

REMEMBER! THREE DAYS TO MIDNIGHT, MARCH 31st
SPECIAL DELIVERY WOULD REACH US!

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.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 18, No. 47

TORONTO, MARCH 28, 1940

Whole No. 932

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"O EARTH, EARTH, EARTH, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD"

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

Preached in Adelaide Street Baptist Church, London, Ontario, at the Reopening of the Building, after the Erection of Galleries, Sunday Evening, December 15th, 1907. (See note on page 4)

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."—Jeremiah 22:29.

I may attempt to unfold this text to you on this occasion with special appropriateness. I think I may trust to your fairness to acquit me of any charge of immodesty if I briefly remind you of how often we have been unsettled in this place during the last three years. Three years ago at this time we were beginning to feel a little uncomfortable in our old quarters. The outside north wall stood about in a line with the face of this side gallery, and the front wall a few feet the farther side of the central pillars under the gallery, the west end of the auditorium was a little this way from the face of the rear gallery. We had room for not more than four hundred people, and about three years ago this time we began to say among ourselves, like the sons of the prophets in Elisha's time, "The place where we dwell is too strait for us."

As soon as the weather was warm enough, the following May, we held our evening services in Jubilee Rink. That was considered a great venture by many, but the large congregations which gathered there amply justified the forward step, and showed that it was taken, not presumptuously, but in faith.

In July the work of enlargement was begun, and we went to the Rink for both morning and evening services. In October the cold weather drove us out of the Rink, and we had to go down town for a few weeks to the Y.M.C.A. to find warmer quarters until the school room could be made ready. In November we moved into the school room of this building. There we continued until the second Sunday in February when this present building was opened. That was only twenty-two months ago. Early in this present year we began to find our clothes again too small for us, and the last Sunday in October we had to return to the school room again; and now once more we are at home to our friends. If you reckon that up I think you will find we have moved seven times in

two and a half years—and still there are a few people who know where we live. It cannot be said that this is not a "moving" church. And what is it all for? Simply that we may have the largest possible opportunity to give men the word of the Lord. A church building must not be regarded as a place of entertainment—though the true child of God ever finds it so, and heartily exclaims,

"O happy souls that pray
Where God appoints to hear!
O happy men that pay
Their constant service there!
They praise Thee still:
And happy they that love the way
To Zion's hill."

The church should be a spiritual post-office, or telegraph office: it is a place to receive and send messages from and to heaven—a place for prayer and praise and preaching. And so I announce again in this larger building, and to this larger audience, that this church considers she can have no higher mission than to spend all her energies, sparing not, but lifting up her voice to cry aloud, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."

Jeremiah was the prophet of tears. But tears, like showers in spring, may belong to days of not a little sunshine, the precursors of still brighter and balmier days of flowers and fruits. The prophet is moved to this startling cry by the appalling sights he has witnessed. It is like an alarm of war to waken the slumbering hosts to their own defense, or, like a watchman's midnight cry of fire to save a city from destruction. Jeremiah anticipated the country's invasion by the Chaldean hosts, he saw the splendid national structure self-consumed by internal fires of iniquity; he was a witness while one who had sat upon the glorious throne of King David, of ever-blessed memory, was "buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates

of Jerusalem." And amid this ruin wrought by sin, in contemplation of the smoldering embers of the once-magnificent and far-famed temple; the deserted palace, the shattered and unoccupied throne of God's anointed; the ruins of the once-beautiful and joyous city; the captive and dishonoured king; the whole nation wasted and destroyed—in vision he stands amid this scene of awful desolation, and summons the whole earth to witness to the divine faithfulness in judgment, as in mercy, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."

We shall find here a *cry of warning; a challenge to wisdom; and a call to wealth.*

I.

Let us then listen that we may "hear the word of the Lord" IN WARNING. The prophet looks upon a national wreck, upon a nation plunged in utter bankruptcy. Not one thing of value is saved from the ruin. And he bids the earth hear the word of the Lord if they would know the cause. When a building is destroyed men enquire, "What was the origin of the fire?" A commercial or manufacturing concern is bankrupt, and they ask, "How did they fail?" A man is dead and they want to know, "Of what disease did he die?" But are there not moral conflagrations, and moral bankruptcies, and moral and spiritual deaths? And are we to smile our way through life, and never see the torch or flame, and never see the wasting treasure, and never stay the scourge of sin? Must there not be a warning note in every faithful minister's message? I am as anxious as any man in London to have a large opportunity in the way of a large congregation, and I am glad to see this great audience to-night. But you had better not come again if you do not want to be warned. I always feel relieved when I learn that even for a few days, our people are all on their feet, and there are none sick among us. And I long for the day when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." But O, ye men and women, that day is not yet! I know not where the smooth-tongued prophets live that they should see nothing in the things about them to lead them to warn men to flee from the destroyer. I confess I see too many golden vessels broken, too many temples in ruins, too many unoccupied thrones, too many captive kings—too many men and women, whom God made for Himself, being consumed with selfishness, and lust, being destroyed body and soul by sin, for me ever to feel free to withhold the warnings of the word of God.

It is not important where poison gets into the blood, whether by a wound on the foot, the hand, or the head; if it gets into the blood the whole system is poisoned. And it does not affect the virulence of the disease of sin, that in some cases it makes only the most respectable manifestations of its presence. The poison is there, and the poison will kill, whether it operates in the appetite of the bloated drunkard or in the intellect of the manipulator of "high finance".

I need not however, tell a congregation like this that drunkenness and debauchery do not pay; that no man can sin against the body without suffering. But the warning of the word of the Lord strikes deeper than that. It says that sin in the heart of all ranks and conditions of men is the same in nature, and is always fatal in its results.

Look at the picture to which the prophet's clarion cry calls attention.

Hear what the word of the Lord says of a *business man's sins*. Jehoiakim was a king, but he was a man of affairs—a business man. And to him God said, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." It is just as necessary that a house be plumb morally as it is that it be plumb physically. There are other laws which are as irresistible as gravitation, and which no builder can afford to ignore. To withhold his neighbour's wages is as fatal to the building up of a man's business, as would be the neglect to put mortar between the bricks. "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." He is the building Inspector and will tear down, as He did the Babel tower long ago, every house that is not built to His specifications. This man, who ceiled his house with cedar, and painted it with vermilion, God judged to be unworthy even of a stable, and cast him forth as an unburied beast beyond the city gates.

That law is still in force. Let a man live for himself alone, and providence will accord him an ass' funeral without mourners. You can no more build a nation's business upon unsound foundations than you can build a sky-scraper upon a few planks thrown over a bog.

That is the word of the Lord ye business men. That dishonesty in business however cleverly and respectably veiled, results in a loss of honour, of position, of power; it strips a man of all those qualities which would make him brotherly or lordly or glorious—of all the qualities that go to make a man; and reduces him to the level of the beast who lives only to chew his own food and render such service as he is compelled to give. There is a law of moral sanitation which, though it seems to work slowly, is a law which cannot be avoided, and which decrees that every putrid thing shall be buried without the city's gate. That law has accomplished the burial of empires and of individuals; and prophesies ruin for every institution that ignores God's law.

But let us "hear what the word of the Lord" saith of *the folly of unbelief*. God had sent His word by many prophets—"I spake unto thee in thy prosperity," He saith, "but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice." A stubborn refusal to hear the word of the Lord is still a very common sin. Jeconiah, or Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, followed in his father's footsteps. The nation refused to hear. But though they made light of God's word, they did not make light of His sword. When the nation's woes were multiplied, and one enquired "Is the man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?" The explanation is given that God has written him as childless, "a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." I tell you there is no throne for the man whom God refuses to crown—no kingdom for him to whom God denies a sceptre. That is the word of the Lord—that the way of the transgressor—all sorts of transgressors: the vulgar, lustful, bestial transgressors; the respectable, well-dressed, secret transgressor; the proud, sceptical, intel-

lectual transgressor: "The way of the transgressor is hard." Unbelief does not alter the fact. The Chaldeans fell upon Coniah though he did not believe the prophet; and ruin came to the nation though they would not hear the word of the Lord. If all the woes of earth and hell were gathered together they might all be spelled with three letters. Death in all its awful meaning is "the wages of SIN." That is the sum of the warning of the word of the Lord.

II.

This text may be regarded as A CHALLENGE TO MEN WHO WOULD BE WISE to "hear the word of the Lord."

It were wise to hear the word of the Lord *because it is the word of the Lord*. Nothing could be a more reasonable assumption than that the Creator would find means of communicating with His creatures. In street cars, and trains, and other public conveyances, it is a common thing to see copies of certain laws regulating the transportation of passengers posted up in several different languages. And it is not unreasonable to expect that God would speak to men in human speech that they might not be left in ignorance of His will. The sun comes forth from his chamber in obedience to the divine word; the stars in their courses are His servants; the waves of the sea are stayed at His order; the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, in common with those bright intelligences of the skies which excel in strength, all "do his commandments hearkening unto the voice of his word." And shall man alone be deaf to the divine command? That is the astonishing spectacle which leads the prophet to turn from the rebel, and throw out his voice, as though he would summon the very hills and dales of earth to witness against their rebellious inhabitants "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Nothing is sadder than that—that the heavens, which send forth rain and dew and sunshine by God's gracious decree, and the earth which, by the same divine fiat, yields her treasures for human sustenance and enrichment, should be called to witness against man's sin. "Hear O heaven, and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished, and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Surely it were wise of the creature to hear his Creator's word. When thunders and lightnings speak for Him, and heaven and hell are the creations of His word, how dare men refuse to hear? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

It were wise to hear the word of God *because it is the truth*. Truth is that which is. Who would not know what really is, as distinguished from that which only seems to be? The word of God is the truth: here the white light shines upon things as they are. "But do you mean that the Bible is the word of God, and that it is therefore the truth?" Yes, I mean that. I question whether there is a possibility of knowing the absolute truth about anything apart from the Bible. That is a wide statement, but I think analysis will show it is correct. The Bible does not claim to contain all the truth, but it does claim to be itself true. And if it be true it is in agreement with everything else that is true. The truth in science and philosophy will ever be in harmony with the Bible.

The multiplication table is not the fullest treatise on modern banking methods. But I fancy any man who did not believe in the soundness of the multiplication table, would, by his unbelief, be disqualified for the safe and successful conduct of any business in the world. Certainly no firm would entrust him with the keeping of its books. And similarly the denial of the truth of Scripture, is the denial of that which is fundamental and essential to all morality.

A man can shut himself within the narrow limits of his little study, and behind his closely shuttered window to "investigate." He has invented a new lamp which is to light the world to great and important discoveries. But oh, it is a little thing of about a dozen match-power, a flickering, unsteady noxious thing. And with its aid he would examine the rocks, and measure the mountains, and explore the trackless sea. For, he says, the sun is out of date! I leave him to his foul and smoky study, and walk out where the sun is shining, where the daisies bloom, and the birds are singing, and the luscious fruit hangs in abundant clusters from the burdened trees, and all nature, resplendent in her robes of light, is vocal with her Maker's praise. The sun is not out of date for me.

And this is the sun in the firmament of truth, notwithstanding all that the clever lamp-makers say. My text summons the whole earth to walk in its light of truth—for in its light all moral fruits, even whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, are found flourishing in abundance.

Is it not wise to come out of our smoky houses into the light of truth? I want to know whether these robes of righteousness of mine appear in that light as filthy rags, that I may know my true standing before God. I want to examine my possessions in that light to see if there be any true jewels among them, or whether earth's diamonds are paste, and its gold but brass, that I may know at once if I am only poor in heaven's sight. I want the Physician to regard me in the light of this word—it may be I have a deceitful and desperately wicked heart; it may be I have a mind which is enmity against God, a conscience that is defiled. It may be I am smitten with a mortal plague, and "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" and, if so, I want to know the worst. Therefore it were wise to come to the light. No good can come of shirking the issue: let us know whether we are sinners doomed to die.

As one accused of wrong I would know the charge against me before the judgment day. It may be I can make some defense; or, if I must plead guilty, it may be I can find a Friend to plead for me, and save me from the vengeance of the law my sin has violated. Only let me know the truth; that I may know the worst and best that can come to me.

For such considerations as these it were wise to hear the word of the Lord.

Once more, it were wise because *it is the only word we have of another life*. O earth, that art so often watered with the rain of human tears, who art so prolific of the bitter herbs of sorrow and bereavement, so full of widows and of orphans and of homeless poor, so

"Full of farewells to the dying
And mournings for the dead",

so hollow with the graves of generations of unnumbered millions whose spirits have gone we know not whither—tear-watered, sorrow-stricken, death-strewn—"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."

I stand upon the shores of Time, and look off over the limitless sea men call eternity, and wonder, if somewhere beyond the horizon their is a fair summer land, and a golden city of glittering spires, with opened gates of pearl? But there is no voice to answer my questioning. I see the boundless space—

"Break, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
"And I would that my tongue could utter,
The thoughts that arise in me.

"O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

"And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me."

So every mourner in the world must cry until they "hear the word of the Lord". No other voice comes out of the void, and, sounding o'er all the trackless sea, tells of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Whoever knows the bounds of time, and feels the limitations of the life of earth, and longs for a life of larger liberty, and fuller knowledge, and holier companionships, and more abiding joys, will wisely hear the word of the Lord.

III.

But suffer me to show you that my text is A CALL TO GREAT WEALTH. . If "the price of wisdom is above rubies", it follows that whosoever becomes wise also becomes wealthy.

Jeremiah does not conclude his prophecy with a picture of a wrecked kingdom and a captive king. He says, "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah-Tsidkenu—the Lord our Righteousness."

You know the story? The ruined kingdom is restored by a righteous King. Jesus is the word of the Lord. All the law and the prophets are fulfilled in Him. He is the only true Interpreter of life. No one else has ever apprehended its meaning; no one else has given the world the truth. What is the word of the Lord? It is Bethlehem with its Babe: God stooping to take upon Him the likeness of men. What is the word of the Lord? It is Nazareth where Jesus lived and wrought, that He might live our life and fulfil the law for us. What is the word of the Lord? It is Calvary, with its shame and spitting, its agony and bloody cross—its awful darkness, and yet more awful cry of a God-forsaken human soul. What is the word of the Lord? It is Calvary with its revelation of undying love, and sovereign grace and power.

What is the word of the Lord? It is the empty grave

in the garden where the sinner may bury his sins; it is the ascending path—

"The golden gates are lifted up
The doors are opened wide,
The King of glory has gone up
Unto His Father's side."

That is the word of the Lord, that in the glorious gospel of the blessed God—that he warns us to make us wise, and makes us wise to make us wealthy with all the riches of His sovereign, saving grace. To you whose sins are of a crimson hue, He cries, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." To you who are poor He calls, "Come, ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price." If there be those who think it cannot be that there is hope for them, He bids me tell them that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," that indeed "it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" even the "chief". He bids me ring this silver bell to call the man of works and penances from his weary toil, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He bids me call the thief, the drunkard, and the harlot; the far-off prodigal, the unfaithful steward, the intellectual sinner whose silly pride forbids his trusting in the blood; He bids me call the man who has failed a thousand times, who has forfeited all friendships, and lost all love of life, and who only lives from fear of death—He bids me say to all, "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the word of the Lord, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

A SERMON THIRTY-THREE YEARS OLD

This Editor was advised by a very competent and experienced preacher, at the beginning of his ministry, never to "talk shop". That rule, he generally follows—and has done so for many years. But sometimes it may be helpful to share with others a craftsman's experience. For that reason, we let our readers, particularly our ministerial readers, into a secret.

There are hundreds of transcriptions of sermons in our files which have been reported during the last eighteen years, enough to keep THE GOSPEL WITNESS going for a good many years when the production of sermons shall have ceased; but sometimes this preacher feels in a somewhat reminiscent mood. In his study he has between fourteen and fifteen hundred sermon manuscripts, for it was his habit for many years to write everything—generally to write every word. Few of these sermons were ever repeated after their first delivery. The other evening we turned, not to the "barrel" but to the cabinet, and leafed over some of the hundreds of manuscripts—most of which represented hours of midnight and early morning toil.

Thus employed, we came upon one which had been preached on the occasion of the reopening of Adelaide.

(Continued on page 6)

CANADA HAS SPOKEN

This paper seldom speaks on purely political issues. It never speaks on such matters unless in such issues some moral principle is clearly at stake. The Editor of this paper did give an address on March 11th to a crowded assembly, in support of the King Government.

From the night we heard his radio speech following his election until this hour, our conviction has ever been deepening that no greater blight ever fell upon the life of the Province of Ontario than when Mr. Mitchell F. Hepburn entered its political arena. From then until now he has been a sinister figure, and his regime has brought nothing but distress to the Province. His policies have been anti-temperance, anti-Canadian, anti-British, anti-everything-and-everybody but Mitchell F. Hepburn. His vulgarity has often reduced the discussion of public questions to the level of the gutter.

We had hoped for better things when Colonel Drew was appointed Leader of the Opposition, but almost immediately he descended to the ditch and rolled in the mud with his axis-partner, Mr. Hepburn. Their joint sponsorship of the censure of the Dominion Government precipitated the election. Hepburn and Drew said, "King must go." They declared that Mr. King had lost the confidence of the country.

Mr. King took the only possible course open to a self-respecting Prime Minister: he dissolved Parliament, and in effect said, "Mr. Hepburn and Mr. Drew have said the people do not want me or my Government; I will give the people an opportunity to say whom they want." The people answered. The vote of yesterday, overwhelmingly supporting the King Government, surely constitutes an utter repudiation of Messrs. Hepburn and Drew. The King Government was overwhelmingly endorsed in the Province of Ontario, while Dr. Manion was left without one supporter in Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Alberta.

We believe there was no single influence which contributed so largely to the utter rout of Dr. Manion's party as the action of Hepburn and Drew.

We have no party affiliations. We can see little hope for better things in the present political situation in Ontario. While Colonel Drew's speech is not quite so coarse as that of Mr. Hepburn, he is, if possible, even more reckless than Mr. Hepburn; hence there is nothing to choose between them. They have both proved themselves utterly incompetent to lead anything—but a retreat to obscurity.

We cannot acquit Mr. Hepburn's Ministers of their share of blame for the faults of the Hepburn regime. With two notable exceptions, they have been partners with Mr. Hepburn in his iniquities. And that is just as true of the blind followers of Mr. Hepburn in the Legislature as of those who have served in his cabinet. The provincial Hepburnites can not make themselves heroes by climbing on Mr. King's triumphal car.

This is only the day after the election, and it is too early rightly to appraise the country's "reaction" to the verdict of the polls; but we feel sure no more vicious or unpatriotic observation will—or could—be made than that which is contained in an editorial in *The Evening Telegram*, of Toronto. It actually says that the vote is an anti-war vote! This is its concluding sentence: "The vote which vindicated the King Government and pardoned all their grievous sins was an 'anti-war' Vote." *The Telegram's* observation is an infamous slander on

the millions of people who voted yesterday. Voters for Liberals and Conservatives alike voted in favour of the most vigorous prosecution of the war. They differed only as to the best way to effect that end. Some believed Dr. Manion would prosecute the war more vigorously than Mr. King, and supported him with that in view. Others believed the country's best interests would be served in that respect by continuing the King Government in power. But for any responsible journal to suggest that the vote of yesterday indicated a desire on the part of Canada generally that the war should not be fought with the utmost vigour to the end, that it was in any sense an "anti-war" vote, is a slander which every loyal Canadian will resent. *The Evening Telegram* is a poor loser.

Equally groundless is the assertion that Dr. Manion was defeated because people feared conscription. No one could have spoken more plainly in opposition to conscription than did Dr. Manion—not because he did not believe it to be fair, but because he had been convinced that in the last war it accomplished little, and therefore he rightly concluded that the best results could be obtained by a continuance of the voluntary system. Unless it be contended by such partisans as *The Telegram* that nobody believed Dr. Manion, conscription was not at issue in this election; for both parties had most emphatically declared their opposition to it.

When we were younger, we used to play cricket; and we always had a contempt for the man who tried to "explain" why he was bowled for "a duck"; or why his side was defeated in the game. We always considered it was a manly and a gentlemanly thing gladly to acknowledge that the best man or the best team had won, and thereafter for the loser to congratulate the victor. *The Telegram's* whine is unworthy of a great public journal. We are convinced that Canada with virtual unanimity voted to get on with the war with the utmost vigour.

But now that it is all over, Canada can get back to work. Dr. Manion called for a National Government: the country answered his request affirmatively, only expressing its opinion that Mr. King's Government would be a better National Government than Dr. Manion's. Dr. Manion is a fine gentleman, and accepted his defeat in the spirit of a true sportsman. At any other time than during war, we should be sorry there should be such a small and ineffective opposition; but in war time perhaps it is just as well.

If the political parties in Ontario are capable of reading the signs of the times, we should think they would both soon decide to elect a new Leader. Meantime, Canada almost made it unanimous. Now we can once more plan and work to defeat Hitler and destroy Hitlerism.

DENOMINATIONALISM

Many ultra-spiritual people—at least, people who are so by profession—speak with horror of "denominationalism", as though it were some kind of religious plague. So far as the significance of the name goes, a denomination is merely a body of people answering to a particular name, who profess to believe certain things, and who have adopted a certain programme of work.

The larger number of such religious groups, it is true, have evolved some form of centralized authority and control—such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican

Church, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church. There are individual congregations in these churches bearing each its own particular name, and calling itself a church; but all such congregations are parts of a great whole. So that it is quite correct to speak of the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, or the United Church of or in Canada; for the denomination is an organized whole, and subject to a central authority.

This is not true properly of Baptist Churches. We recognize of course that in recent years people called Baptists have increasingly practically yielded to the principle of centralized authority. Such is largely true in the Southern Baptist Convention, and in the Northern Baptist Convention in the United States; and during the controversy from 1919 to 1927 it became true of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. The various Boards as represented by the Executive Committee in the Ontario and Quebec Convention sought to dominate the churches, and control the ministers. But even in such case, there was no recognized legal authority exercised. They did it only by threatening dire consequences to the disobedient.

Some ministers and churches refused to be intimidated, and in the exercise of their liberty, did what they believed was right in the sight of God. But historically, and still actually in a legal sense, every Baptist church, both in the United States, and in Canada (except in the Maritimes), is just as much a separate unit, independent of all outside control as is any assembly of "Brethren".

Baptist churches voluntarily cooperate with each other in missionary work and other necessary enterprises; but the measure of their cooperation is wholly voluntary. All matters are finally settled in a Baptist church by a vote of a majority of the members. Such independency may sometimes seem to have its defects, yet notwithstanding we believe it is wholly scriptural.

The principle of Baptist church polity—New Testament polity, we believe it to be—of absolute independence, subject only to the authority of its exalted Head as expressed through the teaching of Holy Scripture, is designed to meet the need of a spiritual organization which, in truth, should be less an organization than an organism, unified, actuated, and energized by the power of the indwelling Spirit. In apostolic times the only extra-congregational authority known to the local church was that which resided in the apostles. That same apostolic authority is continued to the church in the authority of Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

Such authority, of course, is recognized only by spiritual people. If it is objected that a local church is seldom instinct with spiritual life; and that lacking such spiritual responsiveness, its affairs are likely to be directed by carnal authorities, we answer that that is part of the price we pay for such spiritual freedom. If further it is objected that the autonomous principle, unaccompanied by the necessary spiritual responsiveness, leads to disunity, confusion, and sometimes even ultimately to extinction, we reply, That is unavoidable. When life departs from an animal organism—or, indeed, from any other kind of organism—a process of disintegration and decay immediately sets in.

Local spiritual bodies may here and there exist in a larger association subject to a centralized authority, but no such hierarchical government can prevent decay when once spiritual life departs. The best it can do is to wire

the members of the skeleton together, and substitute a mechanical organization for a living organism. That, in turn, serves only to dishonour the name of the Lord. When a church loses its spiritual vitality, it ought to die and be buried.

In subsequent articles, we shall have something to say of undenominationalism and interdenominationalism. Meanwhile, there is at least this to be said in favour of denominations, that they are not ashamed of their name. Whether what they teach and practise be right or wrong, they at least do it openly, and without apology, and accept the consequences equally of their faith and works. We have respect for denominations with which we are not in complete religious agreement on this ground at least, that they stand on their own feet, and do not parasitically feed upon the life of others.

A SERMON THIRTY-THREE YEARS AGO

(Continued from page 4)

Street Baptist Church, London, Ontario, a little over thirty-three years ago. The introduction to the sermon tells of the many moves that had been made by the congregation to provide accommodation; and the particular sermon to which we refer had been preached after the last move, at the reopening, after galleries had been installed. The enlargement of the church itself had been considered such a great thing that, while preparation was made for the galleries, it was thought their erection might be allowed to wait. But in a very short time they were needed, and were put in, providing an additional accommodation of perhaps four or five hundred.

In reading over this sermon we could not find anything in it that we would not preach to-day, and it occurred to us that it might interest some of our very kind readers to have the opportunity of reading such pulpit testimony as this Editor was wont to give in what now seems not so very long ago, although it was over thirty-three years. We have therefore reproduced the sermon in this issue exactly as it was written, from the manuscript of that date. Exactly? Well, perhaps a few commas have been added or deleted; but apart from that, the actual manuscript was put in the printer's hands just as written in the long ago. We recall that it was blessed to many on the occasion of its delivery: we pray it may be blessed to many more in its printed form.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET.

On Good Friday evening Mr. Hutchinson, with the assistance of Mr. Penney at the organ, and Misses Marion Melrose and Ruth Wicksey at the two pianos, conducted the first great praise service in our new building. Combined choirs—Senior, Intermediate, Junior, Primary, and Beginners—numbered practically two hundred.

The service was an arrangement by Mr. Hutchinson, of great Easter hymns and anthems, interspersed with scriptural readings, which parts were effectively taken by Rev. W. Gordon Brown. In a fairly long and varied experience, we have never anywhere seen anyone equal Mr. Hutchinson's command of a great company of children. The whole work was superbly done, and the primary choir coming down the gallery steps to the platform, and singing their Easter piece; and the beginners with their bewitching ways, singing down the gallery stairs from the other side, was a heart-warming experience.

As in all such services as he has conducted before—and this was no exception—Mr. Hutchinson provided for the periodical singing of the entire congregation. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee", is the rule in Jarvis Street. And a very wise one it is too, for even those who have no better voices than crows, would rather sing than hear any *prima donna* in the world perform.

As usual, there was an enormous response. It is always hazardous to attempt an estimate of the number of people who do not get in. We surmise it must have been large on this occasion, for the reason that long before the advertised hour of commencement, the church was packed to capacity. We hope we may be forgiven by the city authorities, for having crowded aisles—for what can you do with a flood of humanity? For there they were on the gallery steps and in the aisles, so that there could not have been far short of two thousand people present Friday.

Parts of the same service were repeated by the choirs Sunday morning and Sunday evening, and great congregations assembled at both services. Necessarily, the time for the sermon on each occasion was considerably shortened, and we did not feel inclined to print either of them. But the week-end was a period of great blessing in Jarvis Street.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Easter at Snowdon

Easter Sunday was a bitterly cold day on Mount Royal, but twenty-four people braved the winds to come to the evening service at Snowdon Baptist Mission. The Sunday School advanced five over the previous week, in spite of the bad weather.

We had two extra services during Easter week-end. On Friday evening seventy-four were present at a lecture on "Favourite Hymns of the Faith", illustrated with coloured drawings. At the Children's Easter party on Monday evening forty-seven enjoyed choruses, an object talk, reading and prayer, playing games, and being treated to a tasty lunch by some of the ladies. The party wound up with Easter candies all around.

The increases in attendance and the general interest being shown in the Mission's work are most pleasing, and we cannot help but think that only the edges of the possibilities in northwest Montreal have yet been touched. It seems now that the Lord has "much people" there, and we confidently trust that He will continue to bless our work.

It would be impossible to say how much the Snowdon people appreciate the liberality of those who have given to the work. We thank you most heartily and pray that your gifts may blossom forth and bear much fruit as the days go by. Remember the work in your earnest prayers, thanking God for the privilege of spreading the Word in this great new suburb of Canada's largest city.

Shenstone Baptist Church, Brantford

The members of the Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church held their annual meeting on Wednesday evening, March 20th. The ladies of the church served supper and after a brief song service the various organizations presented their reports.

There were encouraging signs of progress all along the line. We praise God for the growth of our Bible School. The roll and the average attendance per Sunday both show a decided increase over last year. Many of the scholars have professed faith in Christ and several have been baptized. The school contributed liberally to the expenses of the church. A new work among the teen age girls has been started recently which aims at training them for Christian service. The Women's Missionary Auxiliary have been busy and generous. Help has been extended in providing clothing for needy families and in collecting money for missions. Our missionary offerings have increased considerably over last year, and our interest in the missionary work of our Union enterprises.

A new heating system has been installed and the money to pay for it has been subscribed. We look to God for His guidance and blessing in the coming year and pray that by the faithful ministry and labour of His people many will be added to His Kingdom and be prepared to serve Him in this place.—A.C.W.

About a Generous Church

There is a phrase that never fails to set the joy bells ringing and we have just opened a letter that began with the very words: "Enclosed herewith you will find". The amount of the cheque was \$318.18, and it was specially designated for the Seminary. This was great cause for rejoicing, especially as it came just as we are closing our financial year.

But to those engaged in the work of the Seminary this cheque from the Timmins church was worth far more than its face value. Few if any of our readers will fail to know that this church is in northern Ontario and that Rev. Harold C. Slade is its pastor. By reason of their geographical situation, the members of this church are personally acquainted with the great missionary work accomplished in the north by our Seminary graduates. They have eagerly followed the opening up of these new fields and have prayed for the Seminary students as they have gone up to take charge of them. They have helped to support them financially and rejoiced with them in the conversion of sinners and the building of strong New Testament churches where there had been nothing but darkness and superstition.

Few of the Timmins folk have visited the Seminary classes, but they have seen the Seminary at work in the persons of its graduates; they appreciate the sterling qualities of their own pastor, one of our first Seminary graduates; they realize that it was the Seminary that made possible the great advances in the north, for every pastor in the north is a Seminary man. The friends at Timmins know what they are doing when they give to the Seminary. We wish that their vision, and by that we mean not only their missionary vision, but their physical vision—what their eyes have seen of the Seminary in the North—could be given to many others of God's stewards among our WITNESS readers.—W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 4 Second Quarter Lesson 14 April 7th, 1940

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA

Lesson Text: Matthew 14.

Golden Text: "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

—Matthew 14:27

I. A Conscience Stirred—verses 1 to 14.

Read also Mk. 6:14-29.

The fame of Christ as a Teacher and Healer reached the ears of King Herod, the Governor of Galilee and Perea (Lk. 3:1). This officer of Rome was the son of Herod the Great, who had been ruling at the time of the birth of Christ (Matt. 2:1). Herod, the Governor of Galilee, was also known as Herod Antipas, and he was the Herod who was in office at the time of the crucifixion of Christ (Lk. 23:7-25). His second wife was Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. Her daughter was named Salome.

We do not wonder that Herod was strangely troubled at the reports which reached him concerning the Christ (Lk. 9:7-9). He had reason to fear that this was John the Baptist risen from the dead, for Herod had been responsible for the murder of the great prophet. Sin had made him a coward, and he feared retribution (Gen. 4:7; 44:16; Num. 32:23; Isa. 59:12).

John had met death through his faithfulness in rebuking Herod's sin of immorality. The King's court was the centre of vice and cruelty. The servant of the Lord must be ready to meet sin in every form and in every place (2 Tim. 4:2).

Left to himself, Herod might have listened to the warnings of God's prophet. We are told that at first he feared John and heard him gladly (Mk. 6:20; Acts 24:25). But he was influenced by the evil counsel of Herodias (1 Kings 21:25; Mk. 6:24), and in the end he desired the death of John.

Men of wicked counsel seldom have long to wait for an opportunity to execute their designs. The revelry of the courtiers and the dance of Salome provided the occasion for the murder of John.

The disciples of John tenderly buried the body of their beloved teacher, then went and told Jesus. The ear of the Saviour is ever open to the cry of the sorrowing.

II. A Crowd Satisfied—verses 15-21. Read also MK. 6:32-44; Lk. 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is recorded by all the evangelists. Teachers will find this incident rich in teaching concerning the person and work of Christ. It formed the basis for our Lord's own discourse concerning the bread of life, wherein He declared that He Himself was the bread of life sent down from heaven, and that those who by faith partook of His flesh given for the life of the world would receive eternal life (John 6:26-58).

The disciples looked upon the multitudes as a hindrance to their leisure, but Christ had compassion upon them. He considered them as sheep without a shepherd, for they were weary, wandering, distressed and hungry (Matt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34). The disciples would have ignored or dismissed them, but Christ cared for them. Many in our day seek to evade responsibility for those around them. Christ would recall us to a sense of our obligation, as He did the disciples, by saying, "Give ye them to eat".

That which is impossible with men is possible with God (Matt. 19:26; Mk. 10:27; Lk. 18:27). Notwithstanding the scarcity of food in the desert place, Christ fed the multitude by performing a miracle (Compare Matt. 15:32-38; Mk. 8:1-9). Small and insignificant as our resources seem to be, they will be multiplied when presented to the Saviour (1 Kings 17:14). Let not the hungry multitudes around us perish for want of the life-giving bread which we are to distribute in the Lord's name.

All who eat of the Bread of life will be filled (John 4:14; 6:35; Rev. 7:16); the Lord has bread enough and to spare (Lk. 15:17). He alone can satisfy the cravings of the human spirit created for His glory. He gives life abundant to those who come to Him (John 10:10).

There was no confusion when the five thousand were fed. Order is one of the principles of the Divine government of the universe, as is evidenced by the stars in their courses, the regular succession of day and night, and the alternate approach of summer and winter. The same sense of order and fitness characterizes the Lord's dealings with His people. The Divine economy allows no waste; the fragments that

remain must be gathered. We must remember that each child of God has a place to fill, be it large or small. The Lord's work will be accomplished only when each one is fulfilling his proper ministry (Num. 2:17; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Col. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:5). Care is taken even in the commercial world to see that all work is performed with maximum efficiency and with minimum waste. By-products are investigated with a view to their possible use.

III. A Calm Secured—verses 22 to 36. Read also Mk. 6:45-52; John 6:15-21.

While the disciples laboured at the oars, their boat buffeted by the winds and waves, the Master was alone on the shore, praying for them. Is this not a picture of the present age? The Lord's children toil against the contrary winds of opposition and persecution, but Christ the Advocate is in heaven interceding for them (John 16:33; 17:15).

The disciples fancied that they were forsaken, but the Lord had not forgotten them (Heb. 13:5, 6). Men are prone to doubt the love of God when they look only at their circumstances. His love is constant and abiding; we must not judge Him by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace.

Christ the Saviour went to the disciples at the hour of their deepest need. Physicians tell us that the fourth watch of the night, from three to six o'clock in the morning, as we reckon time, is the period when the vitality of the body is at its lowest point. It is a time of uncertainty and weariness; night has passed, but the day has not yet commenced. The Lord will bless with a sense of His personal presence those who turn to Him in the midst of their sorrow and distress.

Nervous, overwrought and excited, the disciples were as fearful at the unexpected presence of Christ as they had been in His absence. Thinking that they saw an apparition, they found no comfort until they believe His reassuring word: "Be of good courage; it is I; fear not" (Matt. 9:2, 22; Mk. 6:50; John 6:20; Acts 23:11). He bids us trust Him, and not be afraid (Psa. 56:3, 11; Isa. 12:2).

Impulsive Peter ventured to walk on the water to meet the Master. His faith failed when he looked at the monstrous waves and the boisterous winds. Let us keep looking to Christ (Heb. 12:1, 2). Peter's brief cry, "Lord, save me" brought instant deliverance (Psa. 50:15; 91:15; Rom. 10:13).

Christ displayed His authority over nature when He walked upon the surface of the sea. Again, as soon as he entered the boat, the storm ceased (Matt. 8:26; Mk. 4:39; Lk. 8:24), and the ship reached the desired haven immediately (John 6:21).

BOOKS AND SERMONS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

SPECIAL SERMONS ON THE WAR

A Sword Bathed in Heaven—Booklet of 21 pages	\$0.10
20 copies in bulk to one address	1.00
"Watchman, What of the Night?"	per copy .05
"Hitler's Suicide in the Bible" .....	.05
"The Nazis Are Coming!—Where Are the Campbells?"; "The War and Human Nature" .....	.05
"'Culture' and Evolution" .....	.05
"Hitler's Peace Offensive"; "The Virtue of Hatred" .....	.05
"The Russo-German War Against God—Who Will Win?"; "Belgium and Expiation" .....	.05
"The Second Coming of Christ and the War" .....	.05

"How the War May Become a Blessing"	
"The Kaiser and Beelzebub" .....	.05
<hr/>	
"The Adventures of a Modern Young Man"	\$1.00
"Other Little Ships"	1.00
"The Plot That Failed"	1.00
"The Oxford Group Movement Analyzed" .....	.05
25 copies	1.00
Russellism or Rutherfordism, (103 pages) .....	.35
"The Papacy—In the Light of Scripture" .....	.10
"Why I Believe the Rapture Cannot Precede the Tribulation." Also "The Meaning of the Parousia". In Booklet of 32 pages .....	.10
20 copies	1.00
The Gospel Witness, published weekly, per annum	2.00

Address: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto, Can.