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WHAT IS THE "GREAT TRIBULATION"?

Is It History or Prophecy?

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

The substance of which was delivered at a Prophetic Research Conference, in Beverley Hills United Presbyterian Church, Upper Darby, Philadelphia, Tuesday, January 6, 1948

TO THE end of his life it was the supreme ambition of the Apostle Paul that he might know Christ. It may be that no mortal ever knew Jesus Christ as well as did Paul. Notwithstanding, he would know Him better, and better, and more, and more; and well he might, for no man of any age was so misrepresented, and misjudged as was He. Paul, unlike many lesser disciples, never reckoned he had already attained, or was already perfect; but followed after, that he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Jesus Christ. Great numbers of those who profess and call themselves Christians know very little of Christ. They know about Him better than they know Him. They know what others say of Him better than they know what He says of Himself.

It is common, and even popular, to conceive of Christ chiefly, and almost exclusively, as a gentle suffering Saviour. Nor would it be possible to exaggerate that aspect of His character and ministry. Yet it should be remembered that He said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"; and again "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." He also said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Again it was said of Him, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." Jesus Christ in all ages, in all relationships is either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

We should ever keep in mind that in many of His great utterances He sets life and death in contrast with each other. Even John, chapter three, verse sixteen, tells us that He came that men might not perish. Throughout His earthly ministry, while he offered forgiveness, where it was rejected he pledged retribution. *Some of the*

most terrible sayings that ever fell from human lips, fell from the lips of Jesus. I fear that failure to recognize that He is both Saviour and Judge, that in Him we have a revelation both of the goodness and severity of God, leads to much misunderstanding of Scripture, and, indeed, to the whole scope of the mission of the Son of God to this rebellious world. Repeatedly He pronounced woe upon the scribes and Pharisees, whom He described as "hypocrites", saying to them "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell."

Matthew 23. A Prelude to Chapter 24

In what was really a prelude to the great eschatological chapter, the twenty-fourth of Matthew, which is often described as the Olivet Discourse, He enunciated a principle which it was never more necessary that men should understand than it is in our day. *He assumes a moral order of perfectly balanced equilibrium.* He reminds His hearers that a wicked world has been sent prophets, and wise men, and scribes, some of whom should be killed, and crucified, while others should be scourged in their synagogues, and persecuted from city to city; and all *this that the accumulated guilt and the cumulative judgment for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from Abel to Zacharias, should come upon that generation.*

Collective Community Responsibility

He also enunciated *the principle of collective or community responsibility*, when He upbraided the cities wherein His mightiest works were done, because they repented not, naming Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and declaring that it should be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for them; describing Capernaum as having been exalted unto heaven in privi-

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lege, and as being brought down to hell, He said it should be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom than for Capernaum. In all these instances the condemnation was the consequence of rejecting light and life; and with that the whole tenor of gospel teaching agrees. (Matt. XI, 20-24).

The sinner's condemnation is the result of his loving darkness rather than light, and it is said, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The Incomparable Guilt of the Men Of His Generation

Now we are surely justified in charging to the account of the generation which was contemporary with Christ in the days of His flesh, not only the accumulated guilt involved in the rejection of all the prophets, and the meriting of the cumulative judgment invited by the shedding of all the righteous blood on the earth, from Abel to Zacharias; but also the greatest of all crimes, the rejection of the One Who gathered up in Himself the testimony of all prophets, and the righteousnesses of all righteous men, being Himself the perfection of manhood, and the essence of Godhead. Such was Jesus Christ; and He, Himself, declared, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

No more terrible indictment of unbelieving human nature was ever uttered than those words, in which our Lord charges the men of His generation with having both seen and hated both Him and His Father; in other words, the rejection of Christ involved the hatred of God Himself. It was upon such considerations as these our Lord exclaimed: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children to-

gether, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

As there is a fearful judgment awaiting the individual unbeliever who now rejects Jesus Christ, so there was a judgment, multiplied by the number of the rejectors, and aggregating the wrath of the Deluge, and the vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, gathering over the heads of those who would nail Incarnate Deity to the cross. There is a Scripture which says, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after." That is to say, there are some sins which are so open, so unmistakable in their identity, so blatantly vicious and heinous, they need no trial, no witnesses, no verdict: their incomparable and manifest turpitude cries aloud for swift judgment.

"His Blood Be on Us, and on Our Children"

Such was the sin anticipated in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of Matthew, and but shortly after expressed in the dreadful words: "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." SO UNPARALLELED A SIN AS THEIRS DEMANDED A JUDGMENT UNIQUE IN THE HISTORY OF NATIONS, AND OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

The Twenty-fourth Chapter of Matthew

It would appear that the words recorded from the twenty-third verse of the twenty-first chapter, to the end of the twenty-third chapter, were spoken in the temple, and they belong to the last week, perhaps to the Tuesday, of the week preceding Calvary. At that time the courts of the temple were filled with pilgrims from all parts of the world, and the Man, Jesus, had become the Centre of attraction and interest. The religious officials were alarmed, and Matthew from the twenty-third verse of the twenty-first chapter, to the end of the twenty-third chapter, contains an account of several interrogations submitted to Him, either by the chief priests and elders themselves, or, at their instigation, by others, as they sought, in various ways, to tempt Him, as by the lawyer in the thirty-fifth verse of the twenty-second chapter.

The twenty-fourth chapter tells us that He went out from the temple, and was going on His way. It was then His disciples directed His attention to the buildings of the temple, concerning which He said, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). In these days of four-ton block-busters, and atom bombs, there would be nothing very remarkable in such a prediction. By these mighty powers the greatest of buildings can be reduced to dust; but perhaps there was no building in the world so solidly constructed as was the temple in Jerusalem; and the reduction of such a building to a heap of rubble would seem a stupendous miracle, or at least would indicate an overflowing and incomparable judgment of some sort. Let us, however, ever keep in mind that these words, and the words which follow in the twenty-fourth chapter, succeeded almost immediately the truly awesome prediction of verses thirty-five to thirty-eight in the twenty-third chapter.

Going on His way they came to the Mount of Olives, and it was there the questions were asked which elicited the pregnant prophetic utterances of the twenty-fourth chapter.

Here Are the Questions

"When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

It is a mere commonplace to remind you that the question was three-fold. "When shall these things be" — the destruction of the temple; the requisition of the blood of all the righteous shed upon the earth, from Abel's forward, at the hands of that generation, and the desolation of Jerusalem.

The further question was, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" It would appear they assumed these judgments would precede the parousia, or coming, or presence, of the Lord; and they asked for some sign by which they might know, dare we say, the imminence of His coming, or the end of the world, or the consummation of the age, (the same phrase as occurs in the last verse of Matthew's gospel: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" — or "to the consummation of the age".)

A Word of Caution

It is deserving of note that the first sentence of our Lord's reply was a word of caution, suggesting, it seems to me, the importance, especially in respect to this subject, of proving all things.

False Christs

There were to be false Christs, wars, and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. These, however, were said to be only the beginning of sorrows. (I think a study of Josephus will show that all these things came to pass within the life-time of that generation.) (1) These conditions were to issue in great persecution — the Revised Version uses the word "tribulation", thus: "Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation"; and it was promised, "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake". This, we venture to believe, would have application not to the unbelieving multitudes, who had crucified Him, but to those who had identified themselves with His name. Conditions then would be so difficult that many would be caused to stumble, and there would be much treachery: "Shall betray one another, and shall hate one another". False prophets would be multiplied; many would be deceived; iniquity would abound; the love of many would wax cold. Then follows the great saying, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

"The End"

It does not seem necessary that "the end" in that verse should be identified with a particular point of time. It would seem to me that it may mean that those who endured the tribulation heaped upon those who had espoused the name of Christ, with all that it involved, and had identified themselves with Him, and who, without denying, or recanting, endured each his own tribulation to the very end, that is either the end of his life or of the tribulation, by such endurance would reveal his spiritual quality, as giving him a place among those who were saved.

The "end" mentioned in the fourteenth verse is quite another matter: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come".

How Many Gospels?

Obviously we have no time to pause for a complete exposition of every phrase. I am aware of the distinc-

tion drawn by some between the gospel of the kingdom, and the gospel of grace. I must content myself with expressing my conviction that it is a distinction without a difference. I affirm my belief that there is but one gospel; there never was any other, even as it is written: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal. 3:8, 9).

It may be noted in passing that Dr. Scofield in his notes at the end of Matthew's gospel says:

"With the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ begins the 'dispensation of the grace of God' (Eph. 3:2) which is defined as 'his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus'."

Is it not significant that on the next page, "The Gospel according to Mark", begins with the words: "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"? We remark on this only incidentally in passing. (We believe "the dispensation of the grace of God" began in Eden.)

We have next to consider the prediction that this gospel should be preached in all the world. Does that mean the inhabited earth as we now know it? In the epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul speaks of "the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you" (Col. 1:5, 6); and again in the twenty-third verse of the same chapter: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven."

We are not to understand that in these statements the Apostle Paul had in mind the American continent, North or South, or both, or, let us say, of all China, and Thibet. A little sanctified common sense is of great assistance in understanding the Bible; and we must surely understand that the Apostle Paul was speaking of the inhabited earth of his time.

But perhaps we may find an example in which the "world" is used in a still more restricted sense: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). There is a further example in which the use of the word is still more specifically defined: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Pet. 3:5, 6).

Already Fulfilled

On the authority of these scriptures we may, therefore, conclude that the conditions necessarily precedent to "the end", the preaching of the gospel in all the world, have even now been fulfilled. Nor does it seem probable, or practicable, that the gospel should be preached to every individual member of any one particular generation in all the world. The gospel is always preached as a witness. Even in respect to the testimony of nature it is said, "God left not himself without witness" (Acts 14:17). It is said of Noah, when, by the obedience of faith, he prepared an ark for the saving of his house, "by the which he condemned the world"; that is to say, he witnessed against the world.

We have already quoted a scripture in which our Lord Himself said that both His words, and His works were of such a character that by the rejection of both, the rejecters both saw and hated both Him and His Father (John 15:21-24). The gospel is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, and whenever, and wherever it is preached, it witnesses to the grace of God.

"Then Shall the End Come"

We are left now with the phrase, "Then shall the end come". It seems to me that *this does not necessarily mean the end of this age, but perhaps, rather, the end of the probationary period of grace for the people thus warned of judgment.* (2)

Let me now briefly state the thesis which I shall argue in my attempt to expound verses fifteen to twenty-five:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

Temporal and Local Considerations

Whatever the "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" may be, it was not something which was to appear in a somewhat remote period. The language indicates in this instance that the people to whom these words were addressed, were likely, themselves, to see the "abomination of desolation". However, we set that fifteenth verse for the moment in abeyance.

I would direct your attention to a *very distinct, geographical, definition of the area to which our Lord now refers*: "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains"; whoever might be on the top of the house was advised not to come down to take anything out of his house; or if one should be overtaken in the field, not to return to take his clothes. Special mention is made of the woe which pregnant women would experience in these circumstances, and they were admonished to pray that their flight might not be in winter time, neither on the sabbath day. There is not only a geographical element here, but a climatic consideration also. It applies to an area in which winter would be an added discomfort to the general situation.

No Definite Article

The next two verses are generally quoted as descriptive of what is called "the great tribulation". It is well to observe that there is no scriptural prediction of "great tribulation" in which the definite article is used. The tribulation of these verses, while it is not called "the great tribulation" is certainly descriptive of a tribulation that is incomparable, unprecedented, unparalleled, in all human history; that it is, in fact, unique.

But now, for a still further identification of the tribu-

lation we must examine the parallel passage in the twenty-first chapter of Luke:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

It would appear that the marks of identification in this passage are very clear: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20); "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains" (v. 21); and in verse twenty-four of the same chapter, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Let us also look at Luke, chapter nineteen, verses forty-one to forty-six:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Literally Fulfilled by Titus

The forty-third verse, "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side". That is exactly what happened under Titus, for they built a wall which completely encircled the city, and kept them in on every side. "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (v. 44).

What Is "The Abomination of Desolation"?

Or it may be rendered "the abomination that makes desolate"; and further, What is meant by "the holy place"? It does not necessarily mean an idol set up in the temple, such as was set up more than a hundred years earlier.

I remember speaking with Belgians in Brussels after the Armistice in November, 1918. They felt that their whole city, as well as their houses, had been polluted by the presence of the enemy. They spoke with loathing of their enforced presence in their capital city during the war. And in the last war the presence of the German Army in France was "an abomination making desolate". An idol is an abomination. But it is not the only abomination. The Psalmist said, "Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them" (Ps. 88:8). Babylon the great is described in Revelation as "the mother of abominations of the earth". The Roman army must have been, to every

Israelitish patriot at least, an utter abomination. But this abomination was not a static thing, polluting the holy place by its mere presence: it was an active thing of destructive power, "the abomination that maketh desolate".

But what of "the holy place"? Did that mean the inner sanctuary, or the temple in general, or the holy city? Might it not mean all three to the Jews? And did not the Roman soldiers ravage the land, and the city, and the temple, and even the holy place, making it all desolate? And is not the standing of the abomination in the holy place mentioned by Daniel the prophet—mentioned in Matthew 24, in connection with Jerusalem's being encompassed with armies? It seems to me that if any disciple who had heard those words from the lips of Jesus, was present in Jerusalem at its destruction, he would have felt the conditions obtaining a complete fulfilment of the Saviour's prophecy.

There seems to be little doubt that *the passage in the nineteenth chapter of Luke is part of the same discourse contained in Luke, chapter twenty-one.*

I shall return in a few moments to a fuller reference to the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem under Titus. But before doing so, I would have you weigh what is said in Matthew, chapter twenty-four, verse twenty-one, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Whatever else may be said of that passage, it certainly describes a tribulation that is without parallel. It is unique.

The question arising is this: How shall we prove that there never was such tribulation before or since as in Jerusalem about A.D. 70? Must we demonstrate that that particular tribulation was worse than any which had preceded it, or of which subsequent history preserves any record, or else admit that this unique tribulation is something yet to come? At this point I offer a suggestive principle:

A Suggestive Principle

The Bible was not written exclusively for the benefit of those who were the contemporaries of its human authors: it was written for all time. It was written for the atomic age as well as for the age of bows and arrows. It would be useless for the Bible to offer particular and specific descriptions of things and events of which the early readers had no knowledge. The greatest of all teachers said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now". There are many evil things in the world to-day, which belong to, and are an integral part of our present-day civilization. Specifically to have prohibited those things before they had any objective existence, would have been absurd; hence the Bible is essentially a Book of principles, capable of universal, and age-long application.

If the Bible had described the practical obliteration of Hiroshima, no one would have believed it; therefore, in view of the unmistakable indications that the tribulation of Matthew, chapter twenty-four, verse twenty-one, of Luke, chapter nineteen, verses forty-one to forty-six, and Luke, chapter twenty-one, verses twenty to twenty-four, mean one and the same event, is it not sufficient to recognize that *such an unique crime as seeing and hating both God and His Son, required and received an unique punishment?*

"The Days of Vengeance"

But now let us retrace our steps a little. In Luke, chapter twenty-one, verse twenty-two, we read, "For

THESE BE THE DAYS OF VENGEANCE, that all things which are written may be fulfilled", that is to say, *the days wherein Jerusalem was destroyed were the days of vengeance.* When our Lord began His public ministry, and He found the place where it was written, in Esaias, He read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18-21). The quotation is from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and the words following, "the acceptable year of the Lord" read, "and the day of vengeance of our God". We have said before now that some day when He shall come to judge the secrets of men, He will open the Book where once He closed it. We believe that that is true, that *the ultimate fulfilment of that prophecy* must belong to that day when God shall judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He has ordained.

But we return to some of the scriptures we cited at the outset, that we may be reminded that our Lord said it was for judgment He had come into this world. Sodom and Gomorrah are said to be *set forth as examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* Was not the destruction of Jerusalem also an example of the great truth that our God is a consuming fire? and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? At all events, *the destruction of Jerusalem was a divine visitation which unmistakably belonged, as Luke says, to the days of vengeance.* What a terrible reflection that is!

An Experience in World War I.

I remember during the First Great War, going over the Valley of the Somme while the guns were still thundering, seeing at some parts hundreds of dead lying in heaps before machine-gun nests, other bodies black as tar hanging over barbed wire entanglements, while as far as the eye could reach the ground had been stirred, and churned with shot and shell, presenting a picture somewhat like the troubled sea. As I saw it all amid that stench of death, a familiar scripture flashed into my mind with a new significance: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord". I seemed to see that it was a word which forbade any human attempt at vengeance, *not because we must not, but because we cannot repay.* The power of executing vengeance is in the hand of God, and has never yet been fully delegated to men.

There is another scripture which is undoubtedly of Messianic import, Isaiah, chapter sixty-three, verses one to six:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was none* with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and *there was none* to help; and I wondered that *there was none* to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I

will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Christ's Mission to Earth a Dual One

Did not the Lord Jesus come to this earth for a dual purpose? By making atonement for the sin of men, and making it possible for God to be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus", did He not at the same time open the way for Him justly to take vengeance upon His enemies? *Was not the cross itself the greatest judgment of all time?* Was it not of that day our Lord said, prophetically, "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come"? Did He not say, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out"; and as Jerusalem, having both seen and hated the Son and the Father, gave itself up to the prince of this world, with him it was cast out as an act of divine vengeance.

Can the Uniqueness of Jerusalem's Tribulation Be Confirmed?

What confirmation can we find of the uniqueness of the tribulation occasioned by the destruction of Jerusalem? What confirmation can we find of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place? One thing is certain, there is one extremely important passage which I think may have some illustrative bearing upon this question. Our passage is in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, verses eleven and twelve. The latter part of the twelfth verse reads: "For under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem". Jerusalem in its more than two millennia of history before its destruction by Titus had been the theatre of many battles; and in these at least twice Jerusalem experienced a terrible visitation of divine wrath, which completely desolated the city. The first was by Nebuchadnezzar, when the temple and the city were completely destroyed. The second was when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, culminating in A.D. 70. No one, so far as I know, has ever contended that Daniel was written subsequent to the year A.D. 70! Therefore the reference in the first part of the ninth chapter of Daniel, verse twelve, must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Is There Scriptural or Historical Confirmation?

The question then remains: *Can we find any scriptural confirmation of our hypothesis that the predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew, chapter twenty-four, verse twenty-one, Luke, chapter nineteen, verses forty-one to forty-six, and Luke, twenty-one, verses twenty to twenty-four, are all prophecies of the same event?* And further, *can we find any scriptural confirmation of this event as fulfilling the prediction of Matthew, chapter twenty-four, verse fifteen, respecting "the abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place?* The answer to these questions is that the scripture gives us no historical account of the fulfilment of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and no historical account respecting the fulfilment of the prophecy of the abomination of desolation.

I am aware that some may object that there are some intimations of the fulfilment of these prophecies in the Book of Revelation, not as literal history, but as events in the prophetic programme for the future.

But the "abomination of desolation" has a distinct locale, for when it is seen, "then let them which be in

Judaea flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24:16). Therefore to regard "the great tribulation" of the twenty-first verse as having no reference to its immediately preceding context, and referring to something entirely separate from the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, leaves the first part of the question submitted to our Lord on the Mount of Olives, unanswered: "Tell us when shall these things be?"

Still Another Principle of Importance

We come now to another principle germane to our discussion: no derogation of confidence in the divine inspiration of scripture is implied, or can by any means be said to be involved in the use of archeological confirmations of the written Word. Evangelicals do not include what are called the Apocryphal Books in the canon of scripture. But we do not refuse to accept such confirmations as are consequent upon such portions of the Apocrypha as may be proved to be historically accurate. Similarly, we believe there was a divine providence in the raising up and preparation and defence of Flavius Josephus, the great historian. Himself a Jew, and of a priestly family, and of great learning, he was eminently qualified as an eye-witness, to record the story of the destruction of the Holy City. Time would fail me to make extensive quotations, but it is well to remember that the same spirit which was manifest in the rejection of Christ and His crucifixion, was rampant among the inhabitants of the city, and while pressure of the Roman armies from without ultimately accomplished the city's ruin, it was the seditionists, the Barabbases within, that facilitated its destruction.

The Jews of Jerusalem Not Devout Men

It is important to observe that the Jews who suffered in the great tribulation incident to the destruction of Jerusalem, were not devout Jews. It would appear that their rejection, individually, collectively, and as a nation, of the Word of God Incarnate, and His being crucified at their hands on Calvary, had a hardening reaction upon themselves. It would be well if all who would understand the prophecy of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, would give diligent study to the record of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus as contained in the Works of Josephus. Their spirit was more an Ishmaelitic than an Israelitish spirit, for their hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against them. The record shows that they had lost all sense of the reality of God, and therefore, of all responsibility to Him. They have their counterpart in the atheistic, murderous, Zionists of our day.

It would, perhaps, be too much to say that the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem surpassed the horrors of German concentration camps, where millions of Jews were slain, and the bodies of multitudes of them were cremated in the dreadful ovens built for that purpose.

"The Time of Jacob's Trouble"

It may be that that great tribulation which began with the destruction of Jerusalem has continued with more or less intensity up to the present time. There are some who glibly repeat a scriptural phrase as though it belonged only to one point of time, and one geographical location: they speak of "the time of Jacob's trouble". But THE TIMES of Jacob's trouble have been many. Never was it more intense than during the recent war. While the war, perhaps, lessened the tension for some peoples, it brought but little deliverance to the multitudes of dis-

placed Jews, who still wander about without a home, or a country.

Josephus, a Jew, was a man of religious faith. He believed in God, and in the providence of God, and, like the more ancient, but inspired Jewish historians, he saw God in everything.

It is obviously impossible for me to make such extensive quotations from Josephus, as I should like, and I should be impugning your historical intelligence were I to assume many such citations to be necessary. A few sample passages will be cited in the printed record. It is enough to say that Jerusalem was really self-destroyed. Titus showed himself to be a worthy man, who made every effort to spare the people, and the city, and particularly the temple; but they were a people stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, who would listen to no persuasion.

When he saw that the Jews were determined to make war upon the Romans, Agrippa called the multitude together in Jerusalem, and said:

"Had I perceived that you were all zealously disposed to go to war with the Romans, and that the purer and more sincere part of the people did not propose to live in peace, I had not come out to you, nor been so bold as to give you counsel; for all discourses that tend to persuade men to do what they ought to do is superfluous, when the hearers are agreed to do the contrary."

—Wars of the Jews: Book II, Chap. XVI, p. 707.

An Unique Judgment for an Unparalleled Crime

ON THE BASIS OF ALL THAT I HAVE SAID, I AFFIRM MY CONVICTION THAT VERSES TWENTY-ONE AND TWENTY-TWO OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW REFER NOT TO ANY GREAT TRIBULATION OF THE FUTURE, BUT TO THAT UNPARALLELED TRIBULATION WHICH WAS PART OF THE UNIQUE JUDGMENT WHICH FELL UPON JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF TITUS. Thus all "the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar", plus the blood of the infinitely Holy One—ALL THESE THINGS CAME UPON THAT GENERATION.

Are we missing much in our failure to insist that judgment must ultimately, inevitably, follow upon the rejection of Christ, and that for that rejection in the face of special light and privilege, vengeance like lightning may fall?

Who Are the Elect?

We must ask, then, *Who are the elect of these verses for whose sake the days of tribulation were shortened?* (3)

Were they Jews? Undoubtedly most of them would be Jews; but they were not "elect" because they were Jews, but because they were believers in Christ. Between the time prediction of Matthew, chapter twenty-four, twenty-one and twenty-two, and its fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, Pentecost intervened, and among those who heard the gospel there were devout men "out of every nation under heaven". The "other tongues" of Pentecost were not unknown tongues, for said they who heard them, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born". It is, therefore, a fair inference that, as in the days of His flesh, our Lord stepped beyond the bounds of Jewry, in speaking to the Samaritan woman, and the Syrophenician woman, the nobleman of Capernaum, and others, so at Pentecost in Jerusalem, there were "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and

Arabians", who heard them speak in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. Among the three thousand who professed conversion perhaps the great majority were Jews; but beyond doubt the blessing upon Cornelius at Caesarea, was anticipated; and among "the elect" in Jerusalem at the time of its destruction we think it very probable that there were Jews and Gentiles. At all events, whether Jews or Gentiles, the elect were those who were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2).

"Believe It Not"

Let us look now at verses twenty-three to twenty-eight of Matthew, chapter twenty-four. These are not difficult verses. We are told if any should say, "Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not". He will have become invisible: He will have ascended to the right hand of the Father; and we need not trouble ourselves to investigate the claims of false Messiahs. Verse twenty-four says, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Does history preserve any record of anyone's claiming to be Christ?(4) The Roman Catholic Church is an outstanding example centuries old. Its head blasphemously calls himself "the vicar of Christ". False prophets there have been, and still are, innumerable. Religion is the special sphere of satanic activity. It is therefore not to be wondered at that some of these "shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect".

Behold, I Have Told You Before

What a great word is this: "BEHOLD, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE." Why should we be deceived? Why should there be such confusion in respect to the doctrine of the Second Advent? Who has told us before? Not J. N. Darby, nor C. I. Scofield — "Behold, I have told you before". Let us listen again to the Voice from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

No Secret Coming

The twenty-sixth verse is particularly significant: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; Go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." Surely we do no violence to it, nor strain it in the least degree, when we insist that if it teaches anything it teaches this, that *there can be no secret coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*. We shall not find Him in the desert. He will not be hiding in the secret chambers. If He is so reported, believe it not.

What is the proof of it? "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." If language means anything at all, it means that the coming of Christ will be as visible as the lightning, that is, that the glory of His coming will flash across the whole heavens, "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

The next verse: "For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." This verse is not easy to understand. Used in this connection it amounts to a proverbial saying which every one understands, that vultures are always attracted by a dead body, and no matter where it is, they will find it. But to identify the carcase, or the vultures in this case, is not easy. Had

the twenty-eighth verse been the twenty-third, it would not have been so difficult. Jerusalem was a mass of corruption, inviting the vengeance of God as truly as the scent of carrion invites the vultures. Some have thought there may be a reference here to the Roman eagles, their national symbol, gathering about Jerusalem, or, perhaps, it may be taken in a general sense, that wheresoever, and whensoever moral corruption is ripe for judgment, the judgment will surely fall.

The Tribulation of Verse Twenty-nine

We shall not now enter upon a further discussion of the verses following, except, as a suggestion for your thought in the meantime, to say that we feel certain THE TRIBULATION OF VERSE TWENTY-NINE IS NOT THE TRIBULATION OF VERSE TWENTY-ONE. If verse twenty-one is the fall of Jerusalem, and it were identical with verse twenty-nine, then Christ must have come "immediately after those days". The fact is that Christians have never been free from tribulation. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. Tribulation becomes so common that at last by God's grace, we become enured to it, and even glory in tribulations also.

But this introduces us to another stage entirely in the study of our subject.

I shall endeavour later to support the interpretation I have endeavoured to give you⁽⁵⁾ by the examination of the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, Daniel's seventy weeks. Meanwhile, as we pursue our study, let us frequently sing:

"Christ is coming! let creation
From her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore and faith increase:
Christ is coming!
Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace.

"With that blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty advent chorus
Onward roll from tongue to tongue:
Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!"

Quotations From Josephus

¹Now, if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation, but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves; for the Jews, by demolishing the tower of Antonia, had made their temple foursquare, while at the same time they had it written in their sacred oracles, "That then should their city be taken, as well as their holy house, when once their temple should become foursquare." But now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writing, how, "about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judaea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure; and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of the city and their own destruction.

—Wars of the Jews, Bk. VI, Ch. V, Page 849.

²These men, therefore, trampled upon all the laws of man, and laughed at the laws of God; as for the oracles of the prophets, they ridiculed them as the tricks of jugglers; yet did these prophets foretell many things

concerning (the rewards of) virtue, and (punishments of) vice, which when these Zealots violated, they occasioned the fulfilling of those very prophecies belonging to their own country; for there was a certain ancient oracle of those men, that the city should then be taken, and the sanctuary burnt, by right of war, when a seditious should invade the Jews, and their own hand should pollute the temple of God. Now, while these Zealots did not (quite) disbelieve these predictions, they made themselves the instruments of their accomplishment.

—Wars of the Jews, Book IV, Ch. VI, Page 780.

³Yet did another plague seize upon those that were thus preserved; for there was found among the Syrian deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews' bellies; for the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold, as we told you before, when they came out; and for these did the seditious search them all; for there was a great quantity of gold in the city, insomuch that as much was now sold (in the Roman camp) for twelve Attic (drams), as was sold before for twenty-five; but when this contrivance was discovered in one instance, the fame of it filled their several camps, that the deserters came to them full of gold. So the multitude of the Arabians, with the Syrians, cut up those that came as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night's time about 2,000 of these deserters were thus dissected.

Titus then threatened that he would put such men to death, if any one of them were discovered to be so insolent as to do so again: moreover, he gave it in charge to the legions, that they should make a search after such as were suspected, and should bring them to him; but it appeared that the love of money was too hard for all their dread of punishment, and a vehement desire of gain is natural to men, and no passion is so venturesome as covetousness; otherwise such passions have certain bounds and are subordinate to fear; but in reality it was God who condemned the whole nation, and turned every course that was taken for their preservation to their destruction. This, therefore, which was forbidden by Caesar under such a threatening, was ventured upon privately against the deserters, and these barbarians would go out still, and meet those that ran away before any saw them, and looking about them to see that no Romans spied them, they dissected them, and pulled this polluted money out of their bowels; which money was still found in a few of them, while yet a great many were destroyed by the bare hope there was of thus getting by them, which miserable treatment made many that were deserting to return back again into the city.

But as for John (the son of Levi), when he could no longer plunder the people, he betook himself to sacrilege, and melted down many of the sacred utensils, which had been given to the temple; as also many of those vessels which were necessary for such as ministered about holy things, the caldrons, the dishes, and the tables; nay, he did not abstain from those pouring-vessels that were sent them by Augustus and his wife; for the Roman emperors did ever both honour and adorn this temple: whereas this man, who was a Jew, seized upon what were the donations of foreigners; and said to those that were with him, that it was proper for them to use divine things while they were fighting for the Divinity, without fear, and that such whose warfare is for the temple, should live of the temple; on which account he emptied the vessels of that sacred wine and oil, which the priests kept to be poured on the burnt-offerings, and which lay in the inner court of the temple, and distributed it among the multitude, who, in their anointing themselves and drinking, used (each of them) above a hin: and here I cannot but speak my mind, and what the concern I am under dictates to me, and it is this: *I suppose, that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments; for by their madness it was that all the people came to be destroyed.*

There ran away to Titus many of the eminent citizens, and told him the entire number of the poor that were dead;

and that no fewer than 600,000 were thrown out at the gates, though still the number of the rest could not be discovered; and they told him further, that when they were no longer able to carry out the dead bodies of the poor, they laid their corpses on heaps in very large houses, and shut them up therein; as also that a medimnus of wheat was sold for a talent; and that when, a while afterward, it was not possible to gather herbs by reason the city was all walled about, some persons were driven to that terrible distress as to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they got there; and what they of old could not endure so much as to see, they now used for food. When the Romans barely heard all this, they commiserated their case; while the seditious, who saw it also, did not repent, but suffered the same distress to come upon themselves; for they were blinded by that fate which was already coming upon the city, and upon themselves also.

—*Wars of the Jews, Book V, Chap. XIII, Pages 829-830.*

⁴A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose upon the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now, a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such deliverance.

Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit, to the signs that were so evident, and did not plainly foretell their future desolation; but like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

—*Wars of the Jews, Bk. VI, Ch. V, Page 848.*

⁵"And take notice, that I, who make this exhortation to thee, am one of thine own nation; I, who am a Jew, do make this promise to thee. And it will become thee to consider who I am that give thee this counsel, and whence I am derived; for while I am alive I shall never be in such slavery as to forego my own kindred, or forget the laws of our forefathers. Thou hast indignation at me again, and makest a clamour at me, and reproachest me; indeed, I cannot deny but I am worthy of worse treatment than all this amounts to, because, in opposition to fate, I make this kind invitation to thee, and endeavour to force deliverance upon those whom God hath condemned. And who is there that does not know what the writings of the ancient prophets contain in them,—and particularly that oracle which is just now going to be fulfilled upon this miserable city!—for they foretold that this city should be then taken when somebody shall begin the slaughter of his countrymen! and are not both the city and the entire temple now full of the dead bodies of your countrymen? It is God, therefore, it is God Himself, who is bringing on this fire, to purge that city and temple by means of the Romans, and is going to pluck up this city, which is full of your pollutions."

The very same indignation which Jews would naturally have against Romans, had they been guilty of such abuses against them, the Romans now had against Jews, for their impiety in regard to their own religious customs. Nay, indeed, there were none of the Roman soldiers who did not look with a sacred horror upon the holy house, and adored it, and wished that the robbers would repent before their miseries became incurable.

Now Titus was deeply affected with this state of things, and reproached John and his party, and said to them, "Have not you, vile wretches that you are, by our permission, put upon this partition-wall before your sanctuary? Have not you been allowed to put up the pillars thereto belonging, at due distances, and on it to engrave in Greek, and in your own letters, this prohibition, that no foreigner should go beyond that wall? Have not we given you leave to kill such as go beyond it, though he were a Roman? And what do you do now, you pernicious

villains? Why do you trample upon dead bodies in this temple? and why do you pollute this holy house with the blood both of foreigners and Jews themselves? I appeal to the gods of my own country, and to every god that ever had any regard to this place, (for I do not suppose it to be now regarded by any of them;) I also appeal to my own army, and to those Jews that are now with me, and even to you, yourselves, that I do not force you to defile this your sanctuary; and if you will but change the place whereon you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; nay, I will endeavour to preserve you your holy house, whether you will or not."

As for the seditious, they were in too great distress already to afford their assistance (toward quenching the fire); they were everywhere slain, and everywhere beaten; and as for a great part of the people, they were weak and without arms, and had their throats cut wherever they were caught. Now, round about the altar lay dead bodies heaped one upon another; as at the steps going up to it ran a great quantity of their blood, whither also the dead bodies that were slain above (on the altar) fell down.

And now, since Caesar was noway able to restrain the enthusiastic fury of the soldiers, and the fire proceeded on more and more, he went into the holy place of the temple, with his commanders, and saw it, with what was in it, which he found to be far superior to what the relations of foreigners contained, and not inferior to what we ourselves boasted of and believed about it; but as the flame had not as yet reached to its inward parts, but was still consuming the rooms that were about the holy house, and Titus supposing what the fact was, that the house itself might yet be saved, he came in haste and endeavoured to persuade the soldiers to quench the fire, and gave order to Liberalius the centurion, and one of those spearmen that were about him, to beat the soldiers that were refractory with their staves, and to restrain them; yet were their passions too hard for the regard they had for Caesar, and the dread they had of him who forbade them, as was their hatred of the Jews, and a certain vehement inclination to fight them, too hard for them also. Moreover, the hope of plunder induced many to go on, as having this opinion, that all the places within were full of money, and as seeing that all round about it was made of gold; and besides, one of those that went into the place prevented Caesar, when he ran so hastily out to restrain the soldiers, and threw the fire upon the hinges of the gate, in the dark; whereby the flame burst out from within the holy house itself immediately, when the commanders retired, and Caesar with them, and when nobody any longer forbade those that were without to set fire to it; and thus was the holy house burnt down, without Caesar's approbation.

Now, although any one would justly lament the destruction of such a work as this was, since it was the most admirable of all the works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness; yet might such an one comfort himself with this thought, that it was fate that decreed it so to be, which is inevitable, both as to living creatures, and as to works and places also. However, one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians. Now, the number of years that passed from its first foundation, which was laid by King Solomon, till this its destruction, which happened in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, are collected to be 1130, beside seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus, the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were 639 years and forty-five days.

—*Wars of the Jews,*

Book VI; Chapters II, IV; Pages 837, 838, 846.

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL WITNESS

WE MUST apologize for the length of the principal article in this week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, but the subject is of such importance that it could not be compassed in less space. We believe it treats of a matter which requires very general consideration. It is our opinion it strikes at the root of what we have

been compelled to regard as a very serious eschatological error. We ask every reader of THE GOSPEL WITNESS to help us to give this issue the widest possible circulation. Send us names of people who need this message. Send us hundreds of names, if you will; but do, please, help us to pay for the printing and mailing. Send us five cents for every name to whom you desire to have a separate copy mailed. Prices have so enormously increased, especially the cost of paper, that we cannot now offer THE GOSPEL WITNESS for less than five cents a copy, even in bundles; but we do offer to pay the postage on such parcels. Have a copy sent to your minister, and to as many ministers as you know. We are ordering some extra thousands of this week's issue, and we hope, with your help, that they will all be spread abroad.

NEXT WEEK'S INSTALMENT

Next week we shall print the second address delivered by the Editor in Philadelphia, on the subject of The Lord's Return, when we shall deal with the subject of Daniel's seventy weeks, including the theory that between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week the entire Christian dispensation finds a place.

THE "POOR" PRIESTS

ROMAN CATHOLIC priests are supposed to be poor—so poor, indeed, that they do not pay income tax. Roman Catholic monks are bound by vows of poverty, though not rarely, as history records, have their vows been honoured in the breach rather than in the observance. Chaucer's description is classic:

A Monk there was, a fair for the maistrie;
An outridere, that lovede venerie;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable;

His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas—
And eek his face, as it hadde been enoynt;
He was a lord full fat and in good poynt.

Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;
He was nat pale, as a forpyned goost—
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A dispatch that appeared in our daily newspapers reminded us that the opulence of monasteries and monks is quite as true in our day as it was in Chaucer's time. Where, we ask ourselves as we read the following, do "poor" monks manage to get \$25,000,000?—W.S.W.

Cassino Abbey Job to Cost \$25,000,000

Rome, Dec. 29—(Reuters)—The task of reconstructing the great Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino, destroyed in one of the toughest battles fought by Allied troops in Italy, is well under way, although it will be at least five years before it is complete.

The work of reconstruction has been undertaken by an international committee under the chairmanship of Don Ildefonso Rea, Abbot of Monte Cassino.

Four times this great abbey has been destroyed in its 1,400 years of existence. It is estimated that more than 12,000,000,000 lire (about \$25,000,000) will be needed to restore the huge building.

TRAINING COST

It costs approximately \$175 to train one student for one year at Toronto Baptist Seminary, or \$700 for the whole course.

Have you sent your contribution to the Seminary?

SHOULD PROTESTANTS TO RETALIATE FOR ROMISH PERSECUTION?

THE GOSPEL WITNESS has among its readers a large number of French-Canadians. They often write us, either in French or in English, and we are always happy to learn their point of view, whether we agree with it or not. It goes without saying that we do not read anonymous letters. Among our correspondents, there is one subscriber who writes us from time to time, whose letters we welcome with special interest for his use of the French language is masterly and gives evidence of legal training. We understand that our correspondent was at one time a thriving notary in a Quebec village, until he crossed the local *curé* in some way or another and thereafter his business faded away and he was compelled to seek his livelihood in a factory. It is not good for business in Quebec to oppose the priest. While still a Roman Catholic this gentleman is an avowed anti-clerical, if we do not mistake the tone of his letters.

As we have already said, we do not always find ourselves in full agreement with the sentiments expressed by our correspondents, no more than we suppose they do with what we have to say. The last letter we received from this particular writer seemed to us to require an answer, though of a kind that made too great demands on our time. Hence we postponed answering it until the other day, when, running through one of the French classics, Montesquieu's famous book, *l'Esprit des Lois*, it occurred to us that we had ready at hand the very answer that our correspondent's letter called for. In view of the important and far-reaching principles discussed, we venture to translate for our readers the interesting and thought-provoking letter from our Quebec subscriber and our reply to it:

A Quebec Lawyer Writes Us

THE GOSPEL WITNESS,
130 Gerrard Street E., Toronto.

I enclose two dollars in payment of my subscription to your periodical.

I am still of the same opinion and agree with you in your charges against the Church of Rome and the imposture of its ministers. But I am astonished that you were not able to prevent the holding of the Marian Congress in the Protestant Province of Ontario. It was a challenge that the Oblates made to you, and they have shown that they are stronger than you, since they have imposed themselves everywhere and organized their racket in your home province. These pastmasters in the gentle art of blackmail organized a gigantic "show" right in the capital of Canada. Other religions would have been fully justified, in legitimate self-defense, for taking measures to put an end to the staging of this immense piece of bluff. For it was nothing more nor less than "eye-wash". It was your duty to protect public opinion against such a hoax and the error that it is bound to anchor more firmly than ever in the Province of Quebec. They have prevented you from speaking here, why have you not had recourse to the same methods in Ontario to prevent a lie that is as formidable and brazen as this? How do you expect French-Canadians to shake off the yoke of Rome when Anglo-Protestants do not dare to oppose the profiteering impostors of Rome?

Mgr. Vachon has had his reward. He has just been made a "Roman Count", while he is waiting to be named a cardinal—proof that it was just a matter of promotion and revenue.

I bring these considerations to your attention. You are free to do what you please with them. I am seeking to carry on the battle against erroneous theories.

Yours truly,

(Signed) _____

Our Reply

Dear Mr. _____,

I read your last letter with great interest as I do all that you send me. In thanking you for it, however, I feel constrained to express my surprise at your suggestion that Anglo-Protestants should "have recourse to the same methods in Ontario" as the French-Canadian Roman Catholic Hierarchy employs in suppressing free speech in your province. Protestants disavow all recourse to persecution and constraint in religious matters on principle, for they are convinced that true faith is an individual matter between the soul and its God and takes place in a sphere into which it is nothing short of blasphemous for any human being to seek to intrude with physical force. The same liberty which we claim as our own right, we gladly accord to other faiths. Liberty which is restricted to one sect and denied to all others, is not liberty at all but the most vicious kind of tyranny. Protestants have too often suffered from the Roman Catholic interpretation of "liberty" to stoop to employ it against others. If our religion cannot win converts by its own inherent truth and the blessing of God upon His Word, we do not believe that the physical efforts of the state will fill up the fatal spiritual lack. To employ force in this realm, is in our judgment, an unconscious confession of spiritual failure.

I hope that time and occasion may present themselves for us to discuss this most interesting subject, for I am sure that we should find much in common despite the suggestions to which I take exception. In the meantime, however, I wonder if I may presume to refer you to one of your great French authors, with whom I am sure you are much better acquainted than I am. My attention was directed the other day to that famous treatise *l'Esprit des Lois* of Montesquieu and I found there my own views on the matter under discussion so effectively and beautifully expressed that I am venturing to note here a few brief excerpts that particularly fastened themselves on my attention. I do not know of any more passionate plea for religious liberty, even in English literature, than was made by this great French writer and thinker who lived at a time and in a land where men and women were denied the right to read the Bible and to worship God after their own conscience. As you know, "Catholic" France bled itself white by its cruel persecution of the Huguenots. French-Canadians and English-Canadians alike have ample cause for bitter regret (as the French-Canadian historian, Garneau, has pointed out, at least in his unexpurgated editions) that the French Kings in the days of New France were so intolerant as to refuse to their harried Protestant subjects an asylum on this continent similar to the one which the Pilgrim Fathers found on the rocky coasts of New England. How different the history of America, and of Europe, might have been if their Most Catholic Majesties of France had not been under the influence of the political prelates of Rome who blinded their hearts and minds not only to the dictates of justice and humanity but also to the best interests of France. It is conceivable that France could thus have been spared the horrors of the Revolution; it is even conceivable that Canada would have become a French Protestant Dominion, peopled from

sea to sea by Frenchmen and wholly devoted to the cause of liberty, both religious and civil. But leaving off speculations as to past contingencies, since the greed and intolerance of the Roman Catholic clergy has forever ruled them out, I turn to this magnificent plea for religious freedom as found in *l'Esprit des Lois* (Book XXV, Chapter xiii):

A Very Humble Remonstrance to the Inquisitors of Spain and Portugal

A Jew, eighteen years of age, who was burned alive at Lisbon in the last *autodafé*, is the occasion for this little work; and I think that it is the most useless that was ever written. When it is a matter of proving such clear things, one is sure not to be convincing.

The author declares that, though he is a Jew, he respects the Christian religion, and that he loves it enough to remove from non-Christian princes a plausible pretext for persecuting it.

"You complain," he says to the inquisitors, "that the Emperor of Japan has burned in a slow fire all the Christians who are in his states. But he will reply to you: 'We treat you who do share our beliefs, as you yourselves treat those who do not share your beliefs. The real cause of your complaint is your own weakness, which prevents you from exterminating us but which allows us to exterminate you . . .'

"You are depriving yourselves of the advantage that you have over the Mohammedans by the manner in which their religion has been established. When they boast of the number of their believers, you reply that they have been acquired by force, and that they have spread their religion by the sword: why then, do you establish yours by fire?"

"When you seek to win us to you, we offer as our objection that we are sprung from a source from which you glory to have come. You reply to us that your religion is new, but that it is divine; and you prove it because it grew through heathen persecutions and by the blood of your martyrs; but to-day you take to yourselves the rôle of a Diocletian, and you make us take yours.

"We implore you, not by the powerful God Whom we both serve, but by the Christ Whom you say took a human form in order to give you an example to follow: we implore you to deal with us as he himself would have dealt if he were still on earth. You wish us to be Christians, but you yourselves do not wish to be Christian.

"But, if you do not wish to be Christians, at least be men: treat us as you would, if, having only those feeble rays of justice that nature gives us, you had no religion to guide you nor a revelation to enlighten you.

"If heaven has loved you enough to cause you to see the truth, it has given you a great grace: but is it for the children who have received the heritage of the father to hate those who have not received it?"

"If you have that truth, pray do not hide it by the manner in which you offer it. The character of truth is its triumph over hearts and minds and not that impotence which you confess when you determine to make it accepted by torture . . .

"We must warn you of one thing: if someone in the days to come should ever dare to say that in the century in which we now live the peoples of Europe were civilized, you would be cited to prove that they were still barbarians; the idea that will be entertained of you will be such that it will blast your century, and cast hatred on all your contemporaries."

I am not acquainted with the details of the curriculum offered in Quebec's French Roman Catholic Schools, but I venture to suppose that the above extract does not form any part either of it or of the *livre de chevet* of the nationalists of your province. For my part I am happy that true liberty is not the peculiar possession of any race or language, and I am confident that if the yoke of clerical bondage could be removed from the necks of the French-Canadian people, they would have at least as

great a love and devotion for liberty as those shown by Anglo-Saxons.

With all good wishes, I am

Yours sincerely,

W. S. WHITCOMBE.

REPORT AND REVIEW

Our Crisis Article and Visit to Canada

By REV. JOHN WILMOT, in *Our Outlook*
Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, England

THIS number is much overdue, which is partly explained by my absence in Canada during the summer. I had thought that, perhaps, an enlarged number, including the accounts of the Annual Meeting earlier in the year and of the Missionary Evening just held, when the statement of disbursements is ready in the New Year, might satisfy our readers. But many have reminded me that this messenger has not worn his welcome out and his arrival is awaited. I hope, therefore, that this issue may reach them before the year is out.

The exposé concerning the Crisis in our last number met with few criticisms and in no instance were the facts controverted. Such general approval was expressed that a double printing became necessary and requests still come with no supplies to meet them. In advance of my arrival in Canada I found the editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS had reprinted the article, thus increasing its circulation by some twenty-five thousand.

In a letter just received Dr. Shields comments: "However you manage to contain yourself without exploding with such an Administration as Attlee's, I do not know. I have a conviction, however, that the usually well-balanced average British mind will see the futility of supporting such a Government, and will throw them overboard. That, at least, is my hope."

"Great plainness of speech" is to-day's clamant need. How many seem to "have men's persons in admiration because of advantage". The present Administration chosen by the people is proof of the Nation's spiritual decline, the historical and admonitory principles of Holy Scripture being witness. Serious-mindedness is conspicuous by its absence. Not only evident ineptitude and incompetence, but prevarication, evasion, excuse, denial, provocation of some, palliation of others, frustration, a crushing of the free spirit, a consequent idling of precious time, carelessness for duty, morals and ethics and divine institutions flouted, a tendency to totalitarian slavery, no confidence abroad and little at home save that which is prejudicially partisan. How much is opposed to "righteousness which exalteth a nation" and encouraging of "sin which is a reproach to any people". "For men shall be fond of themselves, fond of money, ostentatious, arrogant, defamers, to parents unyielding, unthankful, irreligious, without natural affection, accepting no truce, given to intrigue, without self-control, uncivilized, unfriendly to good men, traitors, reckless, beclouded, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but the power thereof denying" (2 Tim. 3: 2-5).

I quote from *Review of World Affairs*:

"What has happened to Britain? In the great days the giants who ruled and served this country had certain things in common. They were nearly all incredibly distinguished to look at. Most of them gave up much personal comfort and ease for the onerous task of governing a country and empire of unparalleled magnitude and influence. Hardly any of them gained anything from

their public service. It cost most of them the things they cared for most.

"Now Britain is governed by men who have everything to gain from office, for whom politics is a profitable profession. Men to whom politics has meant an almost immeasurable personal advantage. Many, indeed, most of them, had no successful private careers. The old giants—Melbourne, Wellington, Peel, Disraeli, Palmerston, Russell, Salisbury, Gordon, Gladstone, Roberts, Kitchener, were all in some degree or another (and some in a very advanced degree) God-fearing. Most of them, in fact nearly all of them, profoundly believed in and worshipped God; it would never have occurred to them that anything solid could be built except upon that foundation. Is it possible that such men could really have been nothing more than emotional? Were their achievements such that we can dismiss their religious convictions as rubbish? And what were the results? Britain was immensely powerful, rich and great to a degree. She prospered. She introduced some of the greatest social reforms in history.

"Now in Britain we find a large number of the cabinet convinced agnostics, and much of the nation too. What an amazing change. Can it in any way in part explain the decline in prosperity, influence, and the dignity of this famous people?"

I add a terse and trenchant sentence from Mr. Winston Churchill: "Reformation is impossible until the evil is felt." The heart of the nation has not yet felt the evil, but she will.

My visit to Canada was a very enjoyable one. Kindness and friendliness and hospitality were shown me on every hand, beginning at Highgate Road. At the anniversary on March 27th our former secretary, Mr. J. H. Pizey, on behalf of the Fellowship handed me a cheque supplemented later by gifts making about £140. It was explained that the friends desired to meet the cost of my travel, so they actually sent me away and at the same time saw to it that my return journey was paid for. There are few pastorates in these times which extend to twenty-four years, and on looking back it is not without some wonder that I observe how I have been enabled to continue through many ups and downs, and right through the war years, taking far fewer holidays and Sundays away than is common to ministers nowadays. It was thought the change would benefit my health and it did so. Notwithstanding the English weather at this season has early begun to remind me of my vulnerability.

Dr. Shields, whose guest I was, afforded me the animating pleasure of preaching and speaking on Sundays and weekdays, in all about thirty times, to his attentive and appreciative congregations. What a beautiful and serviceable building the new Jarvis Street Baptist Church is, with its commodiously well-appointed school premises, being also the home, with the building adjacent, of the Toronto Baptist Seminary where about a hundred students take a four-year course preparing to become qualified ambassadors of Christ; and the CANADIAN PROTESTANT LEAGUE, THE GOSPEL WITNESS Publications Department, and much besides. Hundreds of people, grown-ups and youth and children together, gather to worship God and give attendance to His Word.

Of pleasant memory also were visits paid to the Guelph and Forward Baptist Churches, which communicated with us in sending gifts during the war, as did also the Dorcas Societies of Jarvis Street, and it was a happy experience to meet friends face to face who had shown us kindness when we were little known.

A few Sundays ago I gave some account of my experiences. The subject in the morning was, "A Toronto Evangelical Stalwart"—Dr. T. T. Shields and the church of which he has been pastor for thirty-seven years, with the agencies for the defence and confirmation of the gospel which he has initiated and over which he presides. The apostle sought to provoke some to emulation by recounting the faith of others, and had I ability and space fully and justly to describe my impressions I would adapt as a text the opening words in 2 Cor. 8: "I do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed upon the Church at Jarvis Street."

In the evening our subject concerned "The Ottawa Marian Congress"—the greatest display of civilized paganism (if indeed paganism may be so described) ever staged by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, attended by tens of thousands of delegates, officials of the Papacy of all ranks, priests and friars and nuns and devotees, in their varied religious garb, of the countless orders of the Church; and the rank and file, adults and girls and boys individually and in their parties, bowing and doing obeisance to these false vicars of Christ, and before the huge elaborate image of Mary and its many replicas, "deceiving and being deceived"; exalting the Mother high above our only sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, while Rome's spokesmen toured the streets with loud speakers addressing non-catholics in particular, denying and repudiating the charge of idolatry, while at the same time to inculcate Mariolatry the image passed along and on bended knees before it thousands of pilgrims bowed, as also before the great altar and statue of "Our Lady of the Crown" in Lansdowne Park where the Congress assembled. The whole affair, destitute of any semblance of spirituality and bold in its carnality and worldliness, its pomp and ceremony, under a veneer of hollow and superstitious religious forms, and masses and confessions and the whole gamut of Rome's pretensions, was designed as a demonstration of Papal power to impress the simple and cajole the compromisers. Orgies of immorality and spectacular coarseness debased the beautiful city and called forth protest in the press and on public platform. Protestants who sought simply, civilly and lawfully to distribute the scriptures among the masses, so bearing witness as our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has "all authority in heaven and in earth", commanded, were shamefully maltreated by R.C. thugs at the bidding of the priests, while police protection was denied.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him", and so into this politico-religious circus of the Hierarchy Dr. Shields came to lead meetings of exposure and protest. In England compromising protestants forget the price their fathers paid in blood for our emancipation and we hear at times criticisms of Dr. Shields' offensive. Yet no less authority than the late Lord Bennett (who died this summer) one time Prime Minister of Canada, declared that the situation could eventually result in nothing less than civil war. And there is no one in Canada to-day whom the Papists dread and watch and hate more than Dr. Shields, Lord Bennett himself being witness. Mine was the privilege to accompany him together with Rev. H. C. Slade, associate pastor at Jarvis Street. It was a flying visit in a double sense. The air flight from Toronto to Ottawa was smooth and uneventful, but the two days of Protestant witness and Papist exposure were packed with fervent enthusiasm. Although a year or two before, for the same purpose of Protestant meetings, halls in Ottawa were refused, now several were eagerly

offered. Two great meetings were held amid surging crowds without and every nook and corner crowded within—the Ottawa Metropolitan Tabernacle, the first commenced at 8 and ended at 11, the second began at 8 and lasted till midnight. I have never witnessed anything to equal it. Rome's assault on the capital city and on the liberty-loving people had now met its re-action.

This Papist Congress was patronized by the representative of our Protestant throne, the Governor-General, Lord Alexander, together with Mr. Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister and members of the Canadian government. It had the "protection" not only of the Knights of Columbus but of the Pope's military bodyguard, uniformed and carrying firearms! There is no question that the apostate church is encouraged in her dominating and infiltrating power and influence throughout Canada by the Dominion and some Provincial governments. Such an exhibition of Papal Sovereign pomp and authority would scarcely be countenanced in England; we believe, notwithstanding the serious drift Romeward.

But British Protestants should take heed and exercise more vigilance and militancy in contending for the Faith, and agencies existing for this purpose in our Homeland should bury their jealousies and self-seeking and unite against the common foe, and an example to emulate of real aggression and accomplishment, disinterested in anything save the supreme Cause of our Lord and His Word, they will find in the CANADIAN PROTESTANT LEAGUE and its president.

Subscribe to THE GOSPEL WITNESS AND PROTESTANT ADVOCATE, and keep yourself apprised of the facts, and remember that the commendable testimony written of Paul while he waited for fellow-soldiers to join him at Athens, is as truly applicable to Dr. Shields to-day as he visualizes and foresees (as few do) and forewarns of present and presaging evils—"his spirit was stirred in him as he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, therefore disputed he daily with them" (Acts 17; 16, 17).

THE MINISTRY OF "THE GOSPEL WITNESS"

A Typical Letter

London, N. 13, England.
December 27th, 1947.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Words fail to express just what THE GOSPEL WITNESS is to us at home. My dear wife, being a semi-invalid, is not able to get out much among God's children to have the fellowship we both love so much. It is a source of trial to her, and the writer also; but we have learned not to grumble, and "in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content". You can appreciate, I feel certain, with what joy your weekly paper then arrives so regularly, and with what delight do we peruse its pages. So thank you, dear brother, for all it contains, not forgetting your sermons.

I once heard a Christian minister say from the platform that "Joseph" (mentioning his own name) "was born to preach". Exactly is it with you. May the dear Lord give you such mighty power as you mount the platform, and write at your desk, that untold victories will be accomplished for the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the enemies of the God of righteousness be smashed to atoms. "Is not my word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

When we have finished with the WITNESS it is sent to friends in many places, and so it gets a good "broad-

casting". Would to God we had men of your calibre around us here in England. So many preach the gospel without results following, and I am convinced the reason is that they are afraid to expose error. Not a word against Rome, nor Spiritism, nor Russellism, etc. And so they do not declare the WHOLE counsel of God; hence the lack of power; and results are nil.

Please forgive me if I speak too boldly or too frankly, but this is a burning question with me, and sometimes it is as a fire in my bones. I ought to tell you I am not a public man in any sense; I have no gift of utterance so-called, but I feel things acutely, and I am greatly concerned over the condition of God's people. My dear wife and I are continually seeking the Lord's mind, so that our ministry of prayer shall be "effectual to the pulling down of strongholds", etc.

May His presence be your portion through Nineteen Hundred and Forty-eight, and His guiding hand be upon all your wonderful ministry.

Your brother in Christ,

P.S. I am sending £5 for WITNESS renewal, and please put any over towards the Baptist Church at Lavigne.

REPORT ON EVANGELISM

By Dean W. G. Brown

AN IMPORTANT conference on evangelism was called last week to meet in Louisville, Kentucky, with representatives from a large number of training schools for ministers. From Toronto Baptist Seminary went this writer, who felt that the inspiration gained and the ideas received were of a high order. Hour after hour Presidents, Deans, and Professors of Practical Theology, in general, and of Evangelism, in particular, conferred together on the most effective way to train men for the all-important task of bringing souls to Christ.

The discussion of the content of the message showed, in general, not only a fine grasp of the New Testament message, but a general adherence among those present to the principles of the gospel of Christ. We must not say, See what the world has come to, but, See what has come to the world! The gospel is not theory, it is what is so. God has taken the initiative. The Old Testament does not show a genius for religion on the part of the Hebrews but the work of the Lord in them. The New Testament completes the Old, with the vicarious death of Christ, His triumphant resurrection, and the promise of final victory for His Kingdom.

As to methods of training men for evangelism, a number of Seminaries have definite courses in this subject, some of them several courses. With these courses goes field work. Often students are assigned to pastors, to work with them in visitation evangelism. A great deal of stress was placed on this last. One man of wide knowledge expressed the opinion that it is the emerging evangelism, although, after all, it is only the New Testament method of eye to eye work.

Concerning evangelistic preaching it was well said that it required more careful preparation than other sorts of preaching, although, indeed, every sermon ought to be evangelistic. We cannot too often explain the way of salvation in the hope that men may grasp it. In order to succeed we must believe in instantaneous conversion. Pastors must have the cooperation of personal workers. Most men will confess Christ in a meeting only if they are at least half converted before they come.

There is a definite evangelistic stress among the major denominations, although, we fear, in some cases their

evangelism means a campaign for church membership, rather than for definite conversion. But the pastors can lead only as the people follow in their co-operation with the Lord in seeking the unsaved.

GODLESS MEN SEEK POWER IN TORONTO

(From *The Toronto Globe and Mail*)

Mayor Saunders told the electors of Toronto in his weekly broadcast yesterday that they must decide before voting day whether they wish to elect God-fearing, civic-minded candidates to office or persons who possess no religious convictions, were not sincerely interested in the welfare of the city and country, and were not free agents.

"What questions should we ask ourselves on Thursday before we vote?" asked the mayor. "Let me give you the questions I shall ask myself regarding the candidates. The first and foremost: Does he or she believe in God? If not, I want no part of him or her. I certainly would not trust any such person with my money, the future of my city, or the future of my child.

"That question answered, I come to the second," continued the mayor. "Is he or she sincerely interested in the welfare of this city and of this country? To get the answer to that question I should like to know if he has a stake in the community, or is his election a mere passing fancy, or a means to some end not for the benefit of this city.

"Thirdly, will he be a free agent in council? Will his opinions be his own or those of some group or organization? I want no part of any person whose votes are dominated by some outside group, a situation that has happened in the past.

A Continued Story

The sequel to the above report is found in another Toronto newspaper that reported as follows concerning the Mayor's activities on New Year's Day:

"Then . . . (the Mayor) went to the palace of Cardinal McGuigan to represent the city at his annual reception."

Was the Mayor's face red as he shook hands with the scarlet-robed cardinal? Did his conscience prick him, even ever so little, when he remembered that he had said in his official capacity as the city's First Magistrate: "I want no part of any person whose votes are dominated by some outside group." Did His Worship the Mayor recall, as he looked into the smiling Irish face of Cardinal McGuigan, that that same face had lain prostrate in the dust before a foreign prince in Rome who blasphemously lays claim to the title of King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Did our Orange Mayor recall that the very mouth of our Toronto Cardinal had been servilely closed and then, after an interval opened by the fingers of this Italian potentate who proclaims his infallibility?

There is no doubt that our Orange Mayor was seeing red when he spoke the above words over the radio, but did his face turn scarlet when he consorted at the cardinal's palace with the black-robed creatures of the pope? We think not. Mayor Saunders' righteous indignation against outside domination appears to be so squint-eyed that it can behold only the dangers that threaten us from Moscow; to those that impend from Rome, he turns his blind eye. And that, we have reason to think, is very, very good political strategy even in "Toronto the Good", where there is a not inconsiderable body of Roman Catholic voters who are sedulously indoctrinated as to the red threat from Moscow but who regard a Mayor that consorts with cardinals as a very wise choice on election day. And, as far as colours go, what is in a colour? Is not orange, especially a faded orange, practically identical with yellow, the papal colour? Reports indicate that Mayor Saunders polled a large vote on New Year's Day, and so the "Red Menace" has been averted, for another year at least.—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 12 First Quarter Lesson 4 January 25, 1948

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

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

Lesson Text: 1 Kings 18:25-39.

Golden Text: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."—1 Kings 18:21.

Supplementary Reading: Josh. 24:15; Matt. 6:24; John 15:19; 17:16; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 4:2-15.

I. Supplication to Baal: The Answer of Silence: vv. 25-29.

It was "after many days" that Elijah appeared as the great public champion of Jehovah (verse 1). He had been prepared by the Lord in secret for his high position. For over three years he had prayed earnestly (Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:17), and he waited patiently for the Lord to manifest Himself. He had been tested and tried, enduring without complaint the long period of famine and drought (Gen. 22:1; 1 Kings 17), living a life of faith and obedience. Many of those who admire the leaders whom God has chosen to perform some conspicuous service for Him little realize the long process of discipline which is the secret of a leader's power.

Elijah showed himself to Ahab, as God had commanded him. If it required courage to appear before Ahab the first time (1 Kings 18:1, 2), much more courage was needed the second time (v. 17). For three years the king and the people had been suffering from famine and drought, which they attributed to Elijah (1 Kings 17:1). Ahab had given command that Elijah be sought, and he demanded an oath of those who said he could not be found. Elijah faced the king unafraid, since he was the servant of the Lord (2 Kings 3:14; 5:16; Prov. 22:29).

Elijah, the king, the false prophets and the people were assembled on Mount Carmel. Historians tell us that the summit of Mount Carmel is 1,635 feet above sea level, and that it presents an esplanade large enough for a great multitude of people. The soil is rocky, with many loose stones lying about, from which altars could easily be made. "Two hundred and fifty feet beneath the plateau there is a perennial fountain which might not have been accessible to the people, and whence, therefore, even in that season of drought, Elijah could procure those supplies of water which he poured over the altar."

This was the hour for decision (Josh. 24:15; Ruth 1:16; Joel 3:14). The drought had been sent in judgment because of the sin and idolatry of the king and the people. Had they repented of their sin, and were they now ready to serve Jehovah? These questions must be answered. Teachers and Christian workers who are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit will know when to call for decisions for the Lord (Gen. 24:58; Exod. 32:26).

The test of fire was appropriate, since Baal was supposed to preside over the element of fire. On the other hand, our God is described as "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). In Scripture fire is the symbol of holiness (Exod. 3:1-6; Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:3), power (1 Kings 19:12) and judgment (Deut. 9:3).

The actions of the prophets of Baal are characteristic of the vain attempts of idolaters to induce their deities to manifest the power possessed by Almighty God. They called upon Baal from morning until noon, then from noon until evening, but the vain repetitions, which in pagan religions are substituted for prayer, were of no avail (Matt. 6:7; 23:14). They leaped around and upon the altar, performing a heathen ceremonial dance. They cut themselves with knives, as though blood would appease their deities (Deut. 14:1; Lev. 19:28; Jer. 41:5). But there was no answer: Jehovah alone is God (Deut. 6:4; 7:9; Isa. 45:22).

II. Supplication to Jehovah: The Answer of Fire: vv. 30-39.

Many helpful lessons may be derived from observing the preparations which Elijah made before the Lord demonstrated His presence and power: (1) He gathered the people together near him (Acts 1:4; 2:1, 46; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 2:2). (2) He repaired the altar of the Lord (Gen. 22:9; 26:24, 25; 35:1; 2 Chron. 24:27), taking twelve stones as a token of the fact that the whole nation of twelve tribes desired to be in right relationship to the Lord, and to worship Him alone (Josh. 4:4-9). Many an individual and many a church would cease to be powerless, if altars which have been broken down were again erected. The Lord would manifest Himself in a new way. (3) Elijah followed the instructions of the Lord with regard to sacrifices (Lev. 1:7-9). God will bless the obedient heart. We must not worship or serve Him in self-will. (4) He poured much water over the sacrifice and the

altar in full confidence that the Lord would demonstrate His supernatural power. We, too, must have unbounded faith in the Lord, if we would see Him work (Matt. 17:20, 21; 1 Cor. 13:2). (5) Elijah prayed simply, yet fervently, asking the Lord to vindicate His Word and also His servant (John 11:42). The fire of the Lord would prove that the Lord had accepted the repentance of the people.

The fire of the Lord fell, consuming the wood, the stones, the dust and the water, as well as the sacrifice (Lev. 9:24). The Lord's answer to the petition of His servant was clear and unmistakable (Eph. 3:20). The people were overcome and renewed their vows (Josh. 24:19-25).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Jan. 19—The Contest on Mt. Moreh Judg. 7:1-25.
Jan. 20—The Contest at Peniel Gen. 32:24-32.
Jan. 21—The Contest in Valley of Elah.
1 Sam. 17:1-11; 38-51.
Jan. 22—The Contest in Valley of Megiddo Rev. 19:11-21.
Jan. 23—The Contest at Jericho Josh. 6.
Jan. 24—The Contest Between Two Natures Rom. 7:15-25.
Jan. 25—The Contest with Invisible Foes Eph. 6:10-18.

Pioneering at South River

South River is a mill town some two hundred miles north of Toronto. Rev. Robert Guthrie of Orillia made some connections there several years ago and discovered that there were a group of people who delighted in the glad sound of the Gospel. He visited them several times and held preaching services in the town hall, finally arranging for a student from Toronto Baptist Seminary to go there for the summer. Under the ministry of student-pastor Reg. Snell several persons professed conversion in the course of the summer months. With the resumption of Seminary classes the work was closed, but interest in the Gospel did not die. When Pastor Guthrie and Mr. Snell visited the friends at South River last October, it was proposed that they should undertake to raise a fund to pay the travelling expenses each week from Toronto and back of students from Toronto Baptist Seminary to continue the work already begun. The Bethel Church in Orillia generously promised to underwrite any deficit as it had done for the summer period. In this fashion the work continues in South River and Mr. Snell reports that the people there have done nobly in fulfilling their undertaking.

For this pioneer missionary venture, student-pastor Snell and his associates ask the earnest prayers of God's people.
—W.S.W.

PROTESTANT LEAGUE MEETING AT BRANTFORD

Meeting under the auspices of Brantford Branch

MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 1948

Y.W.C.A. BUILDING

"Sickness by Order-in-Council"

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