

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.

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

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Vol. 20, No. 48

TORONTO, APRIL 2, 1942

Whole Number 1037

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHERE ARE THE DEAD — IN PARADISE, OR PURGATORY, OR ASLEEP?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, March 29th, 1942

(Stenographically Reported)

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."—I. Thessalonians 4:13.

I speak on the subject announced for this evening because of its general interest, and because specifically I have been asked to do so. I do not respond to requests for the discussion of unimportant matters, but a subject of such vital concern as that which is to occupy our thought for a little while this evening is one that deserves the most careful study on the part of all of us, and especially at a time like this.

Some of you will remember how, in the last war, when death held high carnival, and multitudes were being swept out of this life into the next, there were many who, in the nature of the case, were concerned to know, if it were possible to know, whither their spirits had gone, and in what state they existed.

Some of you will perhaps remember too, that at that time Spiritism, or Spiritualism as it is sometimes called, obtained an impetus because of the general desire to know something of conditions beyond the grave. Fortunately in this war, so far as our Empire forces are concerned, we have not had the casualties we had in the last war. The cost of this war to the British Empire, so far, in blood, has been very very much smaller than the cost of the last war. I have not seen recent figures, but in the first ten months of this war our total British casualties on all fronts, including our losses by sea and the men taken prisoners at Dunkirk, were approximately ninety-two thousand. For the corresponding period of the last war, our total casualties were three hundred and seventy-five thousand.

Much as we deplore the collapse of France, there is one alleviating feature about it, and that is that while

millions of Frenchmen have been taken prisoners, France's loss of life has been comparatively light—comparatively in respect to the last war when their losses daily were on such a wholesale scale.

But the end is not yet, and I do not know how soon the terrible casualty lists may be delivered to us, when the war becomes intensified.

At such a time it is natural, inevitably, that even people who have had little thought of a world beyond this, begin to enquire, What has happened to the spirit of my son, my husband, my brother, my lover? Whither has he gone? And in this war, it is not confined to the male population, for women have suffered almost equally.

Perhaps some of you recall that during the last war there were certain men of prominence who were carried away by the sentimental surge of the moment. Sir Oliver Lodge, a noted scientist, was one. He had lost a son, and when a man has lost a son he ceases to be a scientist: he is just an ordinary father, and he thinks about that boy who has been taken from him. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was another who was caught by the wave of Spiritism. These two names were heralded far and wide as converts to this cult.

I think the danger may be even greater now, for the reason that the defection from the Word of God has become more general and more intense since the last war. You will remember that when Saul the son of Kish, the first of Israel's kings, refused to hear the word of God, refused to yield to the authority of the divine prophecy, when he desired to know something of the

future, inevitably he resorted to a witch, the witch of Endor. The witch is the inevitable concomitant of Modernism. When people turn away from the Word of God, and there is to them no voice from beyond the grave, when their hearts are torn by bereavement, they grasp after something. They want to know whither they are gone.

The simple matter of fact is that we do not know. I spoke at a funeral service yesterday afternoon, and used this text, "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" That was what Philip said to the Lord Jesus when He talked about going away—and that is the utterance of universal human experience; for though we have learned much, our knowledge is restricted to this mundane sphere. We have no certain knowledge of our own of anything beyond the grave.

Many people have speculated about it. They have had their theories, just as those who sought the Northwest Passage in the long ago had their theories of how to reach the Pole. They went to put their theories into practice. What they found, we do not know; for they never came back to tell us. We do not know whether Perry or Cook discovered the North Pole. For myself, I do not know why anyone would want to discover it! I am near enough to it in Toronto! Men have tried out their theories, and then they have shuffled off this mortal coil, cut loose their moorings and set sail upon that voyage which leads to that bourn from which no traveller returns. What they have discovered, no one knows.

If you could find a man of unusual natural capacity, a man of great intellectual perception, and if his life could be extended to the age of the oldest man, Methuselah, and he were to devote his entire life to the acquisition of knowledge from every source whence human knowledge may be obtained; were he thus to become the master of all languages, and of all literatures, and of all histories, and of all sciences, so that he should become a veritable incarnation of encyclopaedic knowledge, and should then therefore be esteemed a man who knew everything a mortal can know—if then you were to hear of some mother yonder sitting at the bedside of her child (like the famous picture of The Doctor), and someone should say, when the doctor's verdict is given that the child is rapidly slipping away, and the mother wants to know whither will the spirit go, "Send for Dr. Methuselah, the man of vast erudition, who knows everything that a man can possibly know, who draws upon the springs of all human knowledge, and tell him a human spirit is about to take its flight, and that you want to know whither it is going", do you know what he would have to say? "I am sorry; I have no answer to that question. My knowledge is strictly limited to this side of the grave. I know absolutely nothing of anything beyond."

After all our advancement, in all departments of human investigation and resultant knowledge, we are to-day, of ourselves, no wiser than the first human mourner who stood before the first open grave. When our loved ones say to us, "I am going to leave you", we have to say to them, "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

Is there then no voice that can break that silence, no wisdom that can answer the heart's questions about the future? There is but one Voice that has ever broken that silence. In all the universe there is only one Au-

thority on this subject. In answer to that observation this Man of Nazareth said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.¹ I have a monopoly of the knowledge of both worlds I am eternal wisdom incarnate. I know what lies beyond, and I am the only One Who can tell you." "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

In an enquiry of this sort, we are absolutely shut up to divine revelation. Unless we have a word from God, we have no word at all. Surely you are not going to ask intelligent people to build their hopes upon the rappings of tables, and the mutterings of a medium? Surely there must be some better direction than these vagaries. We are shut up, I say, absolutely to the principle of divine revelation. We cannot cross to the other side, and return; but there is One Who said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." He is the Traveller, He is the Explorer, He is the One Who has opened up "a new and living way which is consecrated forevermore."

How strange it is that on a matter of such grave importance, so many people should seem to be supremely indifferent! How few there are who learn to number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom! There is but one explanation: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."²

I refer you for an answer to our question, to the Bible. You may call me "unlearned and ignorant", if you will. I rather enjoy the epithet. You may say I am a man of one book. I have read many books—and still read many—but I am a man of one Book. A preacher came to me last week and said, "I am a young preacher. As a man of longer experience, can you advise me as to my reading?" I said, "I think I can. Begin with the Bible. As you read it, you will find the entrance of God's word giveth light. It will drive you to a study of languages, of literature, of history, to a study of science, to a study of philosophy. If you begin with the Bible, and go out from that, you will very soon find that it is a large book." I have been studying it a great many years, but do not know very much about it yet. I hope to spend all eternity revelling in the riches of its revelation. I never expect to get through with it.

If there is a man here who says, "I am not interested in what the Bible has to say on this subject", my answer is, "Then you will have to go out of this life into the darkness. There is no other light. There is no other voice. Only God can tell us about the future life."

What about the souls of those who have left us? I suppose I may gather the views of various sects into three categories as representing what is believed to be the state of those who depart this life in a state of grace.

The evangelical position is easily stated. We believe the moment the soul is absent from the body it is present with the Lord. We believe that to depart and be with Christ is "far better". And we conceive of our loved and lost as living in a state of conscious and indescribable felicity, in the presence of the Lord. Not all they will have some day when spirit and body shall be re-

¹John 14:6.

²II Cor. 4:3-4.

united; but even at this present time those who have departed in Christ, we believe, are now happy in Him.

The Roman Catholic view of those who die in grace, as they put it, is quite different. I am not speaking now of those whom they conceive to be lost, but those whom they would number among the faithful, and who are supposed to die in a state of grace. The spirits of all such enter into purgatory, according to that view. There is no purgatory possible for those who die without absolution, without forgiveness of sin, who die in mortal sin; they go straight to perdition. That is the teaching of Rome; but all the faithful depart, not to perdition, but to purgatory. The theory of purgatory is that mortal sin is atoned for jointly by the efficacious work of Christ and the repeated offering of the sacrifice of the Mass. These two together are sufficient to atone for mortal sin. But there are other sins that still cling to the soul that dies in grace, and a certain "temporal punishment" must be endured; and for the endurance of that they enter into purgatory.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether purgatory is a place of literal fire, but the consensus of Roman Catholic opinion favours the idea that the climate there is not at all congenial, but that purgatorial fires purge sin away; and thus the soul atones for such sins as have not been covered by the sacrifice of the Mass, the venial sin that requires certain temporal punishment before the soul can be freed. As to the time spent by the soul in purgatory, no one knows. I read an account in one Roman Catholic authority respecting a certain bishop whose spirit was said to have been in purgatory for six hundred years—and he was still there. That is a long sentence to be assigned for temporal punishment!

There is still another view, held by a number of people, to the effect that the souls of the just at death sleep with the body, and remain asleep and in a state of unconsciousness and inactivity until the resurrection of the body at the coming of Christ.

These three categories fairly summarize the views entertained by various bodies who believe that some kind of salvation is necessary, and that people who have been partakers of that salvation, dying in a state of grace, as evangelicals believe, go to be with Christ, which is far better; or as the Roman Catholics believe, go to purgatory; or as the soul-sleepers believe, the soul sleeps with the body until the day of the resurrection.

I do not speak to-night of the condition of those who die out of grace, of the unsaved. I merely remark that evangelicals see no hope beyond the grave for those who have rejected all that God has done for us; we do not see how God can do anything more for the souls of men, though He be God, than He has done, inasmuch as He has given His only begotten Son. At this point, Roman Catholics, I think, believe with us, that those who die out of grace—though what they mean by that term is far from what we believe—are eternally lost; and go to perdition.

There are some, like the Christadelphians, who believe in a conditional immortality. They believe that at death the souls of those who are not united with Christ, cease to exist. That is a form of annihilationism. They do not monopolize that view. Russellism, or Jehovah's Witnesses, deny all future retribution. So do Modernists, as a rule, those who are real Modernists. And of course there are those who call themselves Universalists, who

contend that God will be a good fellow, and in the end forgive us all. But my concern this evening is with the enquiry as to what happens to those who die in grace.

I.

I QUOTE TWO OR THREE PASSAGES WHICH USE THE FIGURE OF SLEEP FOR DEATH. You will recall that our Lord used that figure twice. In the house of the ruler of the synagogue, whither He had gone at the father's call, He said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." The little child of twelve years of age was really dead, but Jesus Christ said she slept. When He received word from the sisters of Bethany, "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick", He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." His disciples, not understanding Him, said, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well"—for they supposed that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep—"then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

In the Acts of the Apostles it is said of David that "after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." In the text I have announced, the Apostle Paul by inspiration says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep", referring to those who are dead. In the great resurrection chapter Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Again: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." The apostle speaks there of death, and uses the figure of sleep.

I have quoted all the passages in the New Testament in which the figure of sleep is used as representative of death. If you examine those passages, I think you will see clearly that they refer specifically to the sleep of the body: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." His body was awakened, brought back from the dead. When Jesus Christ said of the little maid, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth", He literally took her by the hand and said, "Maid, arise." And she arose as to her body, the body was quickened.

In the text before us, surely it is manifest that the Spirit of God is speaking of the body: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. . . . For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Surely he is speaking here, first of the death—sleep of the body; and then, of the resurrection of the body.

But it is a dangerous practice to take a few passages of Scripture and settle any question by an examination of those passages without looking at the teaching of Scripture as a whole.

II.

Therefore I want to speak of ONE OR TWO PASSAGES WHICH SPEAK OF THE SPIRIT AS BEING SEPARATED FROM THE BODY AT DEATH, and as not sharing the death of the body. When Jesus Christ was on the cross, and in His last agony, He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up

¹Matt. 9:24.

²1 Thess. 4:13.

³John 11:3-14.

⁴1 Cor. 15:51.

⁵Acts 13:36.

⁶1 Thess. 5:10.

the ghost." And they took down from the cross at last a body without a spirit. The spirit reoccupied that body on the third day, as our spirits will reoccupy our bodies some day. The body they laid in the grave was not a body with a sleeping spirit within: the spirit had returned to God.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was being stoned to death, ere he departed, he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Stephen knew that the spirit was just quitting the tabernacle that was being bruised and broken with the stones, and he prayed that God would receive his spirit.

Even in the Old Testament we are told, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." At death when that vital cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken, the body returns to the dust, but the spirit returns to its Maker.

III.

I now quote A FEW PASSAGES WHICH INDICATE THAT THE SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS DEPARTED IN CHRIST ARE IMMEDIATELY PRESENT WITH GOD AT THE DISSOCIATION FROM THE BODY OCCASIONED BY DEATH. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The moment the soul is absent from the body, that moment it is present with the Lord. The Apostle, in his letter to the Philippians, said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." We need nothing more than the assurance that Paul is speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And yet there is another inspired passage, written by this same apostle, in which he tells us: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Have you had an experience like this, when you are telling someone something, but you are not telling the whole story? There is something you have to say, but behind it there is a general background of knowledge that gives a peculiar authority to your statement. I have an idea that the Lord said to Paul, "Paul, I shall tell you how much you may be allowed to say. I will show you much for your own information; that you may have a background of knowledge, I am going to take you into the third heavens and show you something which mortal never saw. But remember, it is not lawful for you to utter it." Sometimes I have imagined that when the Apostle Paul was writing that letter to the Philippians filled with a desire to be with Christ, when he said, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ", I can fancy the Spirit of God saying, "Careful, Paul; careful, Paul; not too much." "What shall I say, Lord?" "Just say it is very far better; that is enough. Do not tell all you know, all you saw." Paul is content therefore to say that to depart from this body is to be with Christ, which is "very far better".

There is another passage. You remember how the penitent thief turned to the Lord at the cross, and said, "Lord, remember me when thou cometh into thy kingdom." That thief had never observed the Mass, had never done penance—and I rather think there was a good weight of sin upon him. But I am perfectly sure that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansed him from all sin; and there and then the Lord of glory said, "To-day"—not to-morrow, not six hundred years hence—"to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Mr. Brown read to you this evening that there are some things, as Christians, we know. You will never find that note, in respect to the future, outside the Bible. You may surmise, you may speculate, you may hope; but this is the language of faith: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Surely there is abundant scripture for our believing that when we reach the end of our tenure here, immediately, if we are among those who have been washed in the blood and quickened by the divine Spirit, we shall be with the Lord.

IV.

I should like to refer you to A FEW PASSAGES WHICH INDICATE, I THINK, A STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE LIFE TO COME. That is true of all the passages, for instance, to which I have referred: "Absent from the body, present with the Lord"; "With Christ, which is far better." I talked with a man this morning who has been superannuated from his work. He has lived a very active life, and is just becoming reconciled to a life of inactivity. I knew of a man who had been superintendent of a great lumber yard; nothing went on in that great organization but by his direction. Then there came the time when the company he served, superannuated him on a good pension. But he had a house right in the corner of the yard; and a room, with large windows, overlooked the whole yard. Every morning after breakfast, following his retirement, he would go up into that room and look over the yard. Sometimes he used his binoculars to see what the men were doing. He could scarcely understand how that big organization could get along without him.

A good many people make that mistake. I do not know how many people have said to me, "What is going to happen to Jarvis Street when you get through?" I always say, "I do not know; but I am inclined to think the Lord does. We will leave it with Him." It is very difficult for a man who has been active, who to use Theodore Roosevelt's phrase, has lived "strenuously", to reconcile himself to a life of inactivity. If ever there was in the world's history an example of a strenuous life, it was that of the Apostle Paul. How strenuously he lived! And he enjoyed every minute of it; he rejoiced in the Lord always. Do you mean to tell me that a man, in the full possession of his powers, could

¹Luke 23:46.
²II Cor. 5:8.

³Acts 7:59.
⁴Philip. 1:23-24.

⁵Eccles. 12:10.
⁶II Cor. 12:2-4.

⁷Luke 23:42.

⁸Luke 23:43.

⁹II Cor. 5:1-4.

write a letter to the Philippians and say, "Even here and now I have a desire to depart and be with Christ", if it meant to go to sleep, and do nothing? I do not believe it. I do not believe those of our loved and lost who have been called hence are unconscious or inactive.

I believe there is scripture for believing they are translated to some higher form of service. I remember reading a great passage in one of Spurgeon's conference addresses when he spoke to a company of five hundred of his student-graduates. He asked this question, "Brethren, shall we some day have a pulpit amid the spheres? Shall we have voices so strengthened as to reach attentive constellations? Shall we be the messengers of the God of grace, to unfallen worlds which will be wonderstruck when they hear the story of redeeming love?" Then he said this extraordinary thing, "I think we shall. I think there are some scriptural indications of that." He quoted these verses: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹

Sometimes I wonder what Jesus Christ meant when He said the shepherd left the ninety and nine sheep, and went after the one that was lost "until he find it". Sometimes I wonder if He was speaking of unfallen worlds? This universe is bigger than you think. I am sorry for you who are not preachers. You had better get into the ministry immediately, or sooner or later you will be out of a job! I never expect to be out of a job. I feel confident that when I get to glory, I shall go on preaching, telling the story of redeeming love.

And I think the angels will love to hear it! All the principalities and powers—for there are good ones as well as evil—when they thus know by the church the manifold wisdom of God, the salvation that is in Christ, will marvel.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer—whether Paul or not—says, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."² Oh yes, the spirits of just men made perfect, perfected by divine grace; serving, as I believe, the Lord with all their might yonder.

That argues a state of consciousness. But here is another passage: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held"—what were they doing under the altar? Were they fast asleep? No!—"and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-

servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."³ But in the meantime, in their white robes, they exercise a ministry of intercession under the altar. They are not in a state of inactivity, and certainly not in a state of sleep.

V.

Then there is THAT NOTABLE PASSAGE WHICH RECORDS OUR LORD'S GOING UP TO MOUNT TABOR, WHEN HE WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE HIS DISCIPLES. The veil of His flesh concealed as well as revealed. It concealed His Deity; He wrapped the splendor of His Deity in mortal flesh, for "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." When He went up the mount, He allowed the glory to shine through, and His Deity shone through His humanity until the disciples fell at His feet as though they were dead. So white was His garment that no fuller on earth could whiten it.

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."⁴ Who was Moses? One whom God himself had buried. God laid him in the grave, and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."⁵ The Bible says Moses died, and that God buried him; and the only mourners—if there were any, and I rather think there were none, were the angels, and they could not have mourned. Who was Elias? Elijah, poor down-hearted preacher! He is a great friend of mine because I have been so often where he was. It is my usual seat of a Sunday night. I have long ago worn out the grass under the juniper tree. Elijah, after he had had that great success on Mount Carmel, and Jezebel had said she would have his head, went a day's journey into the wilderness, and sat down under a juniper tree, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life."⁶

Did you ever reach that stage? Did you ever feel you could not bear another ounce? I have, many a time. I have prayed Elijah's prayer. "Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." But then there appeared an angel and ministered unto him. God did not let anyone talk to Elijah when he was "blue." He sent an angel and gave him something to eat, and put him to bed. Then he wakened him up for another meal, and put him to bed again. We all need angelic ministry sometimes—and Elijah had it.

"It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life." And it is almost amusing that this man who asked to die, did not die at all! The Lord said, in effect, "No, Elijah; I have something better for you than that." You remember how they said to Elisha his servant, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. . . . Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."⁷

Elijah went home to heaven. He did not go to purga-

¹Eph. 3:8-11.

²Heb. 12:22-23.

³Rev. 6:9-11.
⁴I Kings 19:4.

⁵Matt. 17:3.
⁶II Kings 2:5-11.

⁷Deut. 34:6.

tory: he went right home to glory. The Lord sent, not a private car, but a special chariot, with angels to drive it, and carried him into heaven. Elijah did not die at all! And now, after centuries have passed, and this glorious Saviour of ours—I wish we could love Him more. I wish we could worship Him as He deserves to be worshipped, that we could see Him as the disciples saw Him on this occasion—talks with Elijah and Moses. The spirits of Moses and Elijah came back in a state of consciousness, to talk with the Lord Jesus. They talked with Him of His decease, literally, of His exodus, "which he should accomplish at Jerusalem".¹ I think the Lord Jesus said, "Moses, you did not know all the meaning of the Exodus, but I am going to fulfil all its symbolism; I am going to die at Jerusalem; I am going to accomplish my exodus; I will be home with you soon."

Moses and Elijah talked with the Lord of glory. They were not asleep. They were not somnambulists. They were quite conscious, quite active; and in the exercise of their enlightened intelligence.

VI.

Then there is THE CLASSIC PASSAGE IN THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER OF LUKE, of which we speak as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Both of them died. The beggar was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. They did not stop at purgatory on the way either! Nor was the rich man's a "temporal punishment." It was a pre-resurrection scene, for the rich man had brothers on the earth. The Lord put into Abraham's mouth those solemn words,² "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed. It is too late now. You made your choice: you must abide by it."

VII.

I wish we had time to speak of THE RESURRECTION; we who have lost our friends would like to know something of it. You say, "I loved the body. I loved the spirit of those who have gone, of course, but I loved all there was of them." The mother fondled her child. The husband loved his wife, the wife her husband. Shall we see and meet only their spirits again? Shall we have fellowship with their spirits, and will that be all? I do not know how we shall be able to identify spirits, but I think we shall. I think we shall be able to identify "the spirits of just men made perfect", even in advance of the resurrection. But certain I am of this, that again our Lord Jesus is the Pattern and Representative. He rose again from the dead, "this same Jesus", in the same body that was buried. I do not know how the different particles of these bodies will be brought together, but He Who made us in the beginning, can make us over again. I do not know that I want exactly the same body. If I had my choice, I should like to be a good deal better looking than I am. I should like to have all the defects corrected. I should like to have a really perfect body some day—and I am sure I am going to have such. I do not believe this world ever saw so handsome a man—if I may say it without irreverence—as the Lord Jesus. He was the flower, the perfection of humanity. He was as flawless in His human nature as He was infinite in His divine nature. He represented

what you and I are going to be like some day. We are going to resemble Him; we are going to have bodies "fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Oh to be like Him! And we shall be! Our individualities will be retained, certain distinguishing features will be there; but there will be that general resemblance to Christ that will redeem all our shortcomings, and all our uncomeliness, and make us beautiful even in the sight of the angels.

I wonder if any are longing for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still? Would you like to hear that voice again? Someone here says, "I would give anything in the world if I could hear my name called by that voice. But the voice is still, and I hear it no more." So Mary thought! So Mary thought! She went to the grave, she shed her tears, carried her spices with the other women. Then they found the grave open. When Peter and John had left, believing there was nothing more to see, womanlike Mary said, "I am not going yet." And so she tarried. And as she turned, she saw Someone. For a moment she supposed Him to be the gardener; then a voice that had all the music of heaven in it said to her, "Mary!" She was at His feet instantly as she cried, "Rabboni!", which is to say, Master. They knew each other in the flesh on the other side of the grave. So shall we if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall leave the other side of the picture. I do not like to talk about it. You ask me of the state of the impenitent? Whether those terrible figures which speak of fire and torment are literal? I can only say I do not believe the reality will be less than the figure. The better way is to make sure we shall never know anything about it. I do not want any one of you to know about hell. I hope you will know a great deal about heaven, and nothing about hell. And the only way to know is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the door into everlasting life. Trust Him now, and He will save you for ever.

"So shall it be at last, in that bright morning
When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee;
Oh in that hour, fairer than daylight's dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with Thee."

¹Phil. 3:21.

Canadian Protestant League

The most recent monthly meeting of the Canadian Protestant League was held a week ago in Cooke's Church, Toronto. There was a fine attendance at the meeting in this large church. Dr. R. V. Bingham spoke interestingly of the machinations of Rome against freedom and democracy, and Dr. T. T. Shields, the president of the League, followed with a strong address against the domination by Pius XII of affairs in this country, which owes its allegiance to George VI.

On appeal from Rev. Wm. Thomas, pastor of the entertaining church, there was a fine response in new memberships for the League. In addition, there was a fine offering in furtherance of this much needed movement.

A rally will be held in Collegiate Hall, Kitchener, on Tuesday, April 7th, at 8 p.m. Speakers will be Rev. Gilbert Little (Presbyterian), Rev. G. S. Despard (Anglican) and Dr. R. V. Bingham (Baptist).

²Luke 9:28-31.

³Luke 16:19-31.

Jarvis Street Church

"Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" have characterized recent Sundays in Jarvis Street Church. Attendances have been large. Last Sunday night, for instance, the building was crowded, when the sermon published in this edition was delivered by Dr. Shields. During March baptism was administered on five occasions. It is always a great joy to see men and women, boys and girls, making confession of the Saviour.

We constantly have visitors to see our fine church plant, and right glad we are to show it. There were visitors at service last Sunday from Kitchener, Ontario; Rochester, New York; etc.

Next Sunday is Easter and should prove a "high day". We have a large adult Bible Class, taught by this writer, and we wish that every adult member of the church and congregation would make the little extra effort required to arrive at the church at ten o'clock rather than just at eleven, to follow with us the systematic study of the Word of God. Next Sunday we shall turn aside from our course now following through 2 Samuel, for the Easter lesson in John 20. It is a great lesson. Notice the emphasis on the term "Lord". At eleven and seven there will be "resurrection singing by resurrected saints": "Christ the Lord is risen to-day" and other magnificent Easter hymns. The choir will also provide special numbers both morning and evening. The resurrection as it relates to us personally and to this sorely harassed world, will be the subject morning and evening. At the close of the evening public gathering we shall meet to welcome a number of new members coming by letter, experience or baptism; and then remember in the Lord's Supper the Saviour's death and rising again. Let every member, as far as possible, be present to keep the command, "This do as a memorial of Me."

This last week as I talked with a fellow-pastor from another city, whom I was showing around our new building, he asked very specifically Jarvis Street practice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, saying that he had heard this and he had heard that. The answer was quite definite. We believe that when a man is converted to God, he ought to confess his faith by baptism, according to the command of Christ, and that he ought to do so at once. We celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly. This is always announced in the preceding service, but only announced. That is, no invitation is given. It is the Lord's Table. The Lord by His Word and Spirit must do the inviting. So let us who believe the Word, hear the Spirit calling us to the high places of worship on Easter Sunday.—W. G. B.

Fiscal Year End

Readers and friends of THE GOSPEL WITNESS will be pleased to learn that the paper closed its financial year with a balance on hand. This was due, under God, to the generosity of many contributors, and to all we say a hearty Thank You. Members of Jarvis St. Church and friends of the work will rejoice with us also that we have closed our church year with all accounts met. Praise the Lord.—B.

Hamilton and District

Another great Protestant League Rally will be held in the Philpott Tabernacle, Hamilton, on Friday, April 24th, at 8 p.m. Speakers will include Rev. T. C. Innes, J. H. Barnes and Wm. Thomas.

Among Ourselves

Devoted to Activities and Interests of Former Students of TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

The Seminary family seems to welcome news of the doings of the various members, scattered as they are. So again we give "bits and pieces" of their doings.

Miss Dora Thaxter is now Mrs. W. M. P. Reeve, and is living in Hespeler. The wedding was on February 7th, in Jarvis Street Church.

Rev. and Mrs. Bruce Hisey's second son is named David. He is now nine months old, and a fine little fellow.

The sympathy of all the Seminary family is extended to Rev. Jack Scott and his family in the sudden passing of his father on Sunday, March 22nd.

Mr. W. S. Cutler tried three divisions of the forces but was each time rejected. He is now on government inspection with the John Inglis Co., Toronto.

Mr. Norman Fockler, a ground crew man with the R.C.A.F., was for some time in eastern Canada, where he made himself useful in a Baptist Church. So active was he in Christian service that his commandant wished he could be a padre. This, however, was impossible, for to be a chaplain a man must have been ordained for three years. The age limit, by the bye, has lately been lowered for these appointments from thirty to twenty-eight. Anyway, Friend Fockler has now been sent overseas and arrived safely in Britain.

Mr. Ernest McWilliams about a month ago joined the R.C.A.F. He is now at Manning Pool, Toronto.

Lieutenant H. C. Wilkins is still at Three Rivers, P.Q., where he is now instructing in the fire of machine guns.

We have a letter from Mr. Paul Ayriss, from Debert, N.S. He says:

"I have done almost every kind of medical work (in the past couple of years) from 'riding the hurry wagon' (ambulance) to camp hygiene. At present I am 'on command' at the local military hospital, working in the operating department. As you readily can imagine, the duties are very interesting. . . . I like army life but it certainly has disadvantages. Most of us miss the little things which were taken for granted formerly.

"About the only time the padres are seen is on church parades or hospital visitation. . . . An exception to this was an Anglican padre (the only Protestant Chaplain) at Valcartier, P.Q. May the abundant work at Jarvis St. continue and prosper."

This scribe spoke recently at a noon hour meeting of the Interscholar Christian Fellowship (a definitely evangelical movement of tremendous possibilities) at Humberstone Collegiate Institute. There was a fine group of boys and girls, who showed real interest in the things of God. What a blessing such a gathering would have been in my days in that high school! A week ago Sunday evening this writer took the evening service at Forward Baptist Church, Toronto, in the absence of the pastor.—W. Gordon Brown.

Thoughts

Think, and be careful what thou art within;
For there is sin in the desire of sin.
Think, and be thankful, in a different case;
For there is grace in the desire of grace.

—John Byrom, 1692-1763.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 6 Second Quarter Lesson 15 April 12, 1942

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

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Lesson Text: 2 Samuel 7.

Golden Text: "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."
—2 Samuel 7:22.

Reading: 1 Samuel 8.

I. A Holy Desire—verses 1 to 3. Compare 1 Chron. 17:1-3.

The chapter opens with a picture of David at rest, abiding in unbroken fellowship with his Lord. David's devotion in bringing to Jerusalem the ark, which was the visible token of God's presence and power, was quickly rewarded; God subdued his enemies (Deut. 1:30; Josh. 23:10; 1 Sam. 2:30; Psa. 41:11).

David's love toward God found expression in his desire to build a house for the name of the Lord (1 Chron. 22:7; Acts 7:46). We should love the habitation of His house, the place where His honour dwells (Psa. 26:8; 27:4; 84:1-4). As Christians we also have the privilege of building a spiritual house for the Lord, adding living stones to the Church of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:4, 5).

Nathan the prophet was a true friend to David (2 Sam. 12:1). His name means "Gift", and a faithful Christian friend is one of God's choice gifts to His saints (1 Sam. 18:1; 2 Sam. 1:26; Prov. 18:24; 27:17). It is possible that David named his son after this friend (2 Sam. 5:14).

II. A Holy Destiny—verses 4 to 17. Compare 1 Chron. 17:4-15.

God spoke to Nathan in the night, either by direct communication or through a vision or dream (Num. 22:20; 1 Sam. 15:16). In these days the Lord makes known His will to us through the Holy Spirit by means of His word.

Nathan the prophet had not spoken the mind of the Lord, and God's blessing will not rest upon any message save His own (Num. 22:18; 1 Kings 22:14; Jer. 14:14; 23:32; Ezek. 18:1-9). Building a house for the Lord was a worthy project, but it was not in line with God's purpose for David at that time (1 Kings 5:3-5). All men are fallible except the Lord Jesus Christ (Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 2:22).

David's plan to build a house for the Lord was without precedent. Since the exodus from Egypt the tabernacle had represented the presence of God among his people (Exod. 40:33-35). The Lord does not dwell in temples made with hands; He is Spirit (1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 66:1; John 4:24; Acts 17:24, 25).

Nor had the Lord given any commandment concerning the building of a temple. The judges and kings were to act merely as shepherds of the people (2 Sam. 5:2). The spiritual interests of the Lord's work must ever have the first consideration.

David had been given no gifts, no endowment for such a task. Indeed, he had been chosen by the Lord to unite His people and to lead them to battle and to victory over their enemies (1 Chron. 22:8; 28:3). The Lord has authority to designate the fields wherein He would have each of His servants labour, and blessing comes when each Christian is serving faithfully in his own appointed place (Judg. 7:21; Rom. 12:6-8).

David's request was not granted, but the cry of his heart was answered (1 Chron. 28:2-7). When God denies our requests, in His overflowing mercy He gives us something even better. He delights to bestow rich blessing upon us (Isa. 30:18).

David was not permitted to build a house for the Lord, but the Lord made a covenant to build a house for David, to raise seed unto him, to make him the head of a great

family (1 Sam. 2:35). Of this family would come a King Whose authority and kingdom should last for ever (Psa. 89:4, 20-37). The first clause of the Divine promise found its fulfilment in Solomon, the son of David (1 Sam. 8:12-21; 1 Kings 5:5; 1 Chron. 28:6; Psa. 132:11), but the clauses of the covenant which concerned the everlasting kingdom referred to Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David according to the flesh (Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Matt. 1:1; Lk. 1:33-35; Acts 2:29-36; Rev. 11:15).

Disobedience on the part of David's posterity would bring chastisement, but the covenant itself was unconditional, and rested upon the word of a righteous Lord (Isa. 54:7-10). The New Covenant also is unconditional (Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 36:25-27; Heb. 8:6-13); the promises of the Lord can never fail (2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:17, 18).

III. A Holy Dedication—verses 18 to 29. Compare 1 Chron. 17:16-27.

The prayer of David commenced with adoration (1 Kings 8:23-25). The king humbled himself before the might and mercy of God, Who had made a covenant so unexpected and so far-reaching. Our hearts should go out in praise and worship for the goodness of God in making an everlasting covenant with us through Christ (Heb. 13:20).

In revealing His mercy to David the Lord had acted according to His own sovereign will and for the sake of His own great Name (Psa. 106:8; Ezek. 20:9; Mal. 1:11). The Gospel of grace was likewise planned for the glory of God, and was revealed by the One Who works all things after the counsel of His own will (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:11).

Adoration was followed by thanksgiving (1 Chron. 29:13; Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 4:6). David gave thanks to God for His greatness and for His power as it had been exercised toward Israel, whom He had redeemed from Egypt (Deut. 10:21, 22). The Covenant which promised perpetuity to the house and throne of David also confirmed the covenant relationship between God and His people Israel (Deut. 26:16-19).

God had indeed made mention of David's house "for a great while to come". The material house of Solomon would perish, but the spiritual house of David would endure forever; the one would be erected by the hands of man, but the other would be established by the hand of God.

David's earnest petition, "Do as thou hast said", illustrates the manner and method of all true prayer (1 Kings 8:26). When the Lord reveals to us His will through His word, we have the privilege of giving His own promises as the ground on which we make our requests (Isa. 45:11). The Holy Spirit inspires us to pray for that which is in accordance with the Lord's will, then helps our infirmity, interprets our need and presents our petitions to the Lord (Rom. 8:26, 27).

The king desired above all things to magnify the name of the Lord (1 Chron. 29:11; Matt. 6:10, 13; Phil. 1:20). Many prayers are unanswered because of the selfish motives which prompt them (Jas. 4:3).

David prayed in faith and expectancy. He counted on the faithfulness of God, Whose words are true and Whose promises are sure. Prayer without faith is presumption (Mk. 11:24; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:14, 15).

God gave to David the joy of experiencing very shortly a partial answer to the prayer for blessing upon his house. God blessed him with victory, glory, preservation and wisdom (2 Sam. 8:2, 13-15).

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