiently patent to all. If there be wrong in anyone that needs correction, the proper thing to do is to register our complaint to the person offending, or, if it be a public evil, to deal with it openly and justly, and in such a way as to correct it. We do well to discipline a critical disposition, and to exorcise a censorious spirit. Nothing will do more to destroy a spirit of unity and co-operation in any company than the introduction of a critical spirit.

FROM AUSTRALIA AND AFRICA

We publish two letters herewith which afford an illustration of the widespread ministry of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. We have this week received letters also from England and Ireland; and a letter from a missionary in China, sending \$20.00 in gold. By the publication of

these letters we would send greetings to the members of THE GOSPEL WITNESS family in various parts of Africa, Australia, New Zealand, China, India, and elsewhere. The letters speak for themselves:

Sandgate, N.E. 7, Queensland, Australia.

"Dear Dr. Shields,

"THE GOSPEL WITNESS told me of the destruction of your beautiful Church by fire. I felt much moved as I read of your great loss, and the loss of the members of your great Church. I am sure that this sad news has brought sorrow to all lovers of God and His House, and many prayers will have gone up to God's throne for His blessing upon you, and amongst these mine own have mingled.

"Through THE GOSPEL WITNESS I have shared with your members the blessing and inspiration of your God-given messages. They have been a great source of help to me in my work, and also to my own soul, and I thank you for them. I am sorry I am not wealthy enough to send you some financial assistance towards the new Church. I can not send money, but you can depend upon my sincere prayers, and I am sure that God will raise up those who will help you in erecting a new Church. You have been a great blessing to the City of Toronto, and your good influence I am sure is felt right through the Dominion, and through your messages you have blessed those living in the far distant part of God's world. Myself amongst that number. God bless you in your great work.

"The loss of the Church I know will be a source of rejoicing to the enemies of God and His people. But out of the seeming calamity God is able to work greater victories than we have ever seen. The Lord our refuge is. And ever will remain; Since he has made us His, He will our cause maintain. In vain our enemies oppose, For God is stronger than our foes. Hallelujah. I would have sent an expression of sorrow and regard before, but have been away from home on special service for the Master.

"Go on with your great and good work. Keep hitting the devil, and his agents, like Hepburn and the Vatican. We are up against the same evils here.

God Bless You,

Yours in His Service,

(Signed) _____
Brigadier, The Salvation Army."
May 10th, 1938.

From a Baptist Pastor in Africa

Durban, June 7th, 1938.

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"May I add my little offering to your Building Fund (\$10.00), in the hope that your new building may exceed the former, as the temple surpassed the glory of the tabernacle.

"Since our first correspondence, May, 1932, I have followed your work through THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I am one of the many far from your church who are drinking deeply of the waters of life which flow so freely through your church ministry and THE WITNESS. Your ministry is a constant inspiration; your evangelical and doctrinal sermons instruct and encourage; and not least, your fighting sermons—as the last received, 'Has Britain been inveigled into an alliance with antichrist by the Chamberlain pact of friendship with Mussolini?'—find a very deep response and agreement in my own heart.

"I thank God for your courage, grace and faith, in facing the great task this fire involves. God has been glorified in the attitude you have taken, and your determination not to allow this to hinder the great work you and your faithful helpers are engaged in.

"Your stand for and witness to the Bible as the word of God, and all involved in that, is a help to those who never hear your voice, but feel your spirit speaking in the printed page. I trust you will be guarded against too great physical and mental strain. It is possible the adversary may seek to destroy another 'temple'—which cannot be rebuilt.

"Assuring you of our sympathy, and of our thanks and admiration, I unite with thousands across the seas in praying that God may bless your efforts and make your ministry more powerful than before.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) _____"

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHY THE BELLS OF HEAVEN RING

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 19th, 1938.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts 20:21.

On more than one occasion the Lord Jesus described a condition of life that would consist predominantly in "weeping and gnashing of teeth", but in so doing He referred to a future state. Without awaiting the future, here and now, a very large part of the world in our day seems to be thoroughly occupied with weeping and gnashing of teeth. In contrast therewith, our Lord also spoke of a condition of heavenly life where He said, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God".

That heavenly joy had an earthly strain. Heaven was said to be made glad because of something that had taken place on earth. Surely there are few of us who do not desire to find our way, if possible, to some fountain of gladness, to some wellspring of joy, in the midst of earth's welter of war. I find my self sometimes not a little depressed in spirit as I contemplate world-conditions. We have had now for a long time an experience not unlike a prolonged wet and dreary season when the sun has ceased to shine. We have had a kind of perpetual Lancashire. It is said of Lancashire that it rains there nine days a week! It is always raining. The world has known little good news for a long time, and if there be any place where the sun is shining, if there be any sort of joy springing up anywhere, I at least should be grateful to anyone who would lead me to it.

And there is such a joy. There are "pleasures forevermore" at the right hand of God. The passage I have referred to speaks of a special occasion of joy—and an occasion of special joy "in the presence of the angels of God".

That joy is said to be caused by a sinner's repenting, whatever that may mean. Surely it must be something of tremendous significance that can make the bells of heaven ring! It is worth while our thinking of it, to see if we can find our way to this realm of gladness.

The Apostle Paul, speaking to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, on his way to Jerusalem, summarized his ministry among them for three and a half years. He told them in a few words that he had spent his time testifying "to the Jews, and also to the Greeks", two things: "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ". They are still the two indispensable. None of us can ever find the way to abiding happiness until we have learned the meaning of this twofold duty devolving upon all of us. It may be this evening, by God's good grace, someone may learn to make melody in his heart to the Lord, and thus make melody in heaven. That is the subject of our study this evening.

The longer I live, and the more experience I have, the more I am impressed with the importance of dealing, particularly in our day, with these elementary principles;

because that which is called the old gospel has become the newest thing in the world. I am positive there is nothing more necessary to the well-being of the individual or to society at large, to the nation, or to the whole world—nothing, I say, so necessary as that we should learn over again these first principles.

I.

What is meant by "REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD" AS A PREREQUISITE TO ABIDING JOY HERE OR HEREAFTER? The moment one speaks of repentance, the minds of many will think of some atrocious evil, of some gross and animalistic sin, of a life addicted to some form of appetite, of one's wallowing in the mire of uncleanness. Their minds will turn to the debauchee or to the drunkard as the man who needs to repent. That is not what is here meant. Certainly where such vices obtain repentance in respect thereto will be involved in it, but this has to do with profounder and more general principles than that.

Repentance toward God involves a change of mind toward Him, a change of mind in respect to the misconceptions of God which have been entertained. No one was ever so misunderstood, or so misrepresented, in the whole universe, as the God Who is the Author of its being. God has been maligned, caricatured; and many a religion of to-day—even religions bearing the Christian name—are guilty of producing burlesques of Christianity, a caricature of the Godhead. We can never be happy, never be rightly related to a universe of law, and to the personal Law-Giver Who dwells at the heart of it, unless we come to understand Who and what He is.

I say, how grossly God is misunderstood and misconceived! The God of the universe would be unwelcome in the majority of human assemblies. Nothing would fill many people with such fear, with such dread, as an assurance of the divine presence. There is a fear of God which is legitimate, and which is incumbent upon all of us, a filial fear—and there is a fear of God which is an insult to the divine Majesty. How grotesquely men have represented God in all the religions of the earth, in all the pagan philosophies! The devil is the master-liar; the father of all lies is responsible. The difficulty with men in their natural state is that they do not understand God. They do not know what He is like.

I have sometimes thought that few men have been more lied about than the Pastor of Jarvis Street Church. I have been almost amused sometimes, and have ceased to be indignant by reports that have come to my knowledge. Someone told me of a home—one of many cases of which I have heard—where a certain station

was forbidden when our evening services were broadcast. A Jarvis Street voice of any sort was not to enter the home. One evening, by accident, the station was dialed, and the presiding will in that home—or the mind behind the will—listened to the service, and had a visitation from God, and wondered whence the message had come. When told that it had come from her pet aversion she explained, "That is not possible."

I am not disturbed by it. The One Who made this world of beauty and of order, Who elaborately and appropriately furnished it for our comfort and enjoyment, and Who has presided over human destiny from the beginning until now, is in some quarters looked upon as an enemy of human well-being, as an unwelcome guest at any feast. If there are any thus minded here this evening, who almost by accident have dropped into this hall because you would not go to a church, let me tell you that there is no abiding peace for you until you have learned that the Creator and Ruler of it all is not what you conceive Him to be. You must repent toward God; you must have an entirely different mind toward God; you must entertain radically different thoughts of the divine Ruler if you are to learn the secret of everlasting joy.

And growing out of their misconceptions, *men have assumed the wrong attitude toward God*. The mind of man is antagonistic toward its Maker. Why should it be so? What has God ever done to any one of us that one should be His enemy?

I am not speaking now of that lower realm of misconduct and evil-doing to which men descend who, having no fear of God before their eyes, give themselves up to every kind of excess of riot. I am not speaking of those vulgar, grosser forms of evil. They are but incidental; they are, of course, the outcome, the fruit, of wrong thinking. It is in the mind of man the trouble lies. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Men have always drawn false pictures of God, and on that ground have taken up a wrong attitude toward Him.

Think of Russia with its anti-God campaign, its campaign for the promotion of godlessness, for the eradication of the very idea of God from the minds even of little children. That is bad enough. But it is not much worse than the conceptions entertained by many in other lands than Russia. We need not go to Germany or Italy. Men in our land—and in Ontario—have assumed an attitude toward God that would be justified only if He were our sworn enemy. I met a man once to whom I offered my hand in friendly greeting. He put his hand behind his back and said, "I will not shake hands with you." I said, "I am sorry, sir; I desired to greet you with the kindest intention." "I do not believe you mean it. I have heard all about you."

How the newspapers lie! How terribly they misrepresent everything very often! They tell the truth occasionally, of course. Why the proneness to evil? Because the human mind is perverted. May I say that men will not shake hands with God. They will not greet Him. They take up an attitude of opposition, of antagonism toward Him. But said Paul, "You will have to change your mind toward God." The indispensable thing, the *sine qua non*, is "repentance toward God".

Out of that attitude, of course, grows a *course of evil conduct*. Men set themselves in defiance against what-

ever gods there be, in a spirit of bravado—"I do not care." Do not care for what? "I will live as I like." Who is preventing you? "I will not pray." Who has asked you to? What is wrong with you, man? Why your madness? You are out of sorts with God. You think you have a justifiable quarrel with Him, and you turn your back upon Him. And it is quite enough for anyone to tell you that you are doing wrong for you to go still farther on your evil course.

A few years ago I protested against the present liquor regulations. Shall I tell you why some of you cannot get me by telephone? You can always find me through the office number. After my protest, for several months, for twenty-four hours of the day my telephone rang, and I was afflicted with torrents of abuse, and often of obscenity. At one, two, three, four, five o'clock in the morning, my telephone would ring—and then nearly always a woman would ask some question. She would talk a while, and then say, "By the way, how would you like a glass of Hepburn's beer?" Then would follow laughter, and I knew she was speaking from a cocktail party—or something worse. Whether it was they or someone else who laid our building in ashes, I do not know, or greatly care; because God will put it up again. But I do know that when men take up a wrong attitude toward God, and run off in the ways of evil, they gallop toward the precipice, as though they were doing injury to God, they gnash their teeth against Him.

That will not do. There is no salvation for anyone until he repents of his attitude toward God. He must take up a different attitude of mind altogether.

I was wondering this afternoon how I should put it to you, and I said to myself. I will put it this way. I will ask my congregation this evening *if they have ever thought of the inevitable God*. You cannot get rid of Him. He is, whether we like it or not; whether we know Him or not. God lives, and our relationship to Him, in some form or another, is inevitable. We cannot escape it.

"Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

You do not like Him? That is because you do not know Him. You do not love Him? That is because of your spiritual darkness. But whether you like Him or not, my dear friends—hear me. I care not who you are, if you could count your wealth by millions, if your knowledge were encyclopaedic, if your culture were beyond that of all your contemporaries, if you were one of the greatest men of earth—I should still have to say to you that you had better learn how to get along with God, for you cannot get along without Him. Sooner or later, you will have to deal directly with Him.

I have known men in business who would put up with almost anything rather than lose a dollar. They are infinitely patient with an awkward customer, in the hope of reaping a little profit from commerce with him. Men have said to me, "I do not like to submit to this sort of thing. I feel like telling some men to get out of my office, and not come back; but that would not be good business. So I pocket my pride, and submit to all kinds of insults, and sometimes to grave injustices, rather than effect a break in our relationship." "Why?" "Oh, rather than lose the customer, I put up with his conduct."

You had better learn to "put up" with God. I do not say who or what He is for the moment, but I declare in His name that we must learn the secret, if we are to find joy here or hereafter, of right relationship with God the inevitable. We conform to such laws as we cannot evade. We use stairs or elevators to go up and down, because we cannot set at naught what men call the law of gravitation—I do not know whether they know what it is, or not. On every hand we learn to adjust ourselves to circumstances, to laws that are unescapable. I want you to think of the unescapable God, and to remind you that if life is to be attuned to the harmonies of the universe, it must first of all be attuned to God. Therefore, I preach repentance toward God.

But some man will say, "How shall I change my mind toward God? I do not know anything about him." I talked with someone this morning who came with friends to the service, who said, "I never go to church." She was a very thoughtful woman apparently, but when I spoke to her of Christ, she said, "You call Him Christ: I call Him Life." There was a recognition of that intangible, undefinable something, or Someone, from Whom it is impossible, wholly to escape, but Whom she did not know for Himself. How shall we know Him? How shall we come into proper relation to Him?

II.

You will readily see, on a moment's reflection, that AN INTELLIGENT REPENTANCE IS CONTINGENT UPON AN ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S DISCLOSURE OF HIMSELF WHEREVER THAT MAY BE. If I want to know a man, I cannot be satisfied by reading his biography, or by learning something about him second-hand. A friend may say to me, "Mr. So-and-So is a very excellent man." I reply, "I am not inclined to question your judgment, but I do not know him." "He is a very delightful man." "He may be to you, but I do not know him." The only way I can know a man is to meet him personally—and very probably a good many times. I must meet him, and live with him, and feel something of the response of my own spirit to his, until he, by word and act and general conduct, at last reveals himself: then I say, "Now I know him." "Who told you?" "Nobody. I saw the man himself, and he showed me what he is."

One may tell you what he thinks about God. I can only tell you about Him. If I speak of God, I can but tell you my conception of God. If I were to tell you what you ought to do to please God, that would be to set up my standard of judgment. The great matter for us to consider is, Has this God to whom we are to be rightly related, so come into relationship to man that it is possible for us to know Him? It is of no use to propound to me a nebulous idea about a vague Someone or Something, somewhere. I cannot tell you what I think of such a thing or of such an one. Paul says, "I spent my time among you testifying to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

What did Paul mean? *That we cannot repent toward God until we see God as He reveals Himself in Christ;* for in Christ we come to know who and what God is. As often as I preach, in some form or another, I must proclaim this truth, that there is no way of knowing God save through Jesus Christ. I am not interested in the god of a science falsely-so-called, of what men of science

think about God. I am not interested in your philosophical speculations. It seems the most reasonable thing in the world that if there be a God, and if He is the Author of all things that are, He cannot remain in everlasting obscurity. He is bound to come out of the unknown and say to His human creatures, "Here I am. Judge me, whether you will serve me or not." That is precisely what God has done in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God.

That is a false religion, I care not whether it bears the Baptist name, the Presbyterian name, the Christian Science name, the Russellite name, the Episcopalian name, the United Church name, the Unitarian name, the Roman Catholic name—any religion which denies that Jesus Christ is God, is a false religion. You cannot find out God by your own searching. Out of the unknown and the invisible He has come to us as "the image of the invisible God": "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The question for you and me to determine is this, whether our attitude toward God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ is a correct one; and if it is not a correct one, then we must repent toward God, and have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must receive Him as the Norm, as the Standard, as the Balances in which all human opinions must be weighed:

"What think ye of Christ is the test,
To try both your plan and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him."

There is perhaps a man here this evening who says, "If God is like Jesus Christ, if it be so that the God against Whom I have raved in my folly, and against Whose law I have lifted my hand, if that God be anything like Jesus Christ, then I have been wrong." You see how repentance and faith are but two aspects of the same thing? You cannot believe without repenting, and you cannot repent without believing. But as you believe in the God Who unveils Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, you are faced with the consideration as to whether you have taken up a correct attitude toward Him, and whether the notions you have entertained concerning God are in accord with His disclosure of Himself in the person of His Son.

Let us think for a minute or two of the wonder that God has come down to us in the person of His Son. There are preachers who pride themselves upon their intelligence—usually they are proud of very little. Some years ago I knew of a man who thought he was very "intellectual". One Sunday morning his wife was heard to remark after her husband's sermon, quietly and confidentially to a friend, "The difficulty is, of course, that my husband always preaches over the heads of the people." I knew the gentleman, and if it were true, then the people must have been lying on the floor! His preaching, in my humble judgment, was devoid of any intellectual strength. What nonsense! Even if it were so, it would be no compliment to the preacher.

Have you ever heard of the woman who went up from the country, to hear the world's greatest preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon? There was a vast throng present. The woman listened intently to the sermon, and went away. Relating her experience afterward, she said she had been greatly disappointed in Mr. Spurgeon's preaching. Someone enquired why, saying, "I understood he

is a great preacher. Did you not think so? "No." "And why not?" "I understood every word he said."

That is the end of all true preaching. And do you know that the great God was desirous that you and I should understand every word He has ever said? He stooped to the level and capacity of our finite minds, and wrapped Himself in human flesh, and came to us as a Man; and when they were vaguely feeling out after God, one of them who had long been impressed with the wonder of this Man Jesus, at last when he thought he was going to lose Him, said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And the Man-Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

Let me ask you a simple question, as it might be put to you by the proverbial "man in the street", How do you like God? What do you think of God? Of God as represented in the person of Jesus Christ? Have you any reason to quarrel with Him? He is the Giver of all. Is not that a wonderful word which says, "All things were made by him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." And again, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." In His own world, men did not know Him. But Jesus Christ is God.

My good friend this morning with whom I talked seemed to have a vague idea of an impersonal Spirit somewhere. Ah, that will not do. We must have a personal God. We must know what He is like,—and that He is like Jesus. Can you believe in God as represented in Jesus Christ?

I have not time this evening for a detailed analysis, or even for a full summary of the record of the days of His flesh, but what a liberal Giver He was! He was always giving things, always enriching. When He spoke, the words that came from His lips were "gracious words", words of comfort and of kindness. Would you like a God like that? How did He spend His life? I know that He never injured anyone. He was kind to the little children. I do not believe that dogs ever ran away from the Lord Jesus, or any creature He had made. He was the very incarnation of benevolence as He walked this selfish earth. He fed people when they were hungry. He healed them when they were sick. He opened their eyes when they were blind. He unstopped their ears to the music of the world, and the myriad voices that sing the praises of God: that He did for men who were deaf. He loosed the tongue of the dumb: "Looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened." It cost Him many a sigh to teach us how to speak, how to walk, how to live; and I am glad He went all the way to the graveside, and even called the dead back to life again. Standing with the sisters this God-Man, this Man Who was very God of very Gods, mingled His tears with Mary and Martha; so kind and loving was He, "Jesus wept".

Can you love a God like that? Is there anyone here who says, "If that is what God is like, I am wrong. My attitude toward God has been entirely wrong, if God is like Jesus Christ." God is like Jesus Christ; but more than that, God is Jesus, and Jesus is God, the only God we know. Therefore, we must repent toward God, and have "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ".

What a Teacher He was! How very patient! The wisdom of the universe was incarnate in Him: "In

whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge . . . for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And yet He talked with people as though they were children in the primary class. When they asked Him questions, desiring to know, He answered them always most kindly. There never was a teacher like our Lord Jesus. I had a teacher when I was a boy of whom I was afraid. He was a teacher of mathematics. He taught by what I should call in our day the aeroplane method. He stood before a blackboard and put his problem on the board, and said, "There you are—and there is the answer." I said to myself, "That is all right, but how on earth do you get from here to there?" He never told us. He never explained. And if we asked him a question, he nearly cut our heads off. "Have you no sense?" That man was not a good teacher: he was too clever to be a good teacher. If he had known how to tutor a boy that was a little—what do we say now, "dumb"?—and patiently explain the difficult problem and say, "Come along with me until we solve this problem together", his students would have learned something probably.

But hear *Him*—Oh, hear Him: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that by the Spirit giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." God will not blame you for asking questions. Jesus Christ will not humiliate you if you come to Him and say, "Lord I do not know. Wilt Thou not please tell me?" After He had preached to the multitude, and was alone with His disciples, they said, "Please tell us. There were some difficult passages in Thy teaching that we did not understand. Wilt Thou please explain it?" And the great Teacher taught them privately. That is God. I repeat, *that is God!* God will instruct you privately. He will condescend to the littleness of our understanding.

How do you like God? Have you been wrong in your attitude toward Him? How ready He was to direct those who wanted direction! A Guide and Counsellor to everyone. I can not delineate the character of the Lord Jesus; I can not sketch His portrait. But it is in the Book, painted by a Master Hand. How do you like Him?

III.

What is it to have "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"? It is just to receive Him as God, and to interpret God in terms of Christ's revelation of God. If that be so, you and I have been very, very, wicked. How ungrateful we have been to the Giver of every good and perfect gift! There are men and women here to-night, I doubt not, who have gone to their table day after day for years, and have eaten of that which He provided, and as yet they have never for themselves bowed their head and given thanks to God. There is some father here this evening whose children have never heard their father's voice in thanksgiving at the table, which the hand of God has spread. If that be so, you have something of which to repent, even if you are the best father in the world. By the fact that you have misrepresented God to your children, you have sinned against God and against them. How basely ungrateful we all have been! How we need, every one of us, to repent of our attitude toward God!

We have refused His guidance. We have brought ourselves into a world of trouble because we would not listen to God as revealed in Christ. When you come to see the eternal goodness as it shines in the face of the

Lord Jesus Christ, and think of how you have lived toward Him, you will feel the need of repentance.

There were men who crucified Him. Theirs was a Christless religion, an orthodoxy without Incarnate Deity at its heart. When they learned who He was, and learned that the Man Whom they had nailed to the cross as an expression of their enmity toward Him, was none other than God Himself, they said in effect, "What a terrible blunder! What shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent. Acknowledge that you were wrong. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."

Our difficulty is this, that when we come to see what sin really is—you may never have got drunk; you may not be a liar; you may be eminently respectable, and may even be religious—but when once you get a clear view of God in Christ, and see what a Lover He is, you cannot help but repent. The difficulty is, I say, that repentance may almost drive one to despair. It would be so in my case. I should have to say, How can I get out of my dilemma? How can I get out of my difficulty? I have taken sides with those who crucified Him. I have hated God. What shall I do?

There is nothing you can do. When we come to see that we have sinned against that love of which we have been singing—"O Love that wilt not let me go"—that we have spent our life in blatant, open hostility to the best Friend we ever had, to the One Who loved us with an everlasting love, we are disposed to say, "The case is hopeless." The poor drunkard wallowing in the ditch may be an object of pity, but he is no greater sinner than the man who has been thinking his own thoughts, and has allowed himself to become an avowed enemy of God in Christ—when he sees that, he says, "That is sin; that is sin greater than any sin of the flesh. Bad as that may be, it is only outward: my heart must be made right in the sight of God."

We need a further revelation of God. For myself, I cannot see that there is any way out at all except through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. There I have another view of Christ, and I remember that God "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." With a patient, merciful, longsuffering grace, the infinite grace of an infinite God, He made provision for our folly, and laid all our sins upon the Just One, and wounded Him for our transgressions, bruised Him for our iniquities, laid the chastisement of our peace upon Him, and healed us with His stripes. When thus we see that God did, in the infinitude of His grace, make His soul an offering for sin, that so He might keep the law and yet make it possible that He might justly forgive the law-breaker, we have a full-orbed revelation of God. A God of law? Yes. Of order? Yes. Of justice? Yes. Of truth and righteousness? Yes. All these sterner qualities of Deity are supremely exemplified at the cross.

And what else? Mercy? Yes. Loving kindness? Yes. And the big word, love? Yes. And the biggest word of all, which comprehends all these qualities and many more—grace? Grace! Grace! Grace! Which means, as I have often told you, everything there is of God engaged in saving a poor sinner. Then the sinner comes to say, "And I, in my blindness, thought I could do without Him. Now I have learned that He would not do without me." So we come to sing in a very different tone, and the angels join us in our singing,—

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high:
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last!"

And as we make port we shall hear the angels of heaven, and the multitude of the redeemed sing, "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him—unto him—be glory, both now and forever, Amen."

Let us pray:

O Lord, we have no right to come in ourselves, and yet we have every right to come as those who have repented, or are now repenting, and whose faith is reposed in the Lord Jesus Christ. May we hear some echo of the music of the Skies in our hearts, bringing these discordant lives of ours into harmony with Thy perfect will. Teach us even now, the angels' song, that so we shall be ready for the celestial glory when Thou shalt summon us to thine eternal home of peace. Amen.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

TIMMINS—*Rev. H. C. Slade.* "We had a great and blessed day on Sunday when ten candidates passed through the waters of baptism. They were converted during the last few months. The church was crowded, and seven came forward for salvation. What a joy to see many of our Sunday School children stepping out on the Lord's side! How we praise God for these blessings, and we know that more will come. Our pastor is going to British Columbia and Alberta to visit the Conventions, and we pray that he may be a blessing and a means of developing the fellowship of the Regular Baptists of Canada. In his absence Rev. Wilfred Wellington will occupy the pulpit."—F.B.

MAPLE HILL AND MOUNT ALBERT. Rev. W. N. Charlton was the preacher at the Anniversary services of the Mount Albert Church on Sunday, June 12th. In the evening Mr. Charlton also preached at Vivian, where one young man made a profession of faith in Christ.

On the Sunday following, Rev. W. S. Whitcombe preached at Maple Hill in the morning, at Mount Albert in the afternoon, and at Vivian at night. The Maple Hill Church has recently called Mr. Arthur McAsh, of Toronto Baptist Seminary, to be their pastor, and they are looking forward to greater things. Mr. Norman Rowan, under whose ministry the new work at Vivian has experienced much blessing, has accepted the call extended to him by the Mount Albert Church, and will continue at both these places.

Summer Student Work

From one of our students, Mr. C. Leach, stationed at Avoca, Quebec province, during the summer, comes the following report: "I am pleased to report a measure of blessing upon the work here. The meetings up to date have been very well attended, and the Lord has been in our company blessing His own Word to our souls. I believe some have been convicted and the Lord is dealing with them, so that I am content to preach His Word and let Him convict, and save in His own time."

We would remind all our readers to bear up: all the students before the Throne of Grace in their ministrations of the Word during the summer.

A Human Curse and a Divine Blessing

Through the faithful testimony of one of our pioneer churches in the North, a man and his wife, both French Canadians, have turned from the superstitions of Rome to the gospel of the grace of God. As soon as their conversion became generally known, an organized persecution was begun against the Baptist Church. As a sample of the treatment meted out to this man and his wife who had the courage of their convictions, we were given a copy of a long letter which the local priest sent to his former members. We give a translation of several paragraphs:

"God has already fulminated anathemas against the wicked, and this is what I do in the name of God; I curse you Mr. and Mrs. ———. May God take the part of the priests that you have treated so maliciously in a defamatory fashion. I curse you because you despise the priests of God; because you are causing a scandal, because you are abusing the grace of your faith. You are sinning in full light. You are denying the dearest thing you have, your religion which has sanctified so many souls, your relatives, your friends. You are denying even the most precious things that the good Lord had given you, the gift of faith which He has not given to others and that you are abandoning. I am asking God to execute this curse as soon as it seems good to Him. You have said that it was useless for me to visit you (contempt), that you will not receive me (contempt), not even to write to you."

In districts where the Roman Catholics are in the minority, the priests attempt to cloke the spirit of the Inquisition with a borrowed robe of tolerance, but in districts where they are in the majority, they show their deadly hatred of Protestantism. But over against the cursing of a human priest, those who suffer contumely for the sake of their Lord, may rejoice in the blessing of a Divine Priest: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." We earnestly pray that these dear friends in the North may experience the fulness of this Divine blessing.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 Third Quarter Lesson 27 July 3rd, 1938

THE SIN OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

Lesson Text: Acts 5.

Golden Text: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"—Acts 5:3.

1. Punishment from the Holy God—verses 1-11.

The individual members of the Church at Jerusalem were not compelled to enter into the plan of the community of goods. Ananias and Sapphira were at liberty to keep a part, or even the whole of the price of their land. Their sin consisted in pretending to have given all. They coveted the reputation for whole-hearted consecration which Jesus had earned (Acts 4:36, 37), but they were unwilling to make the sacrifice involved. They sought the glory of men rather than the glory of God (John 5:44).

Men lay themselves open to temptation when they allow Satan a place in their hearts or thoughts (Eph. 4:27). It was the privilege of Ananias and Sapphira to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and had that been their experience, Satan, a liar from the beginning (John 8:44), could not have controlled them and filled them (John 13:2, 27). They had agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, to put Him to the test to see if they could sin with impunity (Matt. 4:7; Heb. 3:9).

Deception may be by act, as well as by word. Ananias had lied, even though the record does not mention that he uttered any untruth. How careful we should be not to misrepresent the truth (Prov. 12:22)!

Ananias and Sapphira sinned against the apostles and against the Church, but their offence was primarily against God (Psa. 51:4). All sin is a violation of the holy law of God: sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4 Revised Version).

God answered their challenge by swift and severe judgment. It was necessary to teach the Church at the very commencement of its history that God is holy, and that men trifle with Him at their peril. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10; 14:26, 27; Hab. 2:20).

II. Progress in the Holy Church—verses 12-16.

The disciplinary judgment meted out to Ananias and Sapphira had a wholesome effect upon the Church. Believers recognized the seriousness of sinning against a holy God (1 Cor. 5:2), and unbelievers feared to join the Church. The

moral health of the Church was thus protected from the contagion of evil. It is not wise to admit men too readily to the sacred society of believers.

While some undesirable people were kept from joining the Church, multitudes of true believers were added to the Church. The apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached the word of salvation with power, and their message was gladly received. God gave them favor with the people by performing miracles by their hands (Acts 4:29, 30).

III. Protection For the Holy Apostles—verses 17-42.

The angel of the Lord who encamps round about those who fear Him brought deliverance to the imprisoned apostles (Psa. 34:7; 125:2; Acts 12:7). He commissioned them to return to the temple and to continue preaching the words of eternal life (John 6:68). They yielded prompt obedience. The Lord delights to have His servants obey Him promptly, willingly, fully and gladly (1 Sam. 15:22):

The Sanhedrin Council had not been able to prevent the spread of the Gospel by their threats (Acts 4:17, 21), but they feared to use violence against the apostles because of the people. The charge brought against Peter and the other apostles was two-fold: (1) They had filled Jerusalem with their teaching (John 11:47, 48), contrary to the command they had received to cease preaching in the name of Christ. (2) They were holding the Jewish leaders responsible for the death of Christ, and might stir up the people to insurrection and avenge His blood upon the Jews.

The first charge was in reality a tribute to the power of the Gospel and the faithfulness of the apostles in proclaiming it. Peter did not refer the problem of his duty to the Sanhedrin as before (Acts 4:19), but he stated his conviction in no uncertain tones. They must obey God rather than men. As to the second charge, the Jews had declared their willingness to assume responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ, not realizing the far-reaching significance of their momentous statement (Matt. 27:25). Peter repeated his former declarations as to the Person and Work of Christ, His crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation, the guilt of those who rejected Him and the reward of those who received Him (Acts 2:23, 24, 32, 36; 3:13-15; 4:10-12).

Christians who bear witness for Christ are not alone in their labour, for they are engaged in the same holy ministry as the Holy Spirit, given to those who obey the Lord, who exercise the obedience of faith unto salvation (Acts 2:38, 39; 11:17; Rom. 1:5).

The members of the Council were cut to the heart by the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12), but the painful indignation did not lead to repentance and faith (Contrast Acts 2:37, 38), for their wills were set against the truth, and instead of yielding to God they deliberated about putting the apostles to death.

Once again the Lord protected His servants from the wrath of their enemies, using Gamaliel as His instrument. This learned doctor of the law, the teacher of the Apostle Paul (Acts 22:3), urged caution. In order to prove that they must proceed carefully, he cited two instances from contemporary history of the work of deceivers coming to nought. If the work of the apostles should not be genuine, it would soon be destroyed of itself, but if it should be of God, it could not be destroyed. Events would prove the issue (Matt. 11:19).

Though speaking in the name of the Lord Jesus brought them suffering and shame, the apostles continued to teach and preach for the glory of that precious Name (Matt. 5:11; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:14).

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