

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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

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What the Fire of March 4th, 1938, Left of Jarvis Street Church Auditorium

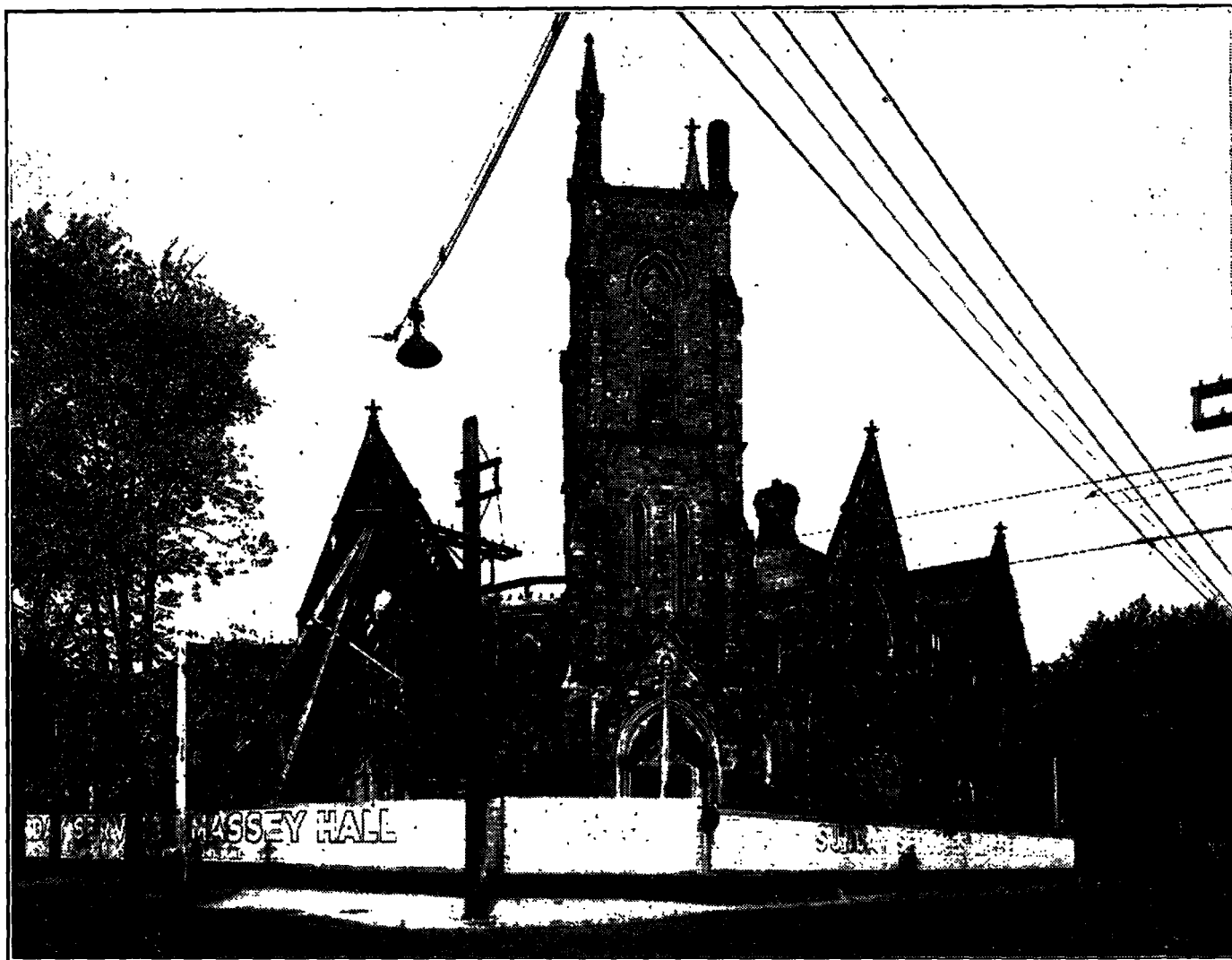


Looking south-east on Jarvis Street. The corner of the Seminary Building is visible on the left.

REBUILDING OF JARVIS STREET CHURCH BEGINS

In this issue we publish several reproductions of photographs of the Jarvis Street building as it has stood since the fire of March fourth last. The whole building was surrounded with hoarding, and we made use of it as an advertising medium, to let all who went past the church know that our services were being held in Massey Hall and Cooke's Church. On the east wall of the building

There is to be a new entrance on the west front of the church, which has equal the combined capacity of the entrances at the north-west and south-west corners of the building. The masonry for this piece of work, a house in itself, is already rising to the ground level. Inside, the riggers have been at work demolishing two great chimneys which rose to a height of over eighty feet. Inside these chimneys there were great castiron smokestacks, weighing many, many tons. As the brick work is taken down, these iron lengths of ten feet each



JARVIS STREET CHURCH RUINS

Looking north-east at the corner of Jarvis and Gerrard Streets.

we erected a large sign which is illuminated at night, making the same announcement. We thought our friends would like to see the remains of the old building once more before the work of reconstruction began.

The contract for the reconstruction of the auditorium proper has been let to Witchall & Son, contractors, one of the leading general contractors of the city. The work of rebuilding actually began October 11th, and has been proceeding ever since. Even in connection with the auditorium there has been a great deal of excavation to do, and they have got down nearly to the proper level on the north side for the new boiler-room and heating plant.

are being removed. Within a couple of weeks the structural steel for the roof, with its hundred feet spans, will be delivered and erected.

Already a large number of men are employed about the building, and the number will be increased as the work opens up. Tenders for the new and greatly enlarged School premises have not yet been let. For the information of our readers we shall publish from time to time reproductions of photographs of the progress of the work.

(Continued on page 10)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

DID GOD ANSWER THE PRAYER FOR PEACE IN MERCY OR IN JUDGMENT?

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 23rd, 1938

(Stenographically reported)

"And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."—Psalm 106:15.

As often as I speak to you, I endeavour to make it plain that I always approach whatever subject is before us from the standpoint of one who believes the Bible to be the word of God, the word of God that endureth for ever. Herein there is a light for the path, and a lamp for the feet, not only of individuals, but of nations:

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic, like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none."

I believe, indeed, there is no understanding of the events of life, or of any truth—or any aspect of truth—save as we view them in the light of the Word of God. Here we have a sliding scale, a ready reckoner, by the use of which all the values of life may accurately be appraised. Herein is a solvent for every problem which, apart from its ministry, is insoluble. This evening we shall turn once again to the Word of God, for by the light of the Book even the humblest and the most unlearned may become wiser than earth's greatest sage.

Not in the spirit of one who boasts of any superior wisdom, of any unusual natural perception or penetration, but merely as one who believes the truth of God—those of you who regularly attend this ministry will acknowledge that for years we have predicted the coming about of just such a deplorable state of things as now obtains. But recently I have been rebuked—very kindly, let me say, for if it had been otherwise I should not have felt under obligation to pay any attention to it—for my attitude. Evidently my correspondents were somewhat troubled, and they enquired why I seem not to be enthusiastic about the peace, and whether it were not something for which we ought all to be profoundly thankful.

I have been told that implicitly I have called the divine faithfulness in question, and even implied that prayer is not efficacious, that it is a useless exercise. I am sure that prayer to God is a human privilege open to all the children of men, and the God Whom I worship has been pleased—is still pleased—to reveal Himself as a God who answers prayer, and to Whom all flesh must come. I do not for a moment doubt the divine faithfulness: "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." Nor do I question that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". The Bible is full of commands to individuals, and to nations, to pray to God, to seek His face and favour. He has bidden us call upon Him in the day of trouble, and has promised to deliver us; and has said that we shall glorify Him. Let that be clearly understood.

Nor am I disposed to say that the peace which thrilled the world was not an answer to prayer. It may have been. Certainly there is ground for gratification that in the exigencies of the hour, people who ordinarily do not

pray, were found gathered in places of prayer, and bowing their knees to God. All that is to the good, and for that we may reasonably be thankful.

Nor would I have anyone suppose that I am less appreciative of the peace—or the respite from war, which ever it may be—which has been granted us. No one but a demon in human form could possibly desire war, and no right-minded—that is, morally-minded—person could do other than desire the maintenance of peace. But my question is, whether God's answer to His people's prayer is always a mercy. He does answer in mercy; He does, of His abounding grace, enrich the needy sons of men. But prayer involves a truly terrible responsibility. It confers upon men a truly awful privilege—to be able to ask God for things, and to have assurance that He hears us when we pray. It is not always easy to pray aright. It is not always easy to pray wisely.

During the Civil War in the United States, on a certain social occasion, one of the Senators talked with President Lincoln and in a little aside he implied some dissatisfaction with the Government's conduct of the war, and suggested that he had some idea how the policy might be improved. President Lincoln replied somewhat to this effect: "Why, Senator, I have long desired to meet such a man as you. Carefully formulate your plans, reduce your proposals to writing, bring them to me, and I will give them effect." The Senator went away feeling rather proud that the President had implicitly expressed such confidence in his judgment. Time passed, but the Senator did not call upon the President. On another similar occasion they were thrown together again, and Lincoln said, "Why, Senator, I thought you were coming to see me with a new plan for the prosecution of the war?" "I originally intended to, Mr. President", said the Senator, "but I am not coming." Sadly Lincoln said, "I really did not expect you, Senator."

On mature reflection the Senator realized that it was a fearful responsibility to propose a programme for the conduct of the war. Does it not involve the assumption of a still greater and more terrible responsibility to hand to God a programme for His conduct of world-affairs? Where is the man—where is the group of men—whose individual or collective wisdom could possibly have been equal to such a task as that? But we did it! We asked for peace—and we got it. Was it a blessing? Or may it have been otherwise? I read to you a story this evening in the eleventh chapter of Numbers of certain people who prayed. They asked God for something in a strange way. They were insistent in their demands—and God answered their prayer. "He gave them their request" to their own irreparable loss: He "sent leanness into their soul."

I want this evening to consider for a few minutes, first, *the principles underlying this bit of history*; to find *some historical illustrations of their operation*; then, to

ask you to *try to make application of those principles to ourselves, and to our present situation.*

I.

Here is a story: "He gave them their request." It is the story of answered prayer. Let us LOOK AT THE PRINCIPLE, and break it up if we can, that we may see it more clearly.

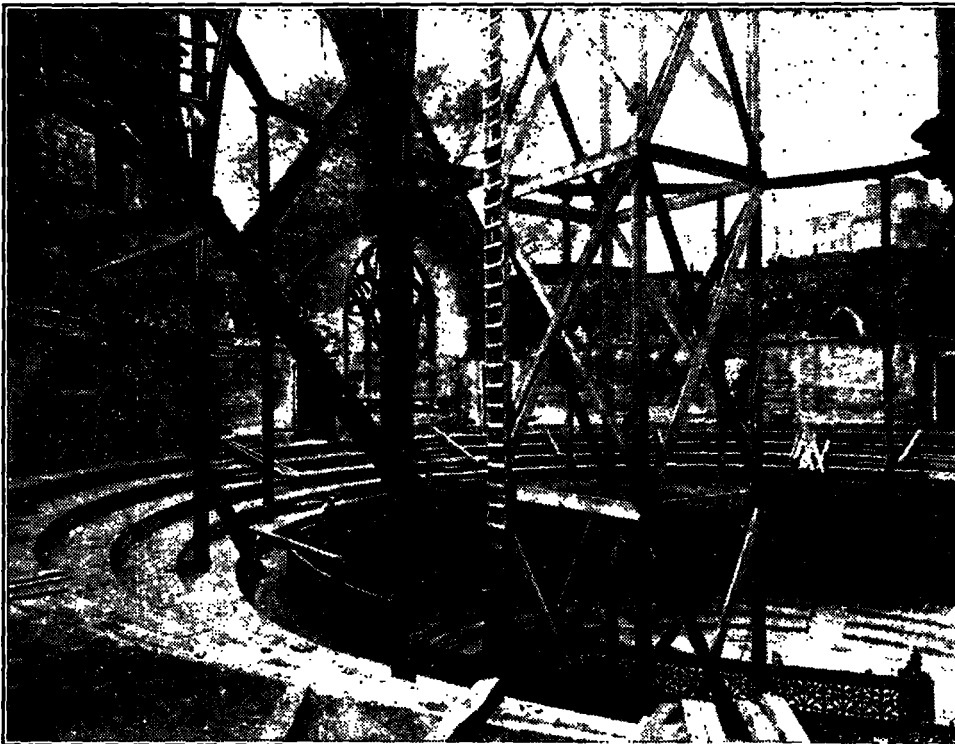
How was this request presented? They did not formally pray at all. They did not bow the knee, and in so many words ask God for anything: they merely complained of the food they had, and asked of Moses that their diet be changed, and that they be given flesh to eat. They wept among themselves, but so far as they knew—or intended—they did not pray to God.

What is it to pray? Does the man pray who goes to church and bows his head, or when in some formal way

it is possible thus for individuals and nations so to pray that God will hear them.

What was their request? *It was inspired by the lust- ing of the mixed multitude.* It did not originate with the people of God: it originated with the mixed multitude which had accompanied them out of Egypt. Soon Israel repeated what the mixed multitude said. The prayer which they offered was inspired from the lowest levels of life. It is often so, that even people who profess and call themselves Christians so identify themselves with the world about them, with the "mixed multi- tude" with which they consort, with those who have no ear for spiritual voices, and no appetite for spiritual food—it is possible for people who profess and call them- selves Christians thus to get down to the lowest levels of life, and grovel here below, fond of these earthly toys; and by the life they live, to call upon Heaven to sanction what they do.

But what did these people ask for? *What was the purport of their prayer as a whole?* They requested to be permitted to go back into Egypt. They said, "Why came we forth out of Egypt?" In their hearts they turned back into Egypt. What was in Egypt? They named the flesh-pots, the leeks, the onions, the garlic, and the cucumbers, and all the things that belong to the life of the flesh, to a mere animal existence. But what else was in Egypt? There was bond- age, slavery, the whips of the taskmasters, submission to the yoke of a despot. Their attitude poured contempt upon the record of providential mercy, by which they had been delivered from bondage. These people were ready to reverse the divine pro- gramme of the God Who had willed to make them a nation of free men, free to worship God according to their own con- sciences. They were willing to go back and put their neck under the Egyptian yoke if only



VIEW OF REMAINS OF GALLERY, LOOKING NORTH-WEST.

he bends the knee, and utters words of prayer? Is that the real prayer of the man's heart? These people did not know they were praying, but God heard them; for He is listening. The prayer you offer is not merely that which you frame into words: it is the cry of your whole life. It is the life you live; it is your whole attitude toward God above you, and your neighbours about you, the things with which you have to do. That is your real prayer.

"They wept", but they did not know that anyone but Moses and those who were standing near to them, heard the voice of their cry. But I read to you the story this evening, how God said, "Ye have wept in the ears of the Lord." It is possible for individuals and nations, by their whole attitude, not merely by individual and particular petitions or concerted intercessions, but by their manner of life, their general conduct, the whole policy and principle by which their courses are determined—

they might have enough to eat!

Theirs was essentially a prayer for carnal comfort. They had no appetite for spiritual food. They said, "What is it?" That is what manna means. "Our soul loatheth this light bread. Give us flesh to eat. Let us live as men in the flesh, and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh." They had no appreciation of spiritual values, no capacity for spiritual enjoyments.

How was their prayer answered?—for it was answer- ed. "There went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp", so that everyone had flesh to eat. It ministered only to their carnal satisfaction, and even that only for a time. Moses, as instructed by the Lord, said, "You shall have flesh. You have asked for it: you shall have it. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils, and it be loath-

some unto you. You have demanded of me that I answer your prayer: I will answer it." And He did! "He gave them their request" abundantly, superabundantly, more than they could ever have asked or thought. He gave it them in answer to their prayer.

But He "sent leanness into their soul", and their carcasses bleached in the wilderness; and God "called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted." Over every grave of those who had demanded that God should substitute their programme for His, there might have been written, "This person died in answer to prayer." They asked for it: God gave it to them. But their's was a suicidal prayer.

What was the underlying principle? *They subordinated every moral and spiritual consideration to mere animal and temporal requirements.* It is written, "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." God answers the prayer of the beasts and of the ravens—and if you pray like a beast, and ask for food and nothing else, God may answer you as He does the beast. If you pray like a raven, and merely ask for carrion, for the things that perish, God may answer your prayer as He answers the raven's prayer.

II.

Let us look at SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE. A little more explicitly *the case in point, first of all.* Who were these people? Those for whom God had ordained a great programme. He brought them out that He might bring them in. What had they in prospect? A land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land full of enemies, it is true, but a land occupied with *people whose iniquity was full.* You remember how God said to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance . . . but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In effect God said, "I will use you as my battle-ax and weapons of war, and will visit these workers of iniquity with judgment, and will expel them from that land of promise, and introduce you into the plenty thereof." But they shut their eyes to the future. They wholly missed the perspective view of life. Like a certain other person, they asked for "peace in our time". The most dreadful, despicable prayer anyone could offer is for "peace in our time". Let all the generations to come go to the devil, so long as we have peace in our time! God stood ready to go before them into the land of promise, and cast out their enemies from before their faces; but they said, "We do not care about that: give us flesh

to eat." They were insensible to all spiritual realities, they took no account of the moral qualities of life.

Their prayer was a *protest against the divine government*, and God let them have their own way. As He does sometimes. It is a terrible thing when God lets a man have his own way! It is the most awful judgment that can befall anyone for God to withdraw all restraint, and let him have his own way. "He that now letteth will let (hinder), until he be taken out of the way." Whatever that may mean in its ultimate import it certainly means that God providentially exercises a restraint upon the powers of evil. But if you ask Him, He may withdraw His hand and let evil have its way in part, even now; if indeed you demand it of Him. These people, like a lot of little children, asked for food only. That is all—food—food—food. On what low levels men live, as though these bodies were everything! As though,



VIEW OF REMAINS OF GALLERY, LOOKING NORTH-EAST.

"What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed?" were the be-all and end-all of human existence.

After the outbreak of the Great War, I met with a great man from the United States, a great scholar and philosopher, a splendid Christian, a really great believer. He said, "After all, what is the life of the flesh, to God? What is mere physical life to God, Who is the Author of all life? People forget that there are moral values, spiritual principles, that are part of His own nature which must be conserved in the government of this universe." His was a true observation. Dare we, therefore, subordinate everything to mere animal existence and say, "Oh well, so long as I escape injury, and have plenty to eat, and my wife and children are comfortable in our time, we need not worry about the future."

That is the common view, I know; but it is not the

view of men whose eyes have been enlightened by the Word of God.

Look at *the case of Esau*, the firstborn, to whom belonged the birthright. He smelled the lentiles and said, "Give me of thy lentiles." He despised his birthright, "and for a morsel of meat", for present satisfaction, for material gain, for physical easement, he sold the future, sacrificed it; and found in later years "no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Look also at *the case of Ahab*; one of the most conspicuous examples in Scripture of how a man tried to silence every voice that dared to tell him the truth. He said in effect to God, "Do not speak to me. I do not want to hear the word of truth. I do not want to listen to Thy prophets. Let me alone. I want my own way." When the prophet came to him, he said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Everyone who dared to tell him the truth, Ahab regarded as an enemy, and so far as he had power to do so, he cut their heads off. What followed? At last there went forth "a lying spirit from the Lord" into the mouths of all his prophets—"a lying spirit from the Lord"! And with one voice they told Ahab to do what he wanted to do. Why did there go "a lying spirit from the Lord"? Throughout his whole life Ahab said to God—not in so many words, but by his attitude, "I do not want the truth. I want a lie." And at last, in terrible judgment, God answered his prayer and said, "All right; you may have it."

You may have your choice whether you believe the truth or a lie. It is possible for a man to reject the truth so long that at last he will be without capacity for its reception, and can believe only a lie. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." People believe what they want to believe. There are more Christian Scientists than those who attend their temples. The Christian Scientist says, "There is no such thing as sin." There is, but they persuade themselves there is not. They say there is no such thing as disease. They deny it, and they think by denying it, they destroy it. It is a most popular philosophy: believe what you want to believe, and persuade yourself that anything is true that suits your fancy. You can do that so long that by and by you will have a most comfortable philosophy of life, and believe whatever you have formulated for yourself although it may be devoid of any element of truth.

The Lord, when we ask for bread, never gives us a stone; but we can keep on asking for a stone until at last, as a disciplinary measure, He may give us a stone that we may break our teeth upon it. If we ask for a fish, He will not give us a serpent; but if we will not distinguish between the two and ask for a serpent, He may give it to us. He will never give us a scorpion when we ask for an egg; but if one sets his own wisdom against God's, and demands a scorpion, He may, as a salutary lesson, say, "Let him have it."

That is a discerning, penetrating word of Whittier's, in which he represents the soul as praying:

"Spare me, dread angel of reproof,
And let the sunshine weave to-day
Its gold-threads in the warp and woof
Of life so poor and gray.

"Spare me awhile; the flesh is weak.
These lingering feet, that fain would stray
Among the flowers, shall some day seek
The strait and narrow way.

"Grudge not my life its hour of bloom,
My heart its taste of long desire;
This day be mine; be those to come
As duty shall require."

Then, as he listens, he continues,

"The deep voice answered to my own,
Smiting my selfish prayers away;
'To-morrow is with God alone,
And man hath but to-day.'

"'Cast thyself down', the tempter saith,
'And angels shall thy feet upbear.'
He bids thee make a lie of faith,
And blasphemy of prayer.

"'Though God be good and free be Heaven,
No voice divine can love compel;
And, though the song of sins forgiven
May sound through lowest hell,

"'The sweet persuasion of His voice
Respects thy sanctity of will,
He giveth day: thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still.'"

God will not impose upon the kingdom of mansoul. He will not, like Hitler, march and take possession of your will. A man may set up his own wisdom, his own judgment, his own appraisal of his temporal interests and comforts, against all that God, in His grace, has planned for him, and, by the general manner of his life, even without words, demand, "Not Thy will, but mine be done." God may, and sometimes does, answer man's prayer in judgment. What more terrible judgment could befall any man than to be allowed to have his own way?—

"O doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul!

"To-doubt the love that fain would break
The fetters from thy self-bound limb;
And dream that God can thee forsake
As thou forsakest Him!"

III.

And now let us consider THE APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES TO OURSELVES IN RELATION TO THE MUNICH PACT.

Look at it in our own case. The Empire, and a large part of the world, asked for peace. People went to their churches in Toronto, in London, and elsewhere, and bowed their knees to God and asked for peace. What did they mean when they asked for peace? What did the vast majority mean when they prayed for peace? They asked to be spared the horrors of war, the killing and maiming of millions of people. You say, "That surely was a worthy request, was it not?" Yes, in itself considered; but is it everything? I deplore the horrors of war. I was not a soldier in the Great War, but I saw something of it. I saw something of the horrors of it while the war was still on; behind the lines, wearing a gas-mask, when the guns were still firing. I saw hundreds and hundreds of men being buried. I would take second place to no man in my abhorrence of war. There is probably no more vulnerable city in the world than London. Terrible were the days of the war in the metropolis with its air-raids—but nothing in comparison, in all probability, with what they would be in our day. Then you will say, "Then surely, surely, that was a worthy prayer?"

In the last analysis, what was your prayer? For what did *you* pray? You prayed for peace. What did you mean by peace? Immunity from war. Men cried, "Lord, save us from war." Yes, and if it could be permanent, if it could be a real peace, what an unspeakable blessing that would be! Why is it, then, that our churches are not thronged with people giving thanks to God for peace? Why is it that the lives of millions of people who bowed their knee and asked for peace, have not been changed. God already is again almost forgotten. It was only a gesture in many instances.

But how was the peace achieved? You may not agree with what I say, but I cannot help it. In these days someone must speak, for there are dark days coming. It is the easiest thing in the world to shout when others shout. How was peace achieved? *By the sacrifice of one of the bravest people of all time.* Someone says, "Czechoslovakia would have had to bear the brunt of it, and in concluding peace we saved her." To their everlasting honour be it said, they asked no one to save them, except to save them from the humiliation of the bondage that submission to Nazi-ism promised them. There was never a nation more brave in standing for the principles of righteousness and truth than the nation that gave to the world John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and multitudes of the noblest Christians that ever lived. But they were thrown to the wolves. Do not say they were not: they were! They were sacrificed without so much as a conference with them. They were never asked to attend one of the conferences. The son of their great former President, Minister of Czechoslovakia in London, was never once summoned to Downing Street during the crisis: he was ignored as though he had no existence. It has been said that we were under no treaty obligation to go to the help of Czechoslovakia. It is equally true that we had no mandatory authority to divide it among the vultures—as it was divided. I have hardly had a night's sleep since. My soul is filled with horror. I feel the shame and the humiliation of it, the dishonour of it; and feel that the future is dark and ominous because of our perfidy.

What did we give ourselves? I am as much a Britisher as any of you. I was born in the dear old land, I love every blade of grass that grows there. I love the flag, but I am compelled, in simple truth, to say that in that Munich conference, *Britain sacrificed her honour.* The Prime Minister did not bring back peace with honour. It was a peace that was purchased by the gravest dishonour that ever characterized a British diplomatic action.

Furthermore, *we sacrificed righteousness.* I will challenge anyone to justify that action on grounds of righteousness and truth and equity. Whoever can justify it, can justify the game of any bandit in the country, and the division of the spoils by those who have robbed innocent victims. There is no moral justification for it: there never can be.

We surrendered *our prestige in the eyes of the world.* There never has been a day in the last two centuries, I believe, when British prestige suffered such a blow as has been inflicted upon it in the last month or so. Who cares for Britain's word about anything now? Who cares? If a man keeps company with a robber and a murderer, and consorts with a bandit, enters into an agreement with him, he must not expect his word will be

of any greater value than that of the man with whom he has entered into engagement. We have brought our prestige and honour to the lowest conceivable level.

With whom did we conclude peace? What I say will be printed, and it may go ill with me when Hitler has Canada under his feet. You laugh at that? You say, "He cannot have Canada under his feet"? I do not know. May it never be! He can only kill the body, and I would rather die a thousand deaths than cry, "Heil, Hitler." And let me say as calmly as I can, but as deliberately as I know how, not on the spur of the moment but after careful thought—with whom did the proud British Government conclude peace? *With the most infamous deceiver and murderer of all time.* You cannot dress him up, nor in any way disguise him. Why should anyone believe Hitler? In the last sermon in the old church I said substantially the same thing. Why should men be so foolish as to believe either Hitler or Mussolini, when they openly boast that they are guided by principles of untruth? I read to you the other night of Hitler's prophecy of what he would do—and he has done some of it. He said he would take Austria—and he has. He has said he will have Roumania, and Jugoslavia, and Belgium, and all the lesser European countries; then France, and after France, Britain. He has said it, and so far as his own programme is concerned, he has carried it out thus far. What strange delusion has come over us? What fatal judicial blindness has come upon the statesmen of Britain, that they would actually believe hell's proudest product, and accept his word as though it were trustworthy? No more territorial ambitions in Europe! You wonder sometimes if some of these men ought not to be examined to see if their heads are right; who could believe such a thing?

What price have we paid? We have given to Hitler in that Munich pact the equivalent of the greatest military victory that was ever won in all the world's history. Search the pages of history, and you will find no instance of any invincible conqueror who, by the force of arms, in a single battle, accomplished as much as Hitler accomplished in his conference with Chamberlain, without striking a blow. We handed to him one of the world's greatest fortresses, augmented his army by one of the world's most effective armies, made enemies of our faithful allies who, breaking away from the Austrian Empire, effected the disintegration of Austria, and hastened the conclusion of the Great War—we gave all that to the very enemy that provoked the Great War. We have established a Fascist state, now only in its incipient stages I grant you, in substitution for one of the world's most heroic democracies. We have made Hitler the master of Europe, and have alienated all our European allies, except France. Britain has scarcely a friend in Europe outside of France, or anyone who will now trust her. We have been guilty of the most colossal diplomatic folly, indeed I think, crime, that ever was committed in modern—or perhaps ancient times.

What further surrender have we made? We have not actually yielded our liberties; but like Israel, who proposed to reverse the record of their progress from national slavery to national sovereignty, we have taken a course which may conceivably result in our being carried back to the Egypt of barbarism as represented by Nazi rule.

What of the future? Someone may say, "We have escaped. I have friends in England, and they could not sleep at nights; they were greatly relieved when war was averted. And so was I. I am thankful it is all over." If you cannot see further than that, it would be useless to lend you a telescope. What of the future? We have only postponed the horror, and greatly increased it when at last it shall come upon us. Whoever and whatever Hitler is, he plans the conquest of the world. No other territorial ambitions in Europe! I thought there was but one prince of the devils, but one may be pardoned for concluding there must be two, and that Beelzebub is proud of his twin. All the lesser powers of Europe are to be swallowed up. Can you tell me of any European nation that can stand against Germany to-day? Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Norway—is there one of them, when Hitler shall turn in their direction, that will dare to say, Nay? France's turn will come; and if it does, instead of having an almost impregnable fortress and an army of some millions, to stand in the breach, and to help her, she will have little or no help. For in spite of any international Commission's "guarantee", Czechoslovakia will very soon be included in the German Reich. What now? Respite! You read it in your papers yesterday: the motor business has increased. General Motors are taking on thirty-five thousand men! Ford is soon to take on his full complement! Business is on the upturn! The scare of war is past! Oh the folly of men! How easily deceived we are! Can you tell me—now be honest with yourself: the most ardent Britisher, the one most thankful for the peace, you mothers of sons who have said, "I feared my sons would have to go, and now they have escaped the necessity of fighting"—tell me, you are trying to be thankful for it, but down deep in your heart, there is a feeling of uneasiness and unrest, and you are not so sure that there will be peace. Britain is not sure. She is busy rearming. France is not sure. As a matter of fact, neither Britain nor France believes what Hitler says. They know he cannot safely be trusted. "But we have gained time." But have we? By what process of "speeding up can we find compensation for surrendering a military organization of forts, men, machines and morale, which took Czechoslovakia twenty years to produce? Doubtless Mr. Chamberlain acted in what he believed to be the wisest way. But I feel sure that if he had ever viewed his duty even in the indirect light of God's word, he would never have proposed, much less gone, to meet Hitler.

What of the future? Look at Palestine. Already the ferment is working. Is there any doubt about who is responsible for the accentuation of the Arab discontent? Germany is at work to-day, as she was before the last

war, but with greater energy. She has ambitions even for this Continent. I read an article in *The Canadian Magazine* which was a summary of a German book about possible German occupation of the Dominion of Canada. To this German writer it is a veritable Naboth's vineyard. He said the day was coming when a few million people, because they happened to be there first, could no longer hope to occupy a Continent to the exclusion of others. He knew the geography of the country better than some of us. He said Newfoundland could be made an independent state, that from a military, and naval, and air-force point of view, it was of enormous strategic value for commanding the Atlantic.

It was not very long ago that we read in the papers rumours that the Germans had laid a very elaborate plan to secure the Isle of Anticosti in the St. Lawrence River—and there was probably much more in the reports than



LOOKING ALONG GERRARD STREET TOWARD THE WEST.

most men believed. In the United States there has been an exposure of the violation of the United States mails, and the use of the German ships plying back and forth, in order to get possession of American military secrets. That is no false alarm. Look at the map of Europe. Man, if you are not alarmed by the present situation, you are little short of a fool. Twiddle your thumbs, and say, "We have peace in our time"? Do not be so sure of it. I saw in one of the papers last night an account of an article actually published in Germany, where the progress of Nazi-ism is marked, that France is to be absorbed within three years: our turn comes ten years from now; and in eighteen hundred and forty-eight Germany will be master of the British Empire! They openly say so. You reply, "Impossible." God grant that it may be so. But it will not be impossible if we of the British Empire, especially and for the purpose of application—we in Canada—sleep on.

If there any hope? Can we stay the progress of this accursed thing? We must not complain that others criticize our action when we criticize it ourselves, only we have better reason because we are responsible. This whole trouble would never have come about if the United States had done its duty. The constitution of Czechoslovakia was written in the United States by Benes and Masaryk, in collaboration with the late President Wilson. Czechoslovakia was the child of the United States, and it was as much its duty to protect her as it was ours. If only the United States and Britain and France could come together; if only there could be a revival of religion that would purge out our selfishness and help us to live largely and unselfishly for the world's weal, these three great powers could bring Hitler to his knees in short order, and compel his submission to law and order. We may well pray that such a combination of powers so desirable may be brought about.

What if Hitler is really the Antichrist? I am suspicious of people who are dogmatic about that matter. I hope you will be suspicious of me. I do not know. A friend wrote me last week from South Carolina. He had read somewhere a reference to an address I had delivered here about Hitler, and he said this: "If he is not the Antichrist, I believe the devil would be very glad to accept him as a temporary substitute"! Frankly, I think he is the best imitation the devil has put on earth yet. Napoleon was a mere tyro in comparison. Do not suppose that Antichrist will appear all at once. The Scripture says he is to be "developed out of the midst." How he will be developed, I do not know; but Hitler is certainly developing toward something.

Someone may say, "Well, sir, you are dealing with matters upon which I profess to be somewhat of an expert. If Hitler be the Antichrist, it will not be very long before the great explosion will take place; but, Good-bye, I shall not be here. I shall be raptured out of it all." I hope you are right. If you are, I promise here and now that I will offer no objection to going with you. I cannot conceive of anyone in his senses desiring to live if Hitlerism were to become dominant throughout the world. If Hitler should be the Antichrist, or his immediate forerunner, there are days of darkness, ever-deepening darkness, before us.

What if he should be just that? What if the power of France and Britain and the United States should be inadequate to stay the progress of this Satanic thing—for when Antichrist shall come, he will be endowed with superhuman powers against which no human army can stand. If it should be so, what would you do? I think it would be the part of wisdom for all of us to try to cultivate a little more courageous attitude toward life than those who propose to run away from difficulty. If I am called away from it, thank God, but I shall not run away from it. I tremble sometimes to think of what might happen if, in face of the record of the last few years, the Prime Minister of Britain could take the initiative in going to meet Hitler, and make the complete surrender that was made—I say, I do not know where we should stop if Antichrist should be developed out of the midst. For myself, I am getting my answer ready: it is ready now. If I should live to that day, by God's grace, I will never submit to the mark of the beast, will you? If I had my choice this minute, between lifting my hand and crying "Heil Hitler", and losing my life, and never leaving

this platform, I should chose the latter. I will not submit to this human devil! May God give us grace to stand for righteousness now, and in the darker days to come.

I was interested in reading an article by a European correspondent in one of the Toronto papers. I have found myself very substantially in agreement with what he has written on this crisis. He has been in Czechoslovakia and has written most ably in my opinion. He once paid me the compliment of writing an article from London, about myself. He had had an interview with a certain professor with whom I had done battle, in which he poured contempt upon men who believe the Bible, and held me up to scorn because, allegedly, I had made belief in the historicity of Jonah a test of orthodoxy. I have never done so, but would be willing so to do. But I was a back number, and all the rest of it. Now this writer has seen in England and in Germany the fruits of the very thing we fought in this place; and in last night's despatch he refers to the Bible, and says that of all things the Nazis hate the Bible. Yes! And, alas! there are many Christian ministers and colleges—leaders in all Christian denominations, who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief, and laying the foundations for Britain's present precarious situation. I conjure you—let us return to the Word of God! It is a great Book, and it is coming into its own ever more completely. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The day of the mocker will soon end. If all human power should fail to stay the progress of Hitler—I do not say it will be so; no one can know: we shall have to await the development of events. But the time will come when we shall be able to say—or our successors, should it not come in our time—"This is that which is written." Sooner or later, God will have His way. If everyone else should fail, what then?

Is it a dark day? No. It would be very bright then, for when this Lawless One shall have been developed out of the midst, and when he shall have gone on from one success to another until he becomes so supremely arrogant that he will oppose and exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God", when evil shall have reached the acme of its power, and the Lawless One shall have summoned all his forces in his final act of rebellion against Christ, then He will split the skies and come down: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." If not before, then at long last this Antichrist shall be consumed with the breath of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming; and "the sovereignty of our Lord shall become the sovereignty of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

For my part, I am determined that no matter what it costs, I am going to take sides with Christ. I want to be right with Him. I want to be sure I am included in the family of His elect. Then I care not what may come. Sooner or later, Jesus Christ will come, and when He shall come, *then*—and not until then—

"Then peace shall over all the earth
Her ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song,
Which now the angels sing."

Let us pray.

REBUILDING OF JARVIS STREET CHURCH BEGINS

*(Continued from page 2)***Building Fund Contributions**

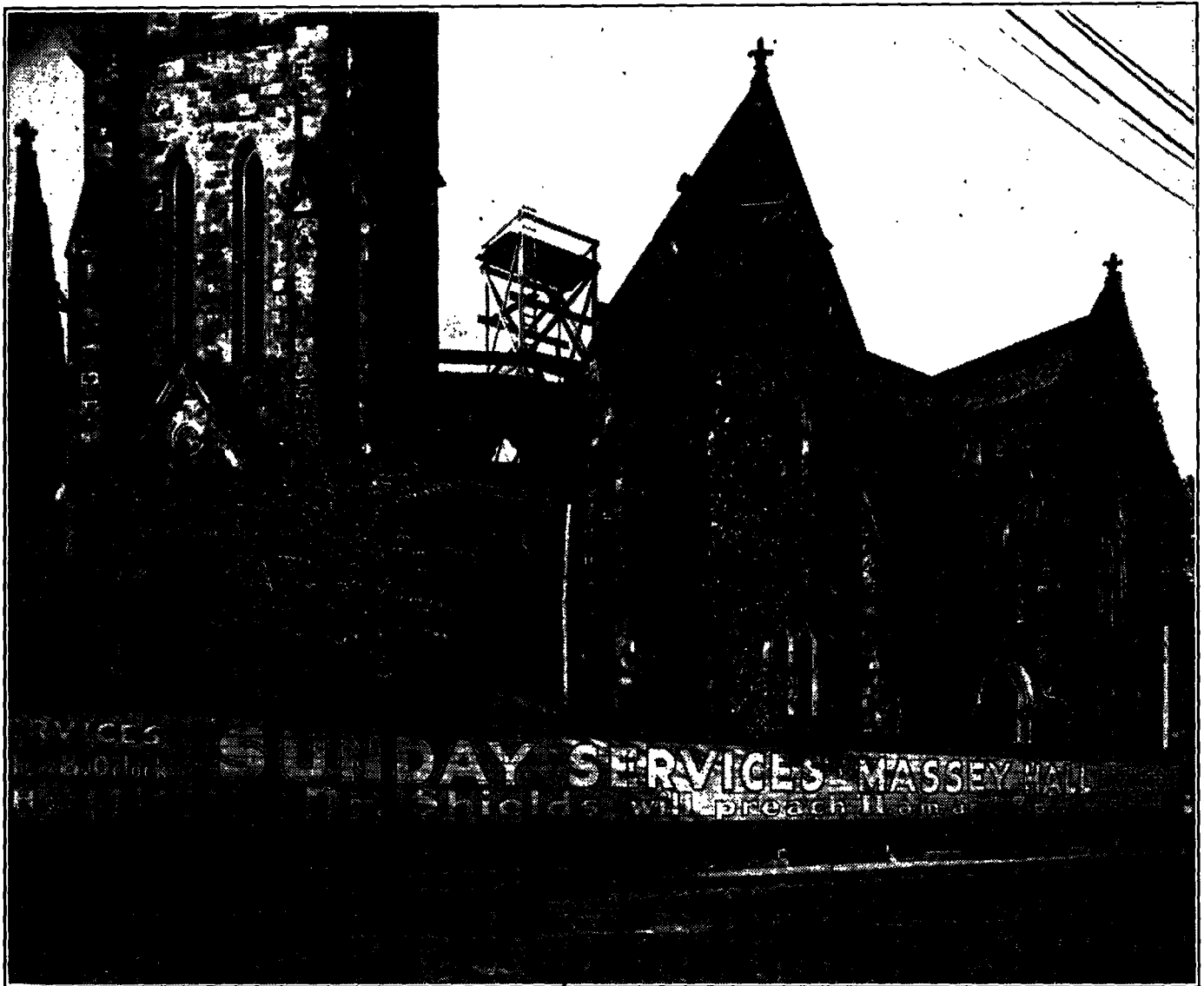
It is possible that many readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, in sympathy with Jarvis Street Church, have had it in mind ever since the fire to make some contribution toward the reconstruction of the building, but have postponed their actual giving until the work of rebuilding was begun. Now that the work is in progress perhaps they will be able to carry out their good intentions. It is scarcely necessary to say that we need money. If an additional \$100,000.00 or more were available, it could be used without any extravagance. There is need for some pretty large gifts.

There may be a taller building now, but for years the tallest building in New York City was erected by a company who sell things for five, ten, and fifteen cents. The smallest gift will be welcome, and we shall be grateful for the help of everyone who will do his or her best to assist us in this hour of need.

Some weeks ago we received a contribution from a church in British Columbia, which years ago had re-

ceived a contribution from Jarvis Street to help them with their building. For many years Jarvis Street has tried to play big brother to churches of all sorts. For more than twenty-eight years, during the present pastorate, the givings of Jarvis Street Church for missions and benevolences—that is, for objects outside of itself—have averaged about \$500.00 a week, or \$26,000.00 a year. We are not appealing for help now because Jarvis Street has lost any of its strength, but we are not a rich church. Most of our people, indeed, are poor. Notwithstanding, the revenue of Jarvis Street, even in these hard times, is larger than it was when we had many rich people in the membership of the church.

Our reason for appealing is, of course, the emergency created by our disastrous fire, and we feel justified in making such an appeal because the ministry of Jarvis Street is not a local ministry, but touches the ends of the earth. If any of our readers who have not sent us a contribution can send us help, we shall appreciate it; and if any who have contributed find that now they are able to contribute a little more, we shall be thankful also to them. Let us hear from you at an early date.



JARVIS STREET CHURCH AUDITORIUM (GERRARD STREET SIDE).

It will probably require not less than six months to complete the building, but we are hoping it will be ready for occupation by May. The general contract for the auditorium is expected to be completed by March 31st, but after that is done, there will be the work of furnishing and finishing, so that it is scarcely probable we shall be able to get into the new building before May.

THE SERMON IN THIS ISSUE

As the introductory part of the sermon implies, it became necessary to deal with the subject treated because of a number of letters of enquiry which had reached us. The address seemed to awaken not a little interest, because a considerable number of people left orders for copies of the sermon to be sent to addresses supplied. If any of our readers desire extra copies they will be available as usual at the office or by mail.

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY*

The appearance of a book purporting to set forth a system of philosophy which is not only congenial to the Christian faith but designed to lend support to the same is something to provoke interest, if not to insure praise. It is indeed a welcome sign in these days of lax thinking, and in many instances—even among professedly evangelical Christians—of no thinking at all, that someone has come forward with a serious effort to provide us with a vantage point from which we may survey the meaning of life, and to furnish us with such balances of judgment as may enable us to weigh the multitude of opinions that are abroad in our world with respect to such varied subjects as science, history, art, government, and even religion itself.

The volume under review, however, is "Philosophy, not Theology". (Page 14) But while the author insists and rightly, that philosophy must be granted a certain independence of method, he likewise insists, and with equal justice, that philosophy must take cognizance of the Christian revelation as contained in Holy Scripture. If only on historical grounds, Christian faith has a right to be heard, and no metaphysical scheme will prove adequate which either ignores or condemns it. But it is time to give attention to the position assumed in the work before us.

In the course of an introductory chapter, our author prepares us for what is to follow by pointing out the essential nature of his thought. The importance of the starting point in philosophy cannot be over-emphasized, for any mistake here is bound to reflect itself throughout the whole work. Nor can subsequent flashes of insight, however brilliant, or later thrusts of criticism, however pointed and effective, serve to rectify the initial error. It is with keen regret, therefore, that this reviewer is forced to dissent from the main position occupied by the author. The latter lays it down as an initial conviction that "to achieve a fundamental development of philosophic investigation and conception" it is necessary to proceed in line with the great Idealist tradition which stems from Plato, and "which appeared for a time to culminate in the massive self-evolving and self-completing system of Hegel". (Page 15) But perhaps it will be best to reserve our own criticism of this position until later, meanwhile going on the leading contents of the book.

Before undertaking to elucidate his own system, Mr. Thomas proceeds to examine a few of the more recent philosophies. Though he is eminently fair in his criticism, and displays, moreover, a thorough competence, he finds that one and all are in some way wanting. Accordingly, the only hope is to abandon the aimless and futile wanderings of empiricism in order to return to the high road of the Idealist tradition. In the reviewer's judgment, this chapter is one of the most helpful discussions of contemporary philosophical thought, the treatment of Professor Whitehead's elaborate constructions being especially penetrating.

Lack of space forbids a detailed examination of Mr. Thomas' argument. It must suffice, therefore, to indicate some of the outstanding features. Very suggestive, for example, is the author's conception of the nature of time and space. By demonstrating that they are at once continuous and discrete,

and that they thus correspond and answer to the human intellect in both its intuitive and discursive functions, he avoids the pitfalls into which so many modern philosophers have fallen by an over-emphasis on one side, often to the exclusion of the other. As is so often the case, we discover that many of our "either-or" constructions should be resolved into "both-and's". In this context, the chapter devoted to the subject of Illusions is a real contribution towards a solution of that thorny problem. But the author rises to even greater heights in his fearless and crushing strictures on the metaphysical implications of the theory of Relativity as promulgated by modern science. Approaching the end of the book, we find a series of chapters suggesting applications of the philosophy of Absolute Spirit to religion, morals, beauty, the state and history respectively. The work is then brought to a close with a recapitulation of the argument, which is cast in the form of a Socratic dialogue.

We must now return to a consideration of the main position itself. As previously noted, it is the author's primary contention that the various systems of modern thought, Realism—of whatever sort, Neo-Idealism, Bergsonianism, Pragmatism, and, last but not least, the outstanding philosophical construction of Whitehead fail to provide a foundation upon which may be erected an adequate life and world view. On the other hand, it is contended that such a foundation is to be had on the basis of the Idealist tradition. It is with this latter position that the present writer finds himself in dispute, and it would be manifestly unfair to the author and to the readers of this review alike were he to fail to disclose the reasons for that opposition.

That the author should register a preference for historic Idealism as the basis of his own philosophical construction is not surprising. We too agree that Idealism is relatively superior to any of the other systems which he has criticised, only to reject. Nor, it should be added, does he give a blanket endorsement of Idealism in the course of its centuries old development. Thus, for example, with his searching criticism of Hegel, we heartily concur. The author has with keen insight placed his finger upon the central errors of Hegel's thought. He has done well to assert the non-ultimacy of the spacetime universe, and to ground its existence in the will of the Absolute Spirit. In his own words, Mr. Thomas has demonstrated, as against Hegel, that "Rationality and Rational Necessity are by no means identical." (Page 117) It is a great boon, therefore, to have our philosophy grounded, not in "Rational Necessity", as with Hegel; but in Moral Freedom. From his rejection of Hegel, the author turns to Plato, convinced that there he finds a concept of the Absolute as transcendent upon which he may erect his own scheme of thought. But this reviewer ventures to think that if Mr. Thomas had but taken the creation concept more seriously he would have been led to see that a truly Christian philosophy must be *exi generis*, and consequently would have been forced to break with Plato as well. Mr. Thomas is not the first to suppose that philosophical Idealism when rightly interpreted is an ally of Christian thought. It is perfectly obvious that Pragmatism and the various forms of Realism, building as they do upon Evolutionary Naturalism, are the outright enemies of the Christian faith. What is not so obvious, but what is all the more dangerous on that account, is that hidden within Idealism, ancient as well as modern, Platonic as well as Hegelian, are implications that are scarcely a whit less inimical to that same faith.

There are one or two specific points that should be noted ere concluding this review. The importance of the starting point in any philosophy has been mentioned. The point of departure in the present volume, therefore, should be carefully scrutinized. Accordingly, we read, "The quest of philosophy must begin with the direct cognition of man's rational Self." (Page 98) The statement, of course, strikes a sound Idealistic note. But it must not escape our attention that this can only be regarded as a piece of psychological analysis. Here, it may be said, is the Achilles heel of all Idealism. There is really no escape from what Professor Perry has termed "the egocentric predicament". But the statement is also open to objection on distinctly Christian grounds, for latent in it is the claim to the mormalcy, if not the ultimacy, of human thought.

No Idealistic philosophy would be complete without some attempt to deal with the problem of evil. It is to be confessed that the present effort is characterized by a becoming modesty, though it is not, we feel, without some ambiguity of expression and possibly thought. As we would expect, the

Helegian solution is rejected without reservation. And as we might anticipate, a solution is sought in "the Self-limitation of Absolute Spirit". But this in turn is said to be "necessary for the complete expression of its Moral Being". (Page 290) That, unless we are altogether mistaken as to the author's meaning, would seem merely to substitute a moral for a rational necessity. Better, it would seem, would it be humbly to admit that for us it is an insoluble riddle, the solution of which we must trust to God alone.

Here then is a book which we can only partly endorse. While there is much, very much, that is helpful and from which the discriminating reader will derive immense profit, the main argument is vitiated by reason of its attachment to a philosophic tradition which, we are convinced, is at bottom anti-theistic and hence antagonistic to the Christian faith. We do not wish to be misunderstood at this point. We are not suggesting that the volume under review is subversive in either character or intention. On the contrary, we believe that its influence will be, on the whole, favorable. However that may be, it remains to be recognized and insisted upon that while it is possible to erect and maintain a distinctly Christian philosophy, such a philosophy must, so to speak, stand upon its own feet. No, not upon its own feet, but rather upon the supreme and final revelation of God in Christ, guaranteed to us by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God.

Finally, we would call attention to some particulars of a minor sort. In appearance, in the general make-up, the printing and the binding, the volume is attractive. Comparatively few typographical errors came to our attention. The book suffers, however, from the standpoint of easy reading by reason of over-capitalization. This, we venture to think, was not only overdone, but was not always consistent and hence led to confusion at many points. Further, the usefulness of the book would have been considerably enhanced for the general reader by the addition of an index, for the special student by the documentation of references and quotations.

—FRED H. LEACH, M.A.

*Philosophic Foundations by John Thomas, M.A. Westminster City Publishing Co., Ltd., London. No price.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 Fourth Quarter Lesson 45 November 6th, 1938

PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

Lesson Text: Acts 23.

Golden Text: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."—Acts 23:1.

I. The Insolent High Priest—verses 1-5.

The members of the Sanhedrin Council, summoned at the command of the chief captain, Claudius Lysias (Acts 22:30), acted in a manner which proved that they were not worthy of the respect of the Lord's messenger. As Paul gazed intently into their faces and read in their flashing eyes the ill-disguised malice and contempt, the words of polite respect which he had formerly used, "Men, brethren and fathers" (Acts 22:1; 4:8; 7:2), seemed inappropriate. He now treated them as equals. He probably recognized many of the Council members, men who had cast their votes along with his own, for the condemnation of Stephen.

Paul could truthfully declare that he had lived in all good conscience before God (Acts 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:16). What a testimony to give!

The High Priest, instead of showing pleasure at Paul's statement, interpreted it as insolent presumption. His own conduct was contemptible, and by inspiration the Apostle prophesied that God Himself would punish the hypocrite (Matt. 23:27; Acts 5:9). History records that Ananias fell a victim to assassins during the Jewish Wars.

Various suggestions have been made in regard to Paul's seeming failure to recognize the High Priest. It may be that the meeting was not conducted in proper form, and that the High Priest was not officially robed, or sitting in his

usual position. Perhaps the Apostle's eyesight was not good (Gal. 6:11). Probably the words were spoken ironically, since the Greek word translated "I wist" is ambiguous, like our English word "recognize". Paul would not recognize or regard as High Priest one who had shown himself so unworthy of the respect due to the ruler of God's people (Exod. 22:28). It behoves us all to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, to give no one occasion to blaspheme the holy name we bear (1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:10).

II. The Unholy Dissension—verses 6-10.

The Apostle soon saw that a straightforward defence was not possible. Accordingly, he appealed to the Pharisees, with whom he had more in common than with the naturalistic Sadducees. As a Jew he held to the doctrines of the Pharisees, especially the truth of the resurrection, concerning which he was being called to account (Acts 24:15; 26:6-8). The Sadducees denied the reality of spiritual beings, angels or the resurrection.

How fickle the favor of the multitude! The Pharisees appeared to side with Paul, but in a few days they joined his accusers (Acts 24:15).

The scribes, though violent in action, counselled caution (Acts 5:39). They joined the Pharisees in defending Paul, who was in danger now from both parties, those opposing and those protecting him. Both groups attempted to seize him and to use him as a weapon for their hatred against their adversaries.

Thus did the Sanhedrin officially reject Paul's testimony. One would not expect such disgraceful and disorderly conduct on the part of a Council of religious leaders. Yet, they had shown similar malice against Christ Himself, and the disciple is not above his Master (Matt. 10:24).

III. The Plot That Failed—verses 11-22.

During the night which followed this day of bitter persecution and anguish, the Lord manifested His presence to His servant (Job 35:10; Acts 18:9; 27-23, 24). Others might stand by him for a time, but the Lord was ever with him (Matt. 28:20). He is our Hiding-Place, our "shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home" (Psa. 32:7; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 32:2). The Master gave to Paul words of cheer for the present, confidence regarding the past, and courage for the future. The message of encouragement implies that Paul's testimony at Jerusalem was complete, and that he would be preserved to give witness at Rome also (Acts 19:21).

No weapon formed against God's chosen ones can prosper; they are immortal till their work is done (Isa. 54:17). Humanly speaking, the plot of the fanatical Jews seemed bound to succeed. Under ordinary circumstances, the Council and the chief captain would have complied with their requests. But God intervened; He it was who arranged that Paul's nephew should overhear the conversation of the conspirators.

This nephew acted with discretion and intelligence. We cannot but admire the part this young man played in the preservation of his uncle's life. The Lord will use even the very young as His instruments (1 Sam. 3:10-14; Isa. 11:6; Matt. 21:16).

IV. The Military Escort—verses 23-35.

When the ecclesiastical court failed either to acquit or condemn Paul, his case rested once more with the civil authorities. Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, decided to refer the matter to the Roman Procurator of the Province, Felix, whose residence was situated at Caesarea. As a man, Felix was lustful and cruel. It is said of him that he possessed "the power of a king with the temper of a slave". God often preserves His children, not through the goodness of unbelievers, but in spite of their badness.

The unusually large escort provided for Paul indicates the dangerous character of the country through which he was to travel. Possibly, also, the captain feared a general uprising.

The letter to Felix illustrates the form in which letters were written in those days (Compare Jas. 1:1).

Lysias' exaggerated statement as to his efforts on behalf of Paul (Compare verse 27 with verse 10), is in strong contrast with the candour and honesty of the Apostle (Prov. 19:9).