

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 27, No. 36 130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, DECEMBER 30, 1948 Whole Number 1389

WHAT ABOUT TO-MORROW?

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—Proverbs 27:1.

LIVING in such troublous times as ours, we poor mortals are reminded on every hand of the truth long ago uttered by the Wise Man. And if we know not what a day may bring forth, how much less can we tell what a year may have in store for us. It is perhaps well for us that we are incapable of gazing into the future. It is commonly said that we can be sure of nothing in this life, except death and taxes. Of course that saying can be matched with another proverb to the effect that

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

The English poet who struck off that line which has passed current in our speech hastened to qualify it with another in which he added that

Man never is, but always to be blessed.

The hope of which he spoke, it would seem, was but distantly related to that full assurance of hope of which the Bible speaks. It is almost universally recognized that there are longings and desires which spring unbidden in the human breast as do instincts and appetites in the physical realm. Men long for some good beyond their present enjoyment, for some assurance of a reality that transcends the experience of eye and ear. Philosophers and poets and teachers have argued with cogency that since God has planted those intense longings in the human heart, He must and will satisfy them. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," said Augustine, "and we are restless till we rest in Thee." The reason may be convinced by such arguments, but the heart remains unsatisfied. The hope offered us in them does not enter into that which is within the veil. Impersonal abstractions can never give our souls rest as can that lively hope to which we have been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 1:3).

A man who is without God is also necessarily without hope, for God is the God of hope. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of one who had sold himself to do evil, who was contrary to God and to men, the classic words that describe so aptly the cynical attitude of despair that must in the end overtake all who will not have God in their thoughts:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

The man who has abandoned hope is already tasting the horrors of the profoundest depths of hell though he still walks the earth. Those who seek to sustain their fainting spirits by imagining that their cheerful fancies are solid promises will in the end discover that there is a hope which maketh ashamed. Abraham, who "against hope believed in hope", did not base his confidence on a mere native cheerfulness or on an innate penchant for optimism. His hope was in God: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Romans 4:20, 21). To abandon God, in thought or in deed, is to abandon hope, to choose to dwell in the region of the shadow of death rather than to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

The things of time and sense are by their nature limited to the present and offer little help to us in bridging the gap between the now and that which is to be. Science bases itself on the orderliness of nature, philosophy seeks to solve the riddle of the universe because it believes that the world is essentially rational. And whoever speaks of order and reason has begun to spell the name of God. But useful as these human disciplines are, they limit themselves to an examination of the workmanship without meeting the Great Worker Himself. They set before our amazed minds the wonders of the laws of the universe without introducing us to the Lawmaker. But in Christ, God has come near to men, has spoken to them in human language, and made a way of access by which we may draw near to Him. The believer rejoices in hope of the glory of God because he already has access by faith into this grace

wherein we stand. The historical revelation of God's love in the death of His Son for sinners is made real to those in whose heart Christ dwells by faith, and this in turn gives substance to the hope that is set before us. Like Moses of old, we say, as we face the unknown future: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." (Exodus 33:15). The comfort of the Great Shepherd's rod and staff, even in the valley of the shadow of death, has taught us to fear no evil, and as we look back to the way in which goodness and mercy have followed us, we may say with assurance, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."—W.S.W.

AT THE PORTAL OF THE YEAR

Standing at the portal
Of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us
Hushing every fear,
Spoken through the silence
By our Father's voice,
Tender, strong, and faithful,
Making us rejoice.

'I, the Lord, am with thee,
Be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen,
Be thou not dismayed:
Yea, I will uphold thee
With My own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen
In My sight to stand.'

For the year before us,
O what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy
Living streams shall rise;
For the sad and sinful
Shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble
Perfect strength be found.

Frances Ridley Havergal, 1836-1879.

ROME'S HAND IN ONTARIO'S PURSE

THE Ontario Department of Education has on its payroll a servant of the Roman Catholic Church who apparently conceives of his office as a means of encouraging the establishment of French Roman Catholic Schools at government expense. This gentleman, Monsieur Robert Gauthier, who bears the official title of "Director of French Instruction", recently took part in certain celebrations held in the town of Pembroke to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the French school of that place. Speaking at a banquet held under the auspices of the local *Saint Jean Baptiste Société*, this official of the Ontario Department of Education dared to make the following statement:

Twenty-five years ago I doubt very much that a French representative of the Ontario Department of Education would have been present at celebrations of this sort, as I am to-day.

At the mass held in honour of the same event, the Bishop of Pembroke said that the government of the province had disregarded the right of Roman Catholic parents to send their children to the Roman Catholic School of their choice and "consequently, by this very fact, it denies the rights of citizens in a true democracy". Or to put the matter in plain terms, the Roman bishop thinks that it is the duty of the people of Ontario not only to provide sectarian Roman Catholic Schools side by side with the Public Schools which are open to all, but to parallel them with a third school system that is not only Roman Catholic in religion but

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Published every Thursday for the propagation of the Evangelical principles of the Protestant Reformation and in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints.
\$2.00 Per Year. Postpaid to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

Editor

T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editors

W. S. WHITCOMBE, M.A. (Tor.)

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

S. S. Lesson and Exchanges

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

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada

Telephone RAndolph 7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

French in language. In practice this demand requires that the largest proportion of the expense for these sectarian and nationalist schools should be borne by those who share neither the religion nor the language that is taught in them.

Still another official of the Ontario Department of Education, the Oblate monk who is Principal of the *Ecole normale de l'université d'Ottawa* (annual salary \$4,850) defined the purpose of the Separate Roman Catholic Schools which he, too, demands should be paid for by public funds. He said:

As a (Roman) Catholic school it must above all prepare its pupils for eternal life. Education finds its full value only as it leads to God. It must moreover give to the children solid religious convictions which will allow them to remain faithful to their faith even in surroundings which expose them to the influence of erroneous doctrines . . .

We as Protestants do not deny the right of Roman Catholic priests and of Roman Catholic parents to impregnate their children in the doctrines of their church; but with the utmost vigour we assert that it is a gross injustice to require us who do not share their creed to pay for its propagation. Why should a Romish monk be on the payroll of the Province of Ontario, placed in a provincial school for the sole and single purpose of producing teachers whose end and aim is to mould and fashion the minds of little children in the peculiar tenets of Rome and in implicit obedience to a foreign prince? The whole system of Separate Schools as we have them in Ontario is a crying injustice that ought to be abolished. If Rome wants separate schools let its faithful have them, but in the name of fairness let them pay for them out of their own pockets and not out of ours!

It is a significant fact that two public officials of the state should be allowed to share, without rebuke, in a sectarian celebration which criticized the governmental system of which they form a part. The present party in power at Queen's Park is certainly following out the policy of appeasement laid down by Messrs. Hepburn, Drew *et al.*—W.S.W.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"Windows in Heaven"—or Noise in the Wind

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 26th, 1948
(Stenographically Reported)

"Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

—2 Kings 7:1, 2.

THE coming of Jesus Christ into the world was heralded by the angels' song, proclaiming "Peace on earth, good will toward men". Certain wise men came from the east, and asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." It has often been a dangerous thing to be born a king. But a little time had passed when another king gave the order if possible to take "the young Child's life".

The truth, the principle incarnated in the Infant of Bethlehem, has never been welcomed by a sinful world. This wicked world, from the days of Eden until now, has been continuously in rebellion against God, and His truth; His righteousness has always had to fight for survival. It was so in days gone by: it is equally true to-day. These histories, such as that from which my text is taken, are replete with lessons to all those who would follow the Lamb wheresoever He leadeth.

I.

This is a story of A LONG WAR BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL. Syria was seldom at peace with Israel. War after war was fought between them, as between the Philistines and Israel. In the preceding chapter there is a story of the outbreak of a Syrian war. The prophet, Elisha, to whom was given a spirit of discernment, was enabled to anticipate all the movements of the enemy, and he communicated to the king of Israel the knowledge which had been supplied him, and warned him against taking certain courses, by which the king of Israel delivered himself out of the hand of the king of Syria, not once, nor twice.

When the king of Syria found that his carefully laid plans were all known to his adversary, he asked the question, "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" The answer was, "None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." It is Elisha who is frustrating all our purposes, and bringing our best laid schemes to nought." Then the king of Syria determined that he would have the head of Elisha, and asked where he might be found, and it was told him, "He is in Dothan".

Elisha was found in Dothan, apparently without defence, no one to protect him; but roundabout the city

were arrayed the armies of the king of Syria, his horsemen and his chariots of war. And when the servant of the man of God rose early, he saw all the enemy roundabout, and he was filled with consternation. He said, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" He was amazed to observe that Elisha showed no anxiety, no perturbation at all: he was perfectly at peace. Then Elisha said, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Then he knew why Elisha was so completely composed.

My dear friends, these chariots of fire are very real. They are not imaginary. I know there are many who have no consciousness of their presence; notwithstanding, it is true that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Elisha was on this occasion supernaturally delivered.

I often wish that the members of this church could have passed through the experiences which have been mine in years gone by. I have often wished that you could have been with me. Had you been, you would not be afraid of anything. I know a good deal about these horses and chariots of fire, for I say, to the praise and the glory of God's grace, I have had many a ride in them, and a delightful ride it is.

Elisha needed something like that, because the trouble with him was, *he saw too much*; and he heard too much. I have often been thankful that the Lord did not give to his human creatures the fine scent that He gives to animals, the keen hearing, and the long vision. My dog can hear far more than I can—and I hear far too much! My dog can scent things, of the presence of which I have no knowledge whatever. But they are very real to him, and he can see, I think, as far with his natural eye, as I can with a telescope—but I see too much, and hear too much. To some has been given the discerning spirit. It is a painful thing to see, and know, and to be assured of things of which many people have no consciousness.

I remember the days preceding the last Great War, when Mr. Chamberlain was hailed by millions in England, and throughout the world; as the great peacemaker; when every newspaper in Canada, without a single exception, so far as I know, lauded him to the

skies. For myself, I do not think I slept a single night for three months. My sleep was broken, and my dreams were nightmares. You will remember, some of you, that during that period from this pulpit, when there was not another corroborative voice in Canada, so far as I know, I declared that Neville Chamberlain had written the blackest chapter in the history of the British Empire. It is easy to see things, and to be wise after the event. The all-important thing is to discern these things as they are about to come to pass, and to take preventive measures so that they shall not be.

When thirty years ago I challenged Modernism in the Baptist Denomination, it was said, "There is not any Modernism. Dr. Shields is a fanatic and a liar." All the world knows now that every word I uttered was true. Wise after the events!

There are some people who are expert at diagnosing a disease by means of a post-mortem examination. The real expert and serviceable physician, sees the disease while the patient is still living, and takes measures to prevent the coming of the undertaker.

But it is an uncomfortable thing to be a prophet. Far easier is it to be an ecclesiastic, or an institutionalist! to drift with the tide, and to become a devotee of the *status quo*, no matter what it may be.

Elisha on this occasion asked the Lord to smite the enemy with blindness, and they all became blind. I have seen that. I have seen a great multitude of people as blind as bats. They could not see a thing; hence they followed him into Samaria. Then they said, "Shall we smite them?" "Oh, no; we shall have a meeting." And so he made a great feast; "He prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away and they went to their master."

But it was not long before the king of Syria was back again. This time he came with his horses and chariots of war, and besieged Samaria, and a great famine ensued. So grievous was the famine that the people resorted to cannibalism. When the king of Israel heard of it, he said, "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day."

There is nothing easier than to blame the prophet! Blame the policeman when he turns the flashlight on: not the burglar. "We will get rid of the prophet." The king of Syria had said that; and now the king of Israel says it. There are times when the prophet is as unpopular with Israel as with Syria: all because he sees too much; all because he sees the infallible indications of a fatal malady that must be dealt with.

"But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him? And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, "Behold, this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer? Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, to-morrow"—to-morrow—to-morrow—"about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." There was scarcely anything left in Samaria, and such things as were available, were at enormous prices. But Elisha said, "To-morrow there

will be plenty. Everyone will have all they want. To-morrow the siege will be raised." "Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned"—a trusted servant of the king—"said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be." Elisha said, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

II.

My dear friends, I have only to remind you that THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WARFARE FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END. It is easy to run well for a while. How many men have I seen who ran well for a while, some of them for a long time and then at last capitulated.

Did you ever see them packing oranges? The people who grow oranges don't pack them. There are packing companies, and the growers take the oranges to the packing factories. The oranges are put into an antiseptic of wax, at a low temperature, but enough to keep the wax liquid. Then the machine lifts them out, and they pass through brushes which brush the antiseptic into any breaks in the orange skin. Then they go up on a carrier, and at last they go into a chute. It is on the level, and they go right along for quite a distance. They are carried over something that has holes in it, and as they go along, the smaller oranges drop down into the first hole, and the others go on, and after a while they go down. And so on. Then one big fellow rolls along, and they say, "He is all right." He goes on until he gets to a certain place, and down he goes, too—when he finds a big enough hole to go through. That is life. Some little people go-down quickly, others go-on. There are very few big enough to pass over the last hole—very few. "Joab turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom."

You and I were warned in the reading to-night that individually, no matter what our station in life, within and without, we shall have to strive to be Christians! There are fiery trials for all. It is all of grace, especially the grace that helps us to strive. Have you not found it so? In the beginning of your Christian life you had plenty of troubles that would not trouble you now. A little later you had other difficulties, and God gave you grace to meet them. So it goes on through life. No matter where you are, trouble of some sort or another enters in: "These are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan". Each succeeding generation had to learn war, that God might prove them, and try what was in their hearts.

The same is true of the church of Christ. Some time ago, in the first war, there was a catchword, which we heard a great deal about, that "it was a war to end war"; but it did not do so. There can be no war to end war until the Lord Himself shall return. And so, if you do not want to be a soldier, you may as well demobilize yourself. We are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and it will be so to the end of the chapter, no matter where you live, or how you work.

That is true of institutions, too. I remember when I used to read of Martin Luther, and the heroes of the Reformation, I used to say to myself, "My, how fine it would have been to have lived in those heroic days!" But Martin Luther had no greater difficulties than we have; and there is still abundant opportunity for anyone to be a hero for Christ, to follow the Lamb whither-

soever He goeth, even to follow Him alone, because your eye is upon Him, rather than upon circumstances.

Well, whether it be the church, or an institution, or an individual, it does not make any difference: the promises of God very often promise us what is humanly impossible.

I did not see this text. I did not find it. It came to me out the air only this afternoon, like an echo, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be". I knew it was the Lord's message for you to-night. How often you and I have said that, when we have put our case, whatever it may have been, some private matter that nobody else knew about, and you spread before the Lord some special difficulty in life, then the Spirit of God brought to your mind a promise of deliverance and victory; and you answered very much like this man: "That seems impossible; it is too good to be true. The Lord would have to make windows in heaven to make this thing true. How can it be?"

I do not think you are much good, I know I am not, unless and until I get to the place where the Lord has to step in. I like to be there. I have been there again and again: "If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side, NOW may Israel say". If it were not so, there would be no Jarvis Street. There would have been no testimony such as this church had given, dare I say it to you, had there not been occasions when this man, like Elisha, had to stand absolutely alone, and people with blinded eyes have said, "Now, Pastor, I have been with you, but you are wrong this time." I knew I was not.

For a moment this afternoon I was undecided between this text and another. The other one was this, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." I thought to preach on that. Instead of that, I said, "I will use that to stand on, and I will preach the other."

Impossible! Yes! The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, is full of supernatural events. It is a record of divine interpositions, where God has again and again stepped in, and wrought a miracle. The difference between any record that you or I, or anyone else could write, is this, that this is written by the pen of divine inspiration. Divinely inspired writers wrote the record of supernaturalism which we call the Bible. But I dare to say that many events in your life—that we have had, put ourselves together—are every bit as supernatural as some of the events in this Book, only we have no inspired pen to record them. But in our experiences we know that horses and chariots of fire have come to our help again and again.

I remember one great prayer meeting we had, when we were in the midst of our conflict years ago, crowded to the walls, and the spirit of prayer was upon everyone; and some, who are not with us now, were there. A little later everything seemed to go against us, and one of these outside men said to me, rather mockingly, "Aha, what about your prayer meeting now? I thought you were going to have victory." I said, "Are you under the delusion that you were victorious?" You must measure things in the light of the Divine perspective. Long since that man, and all that he stood for, and those who stood with him, have passed away: "He passed away, and lo, he was not: I sought him diligently and he could not be found."

When a miracle is necessary God will work it. When some divine interposition is necessary God will always be

on hand. You remember the story of Peter in prison, and how his people prayed. Peter's feet were fast in the stocks. The next morning they were going to have a good time cutting his head off, as they had done that of James'. When you read your Bible, note the little words, and the little sayings. Listen to this, "This same night". To-morrow is the fatal day, but "the same night" the angel came into the prison. You know the story of how the shackles fell off, the prison doors opened, and Peter walked forth into liberty. I but partly quoted my text: "The same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers." It is almost amusing, is it not? The sword is sharpened, all ready for the morning. But Peter is so sure of his God, that he was sleeping between two soldiers; and all was well!

God does not pile up miracles so that we can put them in pigeon holes to take one out whenever we need it. He interposes at the right time, and when He does, He does it for the confirmation of faith: "The same night".

I have sometimes wondered how Moses felt when the Lord said to him, "What is that in thine hand?" He said, "A rod." And the Lord said, "Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." And the Lord said to him, "That is your instrument for the working of miracles". And Moses wrought miracle after miracle, and "the magicians did so with their enchantments". The Egyptians said, "Just a sorcerer's trick. Moses did it, and the magicians did it. No miracle in that." But there came a time when that rod was stretched forth, and another miracle was wrought, and the magicians tried to do the same thing, but they said, "No—no; this is the finger of God." God has stooped down at last. He always does so. Do not make any mistake. The finger of God is still to be seen, and there is no possibility of duplicating His wonders.

III.

HOW WAS THIS PROPHECY FULFILLED? "The Lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be." He would never have thought of four lepers who were outside the gate. They could not get into the city because they were unclean. Famine prevailed in the city, and they were in no man's land between the walls and the Syrian army. These men had reached the point of despair. It was the counsel of despair, when they said, "Now if we were to go into the city we should but die. If we go into the camp of the Syrians, we can only die there. If we stay here we must die. It is death anyway—no way out. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die—that is all." And so "they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there." Then they went exploring through the camp. They entered into the tents, found plenty of food, and they gorged themselves for they were very hungry. They found silver and gold, and they took it. They had a banquet while Samaria was starving. At last they said, "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings,

and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.' Let us get back to Samaria, and tell them there is no enemy in the camp. Tell them the tents are there, the horses are there, the asses are there, the provisions are there, the garments of the Syrians are there, and the road of their flight is strewn with precious things. Let us go and tell the king's household."

What had happened! I said just now that Elisha saw too much for his comfort. And the Syrian hosts heard too much for their safety. The Lord had made them to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host. A bit of divine deception? No, no; I think probably the angel host, which had been at Dothan were sent back with the order, "This time make yourselves invisible, but not inaudible. Let the enemy hear you." And the army of the Lord of hosts passed by, and this time the Syrians heard it, and they ran for their lives, divesting themselves of all impedimenta in order to make the greater speed. Now there was no an enemy in the camp, and abundance of everything, sufficient to feed all the people in Samaria.

My dear friends, when the Lord gives you a promise, do not undertake to tell Him how He shall fulfil it. Do not talk about "windows in heaven", or doors either: just believe Him, that is all; He will do the rest. So it came to pass that the enemy fled, and left behind them such vast treasure that everyone had plenty.

Now still the Lord may use the sound of things; "The sound of a shaken leaf," the Scripture says, "shall chase them." A guilty conscience will make cowards of us all. You do not know what the enemy may hear, and what may happen from their hearing. It may be some poor despairing, desponding man, like these lepers, may find something out, and do something about it. Nobody can tell. The all-important thing is that tomorrow at this time a measure of flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gates of Samaria. The promise was fulfilled, and the famine was relieved. How? *By the very circumstances of which the people of Samaria were afraid*—those horses, those chariots, the great host.

My dear friends, the Lord can commandeer the chariots of the enemy sometimes. I was going home late one night from the printer's office, and a policeman stopped me. "Open your door," he commanded, "and let me in." I did so. "Now go where I say, and step on it. I am after someone." I "stepped" on it; up one street, down another, through this lane, and that one. I drove as fast as I could go. "Faster!" he said, "Step on it." I knew he had a right to command me, and it would have been an offence against the law in such circumstances had I refused to stand by his side.

The King of kings, and Lord of lords, our sovereign Lord can command anyone. Heaven makes the devil do His will sometimes, and sometimes He makes reluctant saints to do His will, too. And sometimes reluctant saints cease to be reluctant, and praise God with all their heart that God did not forsake them in the day of their reluctance. The point is, my dear friends, *it does not make any difference what is roundabout Samaria: the all-important thing is, What is above it.* Windows or no windows, God is there, and He never fails. I have trusted Him—I give it as my testimony—these many years. I have trusted Him here, and wrought here in His name for now nearly forty years;

and there is hardly a page of this Old Testament with its miracles, or the New Testament either, that I have not seen abundantly verified in my own experience. I am not afraid of the Syrians, nor am I afraid of the king of Israel either. All I want to do is know the mind of God.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread"—

There is no ceiling; the clouds are down on top of you, mist on the ground, clouds above but,—

"The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

The very things we fear are the things through which God will answer our prayer. That is how revival comes. When you ask Him for it He puts His hand on anything that would prevent it, and removes it, and often it is like a bad tooth. It will be a painful operation, but you will feel better after it is over. That is how revival comes. Let me tell you, that is exactly how revival is coming to Jarvis Street before very long:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

IV.

I cannot omit this. It is repeated for emphasis at the end of the chapter. Note it. Let me read it. The king appointed a man on whose hand he leaned. He had the charge of the gate. That was the man who said the Lord would have to make windows in heaven. And in the end of the chapter it is said, "the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died." He had said, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" And Elisha said, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." Now listen: "So it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died."

When God gives to His people a promise, and proposes a miracle, it is a tragic thing for any one, like this man, to say, "That is all right, but I don't believe it." The Lord said, "I will let you live long enough to see it, so that you may be filled with confusion, and shame for your unbelief, but you will never be a partaker of it." And so he passed away.

What is the lesson? Let God have His way with us in all things. We must not only do God's work, but we must do God's work in God's way. There is no other way.

If any of you should say to me to-night, "Pastor, I just cannot accept that. I think you are wrong—wrong—wrong." All right, go home, and sleep on it, be comfortable. I give you my testimony that I was never more profoundly assured of being right and doing the will of God than I am at this moment. God is with us, and that all the world shall see.

Let us pray:

O Lord, Thou art still the wonder-working God. We believe Thou art with us still, and that Thou wilt help us in all the circumstances of life. Bless us every one for Thy name's sake. Amen.

God is the refuge of His saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold Him present with His aid!

Let mountains from their seats be hurled
Down to the deep, and buried there,
Convulsions shake the solid world,
Our faith shall never yield to fear.

Loud may the troubled ocean roar;
In sacred peace our souls abide;
While every nation, every shore,
Trembles, and dreads the swelling tide.

There is a stream, whose gentle flow
Supplies the city of our God,
Life, love, and joy still gliding through,
And watering our divine abode.

This sacred stream, Thy holy word,
Thus all our raging fear controls;
Sweet peace Thy promises afford,
And give new strength to fainting souls.

Zion enjoys her Monarch's love,
Secure against the threatening hour;
Nor can her firm foundation move,
Built on His faithfulness and power. Amen.

A WORLD SAFE FOR CHILDREN

A Meditation by REV. A. C. WHITCOMBE, B.A.

leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the child shall lead them."—Isaiah 11:6.

IN THESE verses the prophet gives us a word picture of the world that he looked for. He saw it as a world in which the most antagonistic natures were to be reconciled, a world free from all discordant elements, a world safe for a little child, and because safe for a child, then safe for all of us.

The present world is not safe for children, indeed in many quarters children are not wanted and, coming unwanted, are regarded as a burden or a nuisance. In spite of the application of modern science in the field of medicine, it is still a precarious experience to enter this world and a struggle for existence against tremendous odds while one is here. The unwillingness of parents to assume responsibility, the crowded conditions in large cities, the ignorance and want in backward and isolated communities, the world's philosophy of "every man for himself", does not tend to make it a safe world for children. There are mental and spiritual hazards, too, without number, to twist and warp the little mind before it goes far and, worst of all, a fifth column within that leaves the citadel of the soul too weak to stand the assaults from without.

Why is it not safe for children now? There was a time when all was peace and harmony. Many answers have been given to this question, but the most penetrating and satisfactory is that found in the Bible that is summed up in one ugly word, "sin". Man's self

assertion in the face of God's authority introduced the discordant element into the perfect world. Now the trail of the serpent is over everything, and death reigns over all, thorns and thistles infest the ground and the strong prey upon the weak. The whole creation groans in bondage.

How can the present with its struggle and inhumanity and discord give place to the prophet's pleasant picture? That blessed condition will come about through a Child. Going back to the ancient promise that "the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent", the prophet unfolds another leaf in the book of revelation and says, "unto us a child is born". On a still later page we read, "unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord". God has become man to bruise the serpent's heel, and to suffer for us men and for our sin. It was Deity in swaddling bands that the shepherds and wise men worshipped. God imposed limits on Himself to make a world safe for children.

In answer to the second part of our question as to when the glorious day will come, the prophet has his answer ready: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall be for an ensign to the people" (10, 11). It is the time of preparation. Now we are to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven". Now the ensign is set up and God's people flock to it. Where the second petition is uttered in sincerity of heart the first is fulfilled in a measure. The petitioner has become as a little child, submissive to the authority of God and has entered into the kingdom of God.

When this Gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world then shall the end come. He Who came as a Babe at Bethlehem will come again in power and great glory to destroy the wicked with the breath of his mouth, or as Paul puts it when he talks of the destruction of the man of sin, He will destroy him with the sword of His mouth and with the brightness of His coming. Then the whole world which had been made subject to bondage, and which up to now is described as groaning and travailing together in pain, will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Now we wait, and all creation waits with us, for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body: that resurrection and change that attends the return of the Son of God. Then shall the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled and the world be made safe for a little child.

The ideal is not yet realized, but the fulfillment draws near. A Child has come, a Saviour promised long. His Kingdom is for the childlike, and His blessing is still invoked upon children brought to Him. Where His Gospel is preached and practised it is safer for a little child than it would be otherwise. Wherever there is a Christian home there it is safer for a child, and wherever sincere men and women work to tell the story of Jesus and His love among boys and girls they make a little island of safety in a world of danger. If the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of the One Who called little children to Him is worthy of His notice, then surely the efforts of Christian parents and Bible School teachers will not go unnoticed. There is no greater responsibility, no higher honour than the honour and responsibility attached to that work which makes this present world a safe place for the children and brings nearer the time when the Gospel having been preached in all the world, the kingdom shall come.

"WHY"

"The Canadian Protestant League"

By Dr. J. B. Rowell, Rev. W. S. Whitcombe
and Dr. T. T. Shields

40 pages, designed for circulation by League
Members. Send for sample copy. If con-
venient enclose 3-cent stamp for postage.

130 Gerrard St. East

Toronto 2, Canada

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

The Second Coming of Christ and Related Events

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Seventeenth in a Series of Week-Evening Lectures on the Doctrines of Grace

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, May 21st, 1931

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson read: Matthew 24:29-51; Acts 1:6-12.

WE HAVE been engaged for a number of weeks—in fact, it must now be a number of months—in a study of the great doctrines of grace. We come now to think a little of the doctrine of last things, the coming of our Lord Jesus and the events related thereto.

It is surely unnecessary for me to spend much time this evening insisting on the fact that **THE LORD IS COMING AGAIN**, although only this week I received a letter from one who is apparently an intelligent Christian, asking me if I really believed that Christ was to come again in person, if we are to understand the promise of His second advent literally, as a promise of His personal return. She went on to tell me how her minister had explained that these things had already taken place. Thus it may be necessary to spend a few minutes in refreshing our memories on that point.

There is an analogy between the first and second advents. If our Lord's coming in the first instance was a literal, personal, advent to this planet, there can be no doubt whatever as to the fulfilment of the promise of His second coming. He will come again in person.

He Himself promised that He would come. I am aware that He said to His disciples, "I will not leave you alone; I will come to you. I will not leave you orphans." There is a sense in which some of His promises in respect to His coming to abide with His people were fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit; for it is true that we do not serve an absent Christ. Christ is formed in us the hope of glory. He has come in the person of the Holy Ghost to stand by us, to abide with us; and in His Great Commission He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." There is a sense, therefore, in which the Lord Jesus is with us now. He is with us in the person of the Holy Ghost. But He has promised that He will come again, and His second advent is to be like the first. He is not to send a deputy, but He will come Himself.

There are many Scriptures which tell us that His coming will be visible. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." In the passage we have read from the first chapter of Acts we are told that He will come "in like manner" as He was seen to go.

I think we may assume, then, in this place, that it is unnecessary to argue that point.

But I believe that our Lord's coming will not only be visible: it will be audible. I have repeatedly told you that I find myself compelled to dissent from the position which would imply that Christ is to come for His saints and with His saints. I believe there lurks in that doctrine a grievous error. I do not think it is a fundamental of the faith, and I have always said to you that I shall not quarrel with you on that issue; but I think it is a matter of historic truth that in all the history of doctrine you will find no suggestion anywhere of three comings of Christ,—of His having come once, and is yet to come for His saints and with His saints.

That doctrine was first set forth by Edward Irving, the founder of the Irvingites, or of the Catholic Apostolic Church as it is usually called. Mr. Irving did not propound that view as having any scriptural warrant at all: he gave it forth as a special revelation communicated to him. On that ground I have nothing to say except that I do not believe in special revelations. But if it is to be defended on that ground, it must be defended on that ground alone. I am positive it cannot be defended from Scripture.

Let me remind you at that point that it is very easy for us to read into the Bible our own preconceptions. In the course of my ministry I have met hundreds and hundreds of people who were Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Anglicans, or some other denomination, who were devout Christians, who loved the Lord, and who believed the Bible to be the word of God, who yet believed that the sprinkling of babies was scriptural baptism. Why did they believe it? Because they had not read their Bibles? No! Because whenever they came to a reference to the ordinance of baptism in Scripture, instead of reading out of the Scriptures what the Scriptures teach, they read into the Scriptures what they have been taught, and so pass it over and take for granted that it is true.

It is an amusing thing how few people carefully observe what they read. If you want to test it, when you go home tonight glance at the evening paper—or, if it suits you better, look at a morning paper—then find somebody who has read the same paper and ask him if he has read a certain item in that paper. If he says, "Yes," enquire what it said. In nine cases out of ten such an one will get it upside down or inside out, or out of proportion somehow. Sometimes people read the paper and they do not know whether a certain thing

happened in Vancouver or Halifax—and they think it makes no difference, even though they are three thousand miles apart!

Some of you people use a book-mark in your Bible. You would not need a book-mark if what you read entered into you and became a part of mind and heart. You would meditate upon that passage all day, and look forward to the time when you could resume reading. But that is how some people read their Bible—especially if it is a Scofield Bible, and what they find there is the end of all argument. From absolute ignorance of the Bible to oracular certainty, to a position where a person knows all there is to know upon a certain thing, so that they know it beyond all contradiction, all that is necessary is a Scofield Bible and three months! A person who knows nothing may become an authority in three months—not knowing that they are dealing with subjects that require a lifetime of study, and even then that they are reading, the word of the Infinite, and that it ought to be approached with humility of spirit. What I warn you against is that superficial study of the Word that results in a dogmatism that is obnoxious to the last degree.

Somebody wrote me last week about a certain subject, saying, "The Greek says so-and-so." Greek! The person who wrote that letter would not know a letter of the Greek alphabet if she saw it. In the first place she cannot write English.

The famous Pastor Russell undertook to set all the expositors of Scripture of the world right, telling people what the Greek said, and what the Hebrew said, about certain things. Brought to task in Hamilton a few years ago, and being on the witness-stand under oath—he had sued somebody for libel—the lawyer handed him a Greek Testament and said, "Will you please find such-and-such a passage?" Pastor Russell turned the pages without avail. "Find it," said the lawyer, "if the Greek says it." He could not. The lawyer found it and said, "Will you read that, please?" He could not read it. Then the lawyer said, "Read one word," and he compelled him to admit, great exegetist as he was, that he did not know one letter of the Greek alphabet from another.

Then the lawyer handed him a Hebrew Bible and said, "Read me a portion of that." When asked how he presumed to set everybody right in a matter of that sort, he admitted he was dependent upon Young's Analytical Concordance—which you can buy for a few dollars down-town.

Do not misunderstand me. A person who does not know much English may know this Bible; being divinely taught of the Spirit of God, he may know more about its sacred secrets than the greatest Greek or Hebrew scholar in the world. I am not insisting upon intellectual scholarship merely, but I say these subjects are vastly bigger than some people suppose. The more we delve into them the more cautious we are about being positive about these prophetic matters that relate to the future.

I say, as I study the Bible that is my view. The coming of Christ wherever it is referred to is a visible coming. He will not come secretly: "Every eye shall see him"; "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him"; "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." The coming of Christ is the "glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour

Jesus Christ". His coming, then, is manifest and audible. The great rapture passage itself says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

I believe the second personal coming of Christ is indispensable to the completion of our redemption. He came once to die for us: He will "appear the second time without sin (without a sin offering) unto salvation." At His coming the whole scheme of redemption will be completed. Let us rejoice in this promise.

I pause to say that I think the teaching of Scripture is very specific on this point, that no one can possibly know when the Lord shall come. I know there are many devout people who, in spite of the plain statements of Scripture, try to wrest that secret from God, and estimate when the Lord shall come. Let us learn to hold this doctrine in relation to all the other truths of Scripture, in its proper place, and avoid that lopsidedness and fanaticism that leads so many people to go off at a tangent.

I think I have told you of a dear friend, a man whom I greatly love in the Lord, the author of the book, "Jesus Is Coming", Dr. Blackstone. He must be nearly ninety years old now. I saw him a couple of years ago when he was eighty-seven or eighty-eight. Dr. Blackstone is Chairman of a certain committee to whom were entrusted more than a million dollars to be expended in gospel work. Brother Blackstone thinks he knows when Christ is coming. He has set the date several times, but it did not work out: He did not come, and Dr. Blackstone to go back to his reckoning. He has it fixed now for 1934—it cannot possibly be later than 1934!

Dr. Blackstone not only knows when the Lord will come, but where! He has allowed his mind to dwell upon this, and to speculate about it, until I fear in his later years he has made the doctrine of the Second Advent an absurdity. He believes when the Lord shall come great persecution shall develop, and that the Jews particularly shall suffer. He has spent thousands of dollars in having Bibles printed in Yiddish, that are packed in weatherproof cases, and those cases are at this hour stored in the rocky recesses of the prehistoric rock-hewn city of Petra. Dr. Blackstone is sure that in the great persecution which will fall upon the Jews in the Great Tribulation, they will all run for refuge to Petra, and he has thousands of copies of the Bible in Yiddish in these weatherproof containers stored away marked, "For Use of the Jews in the Great Tribulation".

Can fanaticism go farther than that? I think the devil loves to turn people off the track. It is so important that we hold these doctrines in relation to each other, and get the comfort and joy from them that the Lord designed they should bring to us, without allowing ourselves to be led into such extravagances as that.

I give you this bit of advice: I care not if he profess to be as wise as ten Solomons, whenever you hear any man, anywhere, so-called Bible teacher or what-not, presume to tell you when Jesus Christ will come, have done with him. I would not waste five minutes listening to any man who will go right in the teeth of Scripture and profess to know what our Lord said was withheld

from the knowledge of the angels. More than that, as though to warn us away from that folly, He said there was one thing that was put within the Father's own authority, that even the Son had, so to speak, closed His mind against one thing, namely, when He shall come again. There are some people who are wiser than the angels,—and all that in the name of Christian orthodoxy, turning people aside from the great matters concerning which the Book was written to make us wise!

II.

WHAT WILL BE SOME OF THE ACCOMPANIMENTS OF THE LORD'S COMING? There are some people who are thoroughly versed in the programme of the millennium. I confess I am not. I believe the Scriptures teach that there will come a time when righteousness shall universally prevail upon this earth, when the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." This world is some day going to be a beautiful place in which to live. Even now we sometimes sing of the earth as a place—

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

But some day righteousness will universally prevail.

The dream of a golden age is more than the baseless fabric of a vision. There will be a golden age. I believe that. But I cannot see that the Scriptures teach that that golden age will precede the coming of Christ. Those who believe in the personal return of the Lord, and in a reign of righteousness on the earth, are sometimes classified as post or pre-millennialists. Those who believe the Lord will come after the millennium, and that the millennium will be brought about by some other means than by His personal return, and before His return, are described as post-millennialists. Those who believe in the pre-millennial coming of Christ, that Christ shall come first and the millennium after are called pre-millennialists. I confess myself a pre-millennialist. I can see, from the teaching of Scripture, no hope whatever of the cleansing of this earth, and the establishment of righteousness, this side of the coming of Christ.

Let us be careful there. There are some of our post-millennialist friends who believe in the Bible just as truly as we do. They believe in the personal return of the Lord as certainly as we do, but they believe that the millennium may be brought about through the preaching of the gospel. I have heard it said sometimes, "Is it not impossible that the kingdom should be set up in the absence of the King?" As a matter of fact, the kingdom is set up now. I am not a futurist in the sense that the kingdom of God is something that is literally to be established. "The kingdom of God is within you." "Grace reigns through righteousness." Jesus Christ already sits upon a throne. He is even now King. But I do differ between a kingdom that is spiritual and that is largely invisible, and the manifestation of the kingdom with the King when Jesus Himself shall come again. But remember, if it were in the plan of God, surely this whole earth could be converted by means of the preaching of the gospel. If God willed it so, not only thousands, but millions, could be converted in a day.

If we believe that the world was created by the word of God, we must surely believe that it could be

re-created if it were God's will. It is not what God could do we are concerned about, for with Him all things are possible; but it is what God has said He will do. The question is, What is His plan?

Surely it is perfectly clear that when the Lord Himself shall return to the earth He will not return to an earth where righteousness prevails. There are two periods mentioned in the Scripture when sin had reached such a climax that God intervened in judgment. One was in the days of Noah, when man had corrupted his way upon the earth, and was so vile, that God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." And He visited the earth with judgment. The other case is that of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain. You remember the story of how God Himself came down to conduct a personal investigation, and then rained fire and brimstone from heaven and blotted out those cities.

Our Lord said that when He shall come the second time He will find the earth in a condition analogous to the days of Noah. He said that people will be doing the same things when He shall come again that they were doing when the flood came and took them all away. And certainly the flood did not break upon a world that was enjoying any sort of reign of righteousness. He said that it would be as it was in the days of Sodom when He shall come again. He also asks, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

If you read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew you will find that He predicts there will be false prophets. Error will be everywhere, and "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Then if you come to those great passages in Thessalonians, you will find it is there predicted that before Christ comes there will be a falling away, a universal apostacy that will find its climax in the revelation of the man of sin who "sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." When evil has thus gathered itself up in that colossal personality, and the whole world is subject to the reign of Antichrist, upon that condition of life the Son of man will break in His glory. Thus these things will come to pass before the Lord comes, and that day shall not come except there be a falling away.

There are many who see in the present condition indications, as they think, that we are in the last days—and I suppose we are in the last days. But then, when you think about that, do not forget that this is the word of One to Whom a thousand years are as a day. When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and said, "This is that which was spoken," he quoted this Scripture: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." That term, "the last days", obviously refers, not to the few years which belong to the culmination of things at the end of the dispensation, but to this whole dispensation of grace. We are in the last days. We have been in the last days since Pentecost; and the prophecies relating to the last days begin to be fulfilled at Pentecost.

There is an article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS this week, (May 21/1931) written by one of the most distinguished scholars on this Continent. I am sorry he asked me to publish it without his name. He wrote me a letter respecting a sermon he had read in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, expressing his entire agreement with the position taken.

I wrote him and asked if I might publish his letter. In his reply he said he would like to amplify it a little if it was to be published. He prepared this brief article on the Great Tribulation, and suggested that he would prefer it to be published without his name, in order that people might read and study it for the value of the truth itself without any influential name attached to it.

This scholar takes the position that while there is some reason to believe that that period of suffering described as the Great Tribulation will be intensified toward the end of the age, he sees no reason why the Great Tribulation should not be understood as extending over the whole Christian era, worldwide and gradually intensifying toward the end.

Certainly some such conditions will obtain when the Lord shall come. He will come upon a world that greatly needs Him; for this dispensation will close with His coming, and evil will reach its climax when it is headed up in the person of the Antichrist.

III.

Now when Jesus Christ shall come, WHAT WILL FOLLOW HIS COMING? What will it mean? The Scripture is perfectly clear that *the resurrection of the just shall take place at His coming*: "Our citizenship ("our conversation", our version has it, "our manner of life") is in heaven"—that is where we belong. We are citizens of the spiritual Kingdom—"from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." That is one of the things that will accompany the Lord's return.

Go back to the rapture passage: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." There will be a first resurrection, and at the coming of Christ those who sleep in Christ shall rise first; "then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Let me point out to you that redemption is not completed until it applies to our bodies. Some of our friends talk much about divine healing—and I believe in it. I believe the Lord preserves us in health, and I believe when sickness overtakes us, sometimes without means at all, He may restore us to health. Sometimes it may please Him to use means; but, whether with or without means, He is "the Lord our healer". But even our friends who claim miraculous healing, I find, do not remain for ever well; and some of them need to be healed as often as there is a divine-healing campaign held in the city. They get healed over and over again. It does not look to me as though it were specially the Lord's work. But I want to be so well some time that I shall never be sick any more.

The difficulty is, we still have these mortal and corruptible bodies. Sin is inseparable from the body. Man is a trinity, spirit, soul, and body; but what one does the other does. We said to a man one day, who was very ill. "How are you?" He said, "I am too well." "What do you mean?" I asked. "I fear," said he, "this old tabernacle has too much vitality, and that my agony will be prolonged." We need new bodies.

I heard of a minister once who met a certain woman of his congregation, and said, "I have not seen your husband at church recently." "No, sir," said she, "he has not been there." "What is the matter with him?"—he imagined that he had been disaffected doctrinally, and named over all the "isms" he knew. He wanted to know if the man had fallen a victim to this "ism" or that "ism". "It is worse than that," said his wife. "It is? What do you mean?" "It is rheumatism."

These bodies are not wholly exempt. "We that are in these tabernacle do groan." But we shall not always do so, for at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be given new bodies. I do not know what they will be like. I suppose we shall be better looking than we are now! And certainly we shall be more charitably disposed toward each other. We shall be more disposed to regard other people as being passable, at least, than we are today. I hope I shall not be like I am now. Do you want to be just like yourself? Come now, do you? Why do you let the photographer touch up that negative, and make you better looking than you really are? Why not have a lifelike photograph and be done with it? We all need improvement, do we not?

Here is the wonderful truth of Scripture that when Jesus Christ shall come we shall have bodies that will be "fashioned like unto his glorious body"—not like yours, or mine, or somebody else's, but like His. We shall be like Him. There will be a real resemblance to Jesus Christ. We shall be done with all our aches and pains when we have our resurrection bodies. There will be an end to all the limitations that now surround and hamper us.

I am rather glad that we do not know too much about that. It is one of the things that we can look forward to. We shall discover when we have those new bodies, new viewpoints. I was calling upon one of our members the other day, and she told me that her mother insisted that we should not need wings soon, but would be able to fly without an aeroplane, and be able to talk to the world without a radio set. We must learn to talk, if that is the case, for that would inflict a real injustice upon people if we all had broadcasting power. I believe there is no harm in dreaming of that glorious resurrection day when we get our new bodies.

The coming of the Lord will mean rest and reward to all His saints: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you and to you who are troubled rest with us"—When? When the Lord Jesus shall come secretly? No!—"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." That is when we shall have rest, when He comes down the skies. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." And that rest will be enjoyed when Jesus shall come again.

There will be rewards for His people. That is certain. I do not think we give enough attention to that; because we are so zealous for the truth that salvation is of grace, and of grace alone, we forget sometimes that over and above the gift of life there will be rewards for the faithful. It is like a little boy whose father says, "If you do well in the next examination at school I will give you a watch." The boy is his father's son. He has not to work for that. His relationship to his father is determined by the

fact that he is born into the family. He is there. He can never be anybody else's son. But, being a son, his father says, "If you behave yourself, and are faithful, I will reward you for your faithfulness." That is the teaching of Scripture.

You remember Paul said, "As a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." That is the Foundation, that is our hope of eternal life; but on that foundation we are to build a superstructure. And Paul says, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon . . . if any build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Paul said he was living for that day, that he cared little for what people said of him now, but that he was living for a better day. A friend of mine said that he thought certain scriptures should be brought up-to-date. Speaking of a certain preacher he said, "I think he is building wood, hay, and newspapers!" It was just a facetious remark, but it is possible for people to be important in the public eye, and appear to be successful, when they have merely reared a structure of wood, hay, and stubble. The gold, silver, and precious stones, are likely to be less manifest, smaller in bulk, and not so readily recognized; but when the fire comes we shall all be tested, and the genuineness of our work shall appear. Are you not glad it is coming?

Then, remember, *it is a time of judgment for those who still live at His coming*, for He comes to "take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." His coming will mark the destruction of Antichrist: "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." So that Antichrist must be revealed before He comes, for he will be destroyed with the brightness, the epiphany, of His parousia. Do not speak about a difference between those words. They are three aspects of the same thing.

Then afterward comes the millennium. I know little about it, and will leave the explanation to my wiser friends. In the twentieth of Revelation there are three or four verses which tell us that the devil is going to be chained. The devil is not in hell now: he walks about "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." You may stay away from church next Sunday morning, but he will be here. When the sons of God come together he is always among them. He goes about tempting people. He is not in the heavenlies now only: he is present in the lives of men and women on earth, going about seeking whom he may devour.

It is not hard for me to believe in the existence of a real devil. I could not explain many things if the Bible were not clear on that point, that there is a real personality trying to destroy the sons of men. But the Bible tells of a day when he will be cast into the bottomless pit. May I be there to see it! Would

you not like to see him in the bottomless pit? A friend of mine said he would love to be Pastor of a Baptist church when there was no devil: I shall not be dogmatic about it, but I believe there are many passages in the Old Testament that have not been fulfilled. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." I believe that some day we shall have a garden without a weed. I believe we shall have fruit-trees without a worm. The curse will be removed from the earth, as it will be from us "in the regeneration", whenever that is; when the Son of man shall sit upon His throne in glory we also shall set upon thrones. This old earth is going to be regenerated some day: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The lion shall eat straw like an ox; the very nature of the beasts of prey shall be changed.

I am glad to believe that human nature will be changed too, the same as the nature of the beasts about us. Righteousness shall everywhere obtain. I frankly say that I do not know why the devil should ever be let loose again, but he is to be. God knows why. Then the final summing up of all things will take place. The last two chapters of Revelation tell of a time when all shadows will pass away, when there shall be no more tears, no more sorrow, and no death. There will be no night there. There will be no sun nor stars nor moon there. There may be, but they will not be necessary, because the Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land. There is a great future before us. Everything is bright,—the prospect of some day living and reigning with Christ, sharing His glorious victory.

RELIGION AND SPEED LIMITS

A Letter That Appeared in "The Ottawa Citizen"

Editor, Citizen: Could any of your readers explain the connection between exceeding the speed limit and one's religion?

On Thursday morning I was stopped by the Eastview police for exceeding the speed limit, to which I pleaded guilty to the officer who took the particulars, my speed, by the way, being between 35 and 40 miles per hour on the outskirts of the town.

The officer examined my license, etc., and his last question was, "Are you Protestant or Catholic?" I replied, "Protestant", and he recorded that fact in his notebook.

To say the least, I think it was not at all a pertinent question and is open to the strongest protest.
Westboro, Sept. 10. LESLIE F. G. BADHAM

GOSPEL WITNESS PUBLICATIONS

(Reprints)

- | | |
|---|--------|
| "The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional," by Father Chiniquy | \$0.75 |
| "The Antichrist—His Portrait and History," By Baron Percelli | .50 |
| "The Greatest Fight in the World," by C. H. Spurgeon, 64 pages | .25 |
| "Blakeney's Roman Catholic Doctrines Examined", 316 pages | 1.00 |
| "Blakeney's Popery in Its Social Aspect," 312 pages | 1.00 |

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East Toronto 2 - Canada

The Hiding Place of the Blood

A Sermon by the Rev. Thomas Todhunter, M.A.

Vicar of Dacre, Cumberland, sometime during the last half of the 18th Century. This sermon is dated Crathorn, April 10th, 1760

"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."—Hebrews 11:28.

EDITORIAL NOTE: The Editor craves the indulgence of his readers as he explains the appearance of this sermon in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. It surely is not wrong to be thankful for a godly ancestry. Is not His righteousness promised "unto children's children"? And while the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation in them that hate Him, He promises also to "show mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

It is known, at least to his intimate friends, that the Editor's initials stand for Thomas Todhunter. The latter is an old family name running far back into the seventeenth century. The Editor's family were left no bank stocks, nor material wealth of any kind by their father, but that which is of greater wealth, the heritage of a father's and mother's godly life and example.

Among our family treasures are hundreds of sermon manuscripts, carefully written by a hand that alas, these many years has "vanished",—manuscripts of sermons preached by a voice now long since "still". We hope in the near future to share these sermonic treasures with our readers when we can find time to examine them and put them in order for publication.

But we publish herewith a selection from another sermonic treasury. One of the prized possessions of the Editor's family has been a collection of sermon manuscripts, now yellow with age, dating back, some of them, nearly one hundred and ninety years. At a Baptist Convention one speaker suggested that this writer was scarcely a Baptist because his father had not always been a Baptist. It was an unworthy remark, for Baptists worthy of the name are such by a spiritual and not by a natural birth. But perhaps our readers will forgive us for saying that we feel we may legitimately be proud, or at least thankful to belong to a family which has had preachers of the gospel in its membership for now about two hundred years. How long before that we cannot be sure.

But the sermon printed below was preached by the Rev. Thomas Todhunter, M.A., sometime Vicar of Dacre, Cumberland, England. He was a clergyman of the Church of England and was the great, great grandfather of the Editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. This particular sermon is dated at Crathorn, April 10th, 1760, one hundred and eighty-eight years ago. Whether this was the date of its composition or of its delivery we cannot be sure. It is one of many selected at random.

This sermon has not been edited. The manuscript was copied in our office and is reproduced exactly as written without the change even of a punctuation mark. The sermon shows careful preparation. Our readers will agree that it is gloriously sound in doctrine, while its diction is simple and chaste, it has a fine Oxonian flavour, and it is worthy of the great truth it enshrines.

Other sermons have on them certain interesting notes—some made by the Editor's father, others by his father's mother whose maiden name was Todhunter—"a great lady" as a countryman who remembered her in Yorkshire once described her to us. We believe our readers will share our enjoyment of this one hundred and eighty-eight year old sermon.—T.T.S.

THE apostle in the beginning of this chapter gives us a description or definition of the word "faith", which he says, "is the substance", or subsistence, "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Having given a definition of faith, he selects many eminent and illustrious examples of it out of the Old Testament. Amongst the many extraordinary instances of this faith he reckons Moses, the Lawgiver and Deliverer of the children of Israel: "Through faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."

If we consult the history to which these words refer we shall find the Israelites in a state of great affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them; and made their lives bitter with hard bondage. God pities the misery of His people, and is resolved to redress it. Accordingly He sends Moses, in the quality of His ambassador, to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to demand their release. The king most insolently replies, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go?" I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." God, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects. In contempt of all which Pharaoh hardens his heart; persists in his disobedience; and refuses to let the people go. At last, says the Lord, "I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt, which shall

infallibly accomplish My purpose. Be their hearts hard as the nether millstone, this shall make them feel. Be their resolution stubborn and inflexible as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend. About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts."

The Lord had already put His hand to the sword. It was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth—to go forth that very night; to walk through all the land of Egypt, and to be bathed before the morning light in the blood of the firstborn. All the firstborn, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field—tremendous as well as inevitable blow! Oh, what an alarm will it create, and what affliction will it spread! Make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning! "There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."

Moses was apprised of this dreadful vengeance that was going to be inflicted on Egypt, the most dreadful that ever was known since the beginning of their nation:

so dreadful that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of Pharaoh and smite every firstborn, both of man and beast, so that before the morning there should be heaps of slain in the cities, in the villages, and in the fields—not a house exempt, not a family spared, not a herd nor a flock, free from the fatal calamity.

But as the Israelites then dwelt in Egypt, how shall they be safe amidst the general desolation? Moses, considering the danger of their situation, feared the blow. He feared, as the text intimates, the least touch of the divine Executioner's hand. Knowing that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone, he is therefore greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use? Shall he give them orders to close their windows and bar their doors, to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defense? Alas! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of Heaven, all such precaution would have been as a spark before the whirlwind. Shall he assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers to patrol the streets, and guard the houses? Vanity of vanities! The sword of an avenging angel would pierce through legions and legions of such guards as lightning penetrates the yielding air. Shall the whole congregation bend their knees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future obedience? This was highly necessary to be done, but extremely improper to be relied on. It would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the Holy One.

How then shall the Israelites be preserved? How shall they secure themselves from the impending storm? How shall they be safe amidst the general havoc? The Lord Himself appoints a method of preservation, which, though seemingly despicable and insignificant, yet entirely effectual and sufficient for their defence. Moses is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in Israel is commanded to do the same. Having received the blood into a basin, they are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and sideposts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel: looking upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, wherever he sees the blood sprinkled—all this being performed in pursuance of the divine direction: with faith and tranquility they await the event.

Now the whole of this most wonderful transaction was typical or prefigurative of spiritual things, a lively lesson delivered, according to the eastern method of conveying knowledge, by figures and emblems. The Egyptian bondage was a fit resemblance of our natural condition, which is a state of the most abject slavery to sin and satan. We are by nature prone to evil, and averse to good. How often are we led away by carnal and corrupt affections! How often do we fall a prey to unruly appetites and imperious passions! "We are all gone out of the way; we are altogether unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one." All mankind is by nature enslaved to sin and the love of this world in some shape or other. Some are addicted to the lust of covetousness, some to drunkenness, others to fornication and uncleanness, others to theft, others to dissimulation, backbiting and tale-bearing; and others to gaming, idleness and diversion—so that we are all slaves to some irregular lusts, to some wild domineering passions. And such is the deplorable hardness of our hearts, and blindness of our understandings, that we hug our chains, are in love with our misery,

and have no desire to change our condition for the better. The Israelites, when they met with some troubles and difficulties in their journey, began to murmur and to wish they had continued by the fleshpots in Egypt. So we shall always continue slaves to our sinful lusts, ignorant of our true interests, until "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The Commission given to the destroying angel to slay the firstborn, and to make such a dreadful massacre throughout all the land of Egypt, shadowed forth the punishment due to mankind upon account of their sins, disobedience, and rebellion against God. What storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of God poured out upon a sinful soul? To this every sinner is justly liable; this punishment is the proper wages of our sins. "If God should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who could abide it? If he should enter into judgment with us for the actions of any one day, we could not answer Him one of a thousand"; but "must lay our hands upon our mouths and plead guilty." Should the flaming sword of His awful justice be unsheathed against us, hell would be our inevitable portion. Though God inflicted the most tremendous plagues upon Egypt, yet Pharaoh always hardened his heart against the divine judgments. In like manner we have been obstinate and rebellious, perverse and stiffnecked, amidst all divine visitations: "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." And if, upon account of Pharaoh's wickedness and disobedience, God smote all the firstborn of Egypt, we have reason to fear lest for our sins He pour out His indignation to the uttermost upon us, and appoint us our portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. This is our deserved doom; to this punishment we are justly liable; and unless we obtain a place of safety we shall at last, to our confusion and sorrow, find this to be our unhappy portion.

But the text, if further considered, will afford us some comfort in our miserable situation. The deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage was an expressive sign of our redemption by the blood of Christ. How were the Israelites preserved in the general destruction? By the blood of the Paschal Lamb. How must sinners escape divine vengeance? By the blood of Christ. The blood of the Paschal Lamb typified or prefigured the blood of Christ, Who is the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world. By the blood of Christ is frequently signified, in Scripture, the whole merit of His life and death, of His actions and sufferings, of His trials and graces, which satisfied God's justice, and magnified God's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Well does the apostle call it "precious blood". It appeases the wrath of God revealed from heaven; and makes peace between the offended Creator and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance. This therefore, this Blood, is the security of all believers; this is to their souls what the blood of the Paschal Lamb was to the Israelitish families.

Was the blood of a lamb sprinkled upon the lintel and sideposts of the doors a sufficient security and preservative against the destroying angel's sword? Much more will the "precious blood" of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, be a safeguard and defence, a shield and bulwark, for the believer against the flaming

sword of God's justice, and the piercing arrows of divine vengeance.

As I have said that the blood of Christ avails only to save those that believe, it is very proper that I should explain myself and show what I understand by a "believer."

By a believer I do not mean one who barely believes that Jesus Christ lived upon earth, and suffered under Pontius Pilate. This, I suppose, everybody believes. Ask the drunkard: he will tell you he believes in Jesus Christ; ask the covetous, the man of pleasure, nay, ask the proud, self-righteous moralist—they will all tell you the same. But what sort of belief is it? Not the same as that of the apostles, not such a faith as affords them peace of conscience, and gives them hope towards God—indeed, it is no faith at all, for to such it is a matter of no great moment whether the gospel be true or not; and many thousands who flatter themselves with thinking they are Christians and true believers are as ignorant of the end and design of Christ's coming into the world as infidels and heathen who never heard of the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

But by a believer I mean one who believes the gospel upon its proper evidence, and derives comfort from it; one who believes that the blood of Christ is as able to justify a sinner before God, as the Israelites believed that the blood of the Paschal Lamb was sufficient to screen them from the angel's sword. This I call faith; this is the faith which is always connected with gospel obedience; this is the faith which always produces good works. Though if we compare this sort of believers with those who call themselves Christians, their numbers will be but small in the Christian world.

The Scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of Christ as our Refuge and Safety. He is called a "Hiding Place". To a hiding place people retreat, and are secure from their enemies; even from those cruel enemies that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave were secure from Ahab's tyranny and Jezebel's persecution. So they who believe the gospel of Christ, and take sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling, are secure from the most formidable of all enemies, are secure from all the wrath due to sin, and from every accusation which Satan can bring. To such persons shall be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

Christ is styled a "covert from the tempest." "A man," says Isaiah, that is, the Godman, Christ Jesus, "shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water and a horrid storm comes on; all that are in the open air retire to some commodious shelter. So the sinner, convinced of the evil of his ways, pursued by the terrors of a broken law, and exposed to the righteous vengeance of God, flies to the blood of Christ for safety. His blood and righteousness are a covert; hither he may fly, and be screened; hither he may fly and be safe—safe as Noah was when he entered the ark; and God's own hand closed the door, and God's own eye guarded its motions, for there is, "no condemnation" of any kind, or from any quarter, "to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Christ is compared to a stronghold, "Turn ye to the

stronghold," says the prophet Zechariah, "ye prisoners of hope." When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger, they give their fears to the wind, and repose themselves in tranquility; so they who are justified by the blood of Christ are in a tower of salvation. Their guilt is laid upon their Surety; they see that the flaming sword of justice is returned to its sheath, having received full satisfaction from the sufferings of Christ. The curse of the violated law is taken away, for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He had effected for us the blessing of perfect reconciliation and everlasting friendship with God most high.

There, then, is the believer's security in the day of peril: the blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious Person of Christ. These are his hiding places, these are his coverts, these are his strongholds; and, blessed be God, the doors stand wide open; they are never shut night nor day. Access is free for sinners of all ranks and nations, for "the righteousness of Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

The Egyptian^s firstborn were wounded; were mortally wounded; were absolutely destroyed. The Israelites were not hurt; nor endangered; no, nor so much as touched—so sure and complete a defence was this sprinkling of blood! Nothing else could have yielded any protection: this afforded security. When the blood was sprinkled upon their door posts, they had no need to be "afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

And is not the Hiding Place, the Covert, the Stronghold, provided for us in the blood and righteousness of Christ, an equal security? Do they not yield absolute, perfect, and consummate safety? Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of our iniquities; but the blood of Christ has infinite worth to purge the conscience from guilt, and make our peace with God. This opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners; none ever perished who laid their help upon Christ. He is mighty to save, to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." How did Israel bless and adore God for granting them such an effectual means of preservation as the blood of the Paschal Lamb! And how will believers bless and adore the same most gracious God for granting them a means of preservation, altogether as effectual and incomparably more wonderful! Had any of the Israelites despised God's ordinance, and neglected to sprinkle the blood upon their door posts, the angel would not have passed by their houses; but he smote their firstborn, and involved them in the general destruction. So they who dispute the efficacy of Christ's blood to justify a sinner before God, and put it far from them, shall at last be judged unworthy of eternal life—they shall be banished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of His power.

It is the dignity of our Saviour's Person and character that gives such infinite worth and value to His blood. It has all the power and efficacy that every divine perfection can give it; it is the blood of Him Who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it: it is all-sufficient to screen those who trust in it, not only from

the destroying angel's sword, but from the sword of God's justice, and from the pit of everlasting ruin.

When the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise; when the elements shall melt with fervent heat; when the whole earth and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; when our cities and all the labours of human art, shall be laid in ashes; when all the grandeur, pomp, and magnificence of this world shall drop into nothing—happy, unspeakably happy, will they be on whom this precious blood is sprinkled! This will screen and protect their persons, like the blood of the Passover sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, or like the mark which the man clothed with linen set on the foreheads of God's chosen ones, or like the line of scarlet thread which Rahab the harlot bound to the window of her house — being justified by this Blood their latter end shall be peace; their inheritance is unalienable; and their "joy no man taketh from them."

Crathorn, April 10th, 1760.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 13 First Quarter Lesson 2 January 9, 1949

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

THE FIRST APOSTOLIC MIRACLE

Lesson Text: Acts 3:1-16.

Golden Text: "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."—Acts 3:16.

I. The Miracle of Divine Power: verses 1-11.

Peter and John appreciated the opportunity of united prayer, when God's people may have fellowship with Him and with one another in intercession. Special promises are given to those who engage in such united prayer (Matt. 18:19, 20). It was while Peter was in the spirit of prayer that God used him as His instrument to bring blessing to the lame man. The stated hour for prayer on this occasion was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon (Psa. 55:17; Dan. 6:10).

The entrance to the House of God is indeed a "Beautiful Gate" for those who love Him (Psa. 26:8; 84:1, 10; Isa. 64:11).

The lame man fully expected that those who frequented the house of the Lord would have compassion upon him in his need. Similarly, those who are spiritually lame, halt, maimed or blind have a right to look to the Church of Christ for the relief of the ills of their souls. Let them not look to us in vain, for the all-powerful and all-merciful Saviour has placed His resources at our disposal (Eph. 1:15-20).

The references to sight in verses 3-5 would make a helpful study:

- (1) The casual glance of one in need ("seeing Peter and John"); the look of the curious crowd (Lk. 23:35; Lam. 1:12).
- (2) The intent gaze of one who can help ("fastening his eyes upon him"). The same Greek word is translated "look so earnestly upon" in verse 12. This is the look of the compassionate God (Exod. 2:25).
- (3) The attentive look of one who has faith ("Look on us . . . he gave heed"); the look of the contrite soul (Isa. 45:22; Numb. 21:9; John 1:29).

Peter uttered his command to the lame man "in the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:38; 4:7, 12, 17, 30; 10:43; 16:18; 19:5). The name of Christ represents His personality, His power, His authority. As Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour had been subject to human ills, and could have compassion upon the ones burdened with sickness and sin (Matt. 8:16, 17; Heb. 4:15), and as Jesus of Nazareth He had died (Heb. 2:14).

But He was also Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Messiah, the Son of God, the risen glorious Lord.

Peter was not content to heal the man from a distance, but stooped, took him by the hand, and lifted him up (1 Kings 17:19-22). Cold, formal, legal methods of social service will not avail to heal the lame of spirit: in the name of the Lord we must go to them with warm compassionate love, and like Peter, who followed the example of our Lord, take them by the hand and lift them up (Matt. 9:25; Mk. 8:23; 9:27).

Teachers will find this incident a helpful illustration of the steps of salvation. The lame man gave heed, heard the message of deliverance, believed, arose, received strength, rejoiced, praised God, and then joined the believers in the fellowship of prayer and worship. No longer was he on the outside of the temple, begging; he was on the inside, praising. He was not ashamed to allow people to see him enjoying the newly-acquired powers of leaping, standing and walking (Matt. 5:16). His testimony aroused others to interest and faith (Acts 4:16, 21).

II. The Message of Divine Faithfulness: verses 12-16.

Peter's message was directed especially to the Jews, and he aimed to meet their particular difficulty and need, but it is applicable to all.

The apostles had no power in themselves to perform miracles; they simply acted as channels for the power of God (Matt. 23:18-20). Peter wasted no time, words or effort on minor matters, but spoke immediately of the main issue—the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and their personal relationship to Him.

The God of their fathers had glorified Christ in His passion (John 17:1), making even the wrath of men to contribute to His praise, for at Calvary God was fulfilling His own purpose for the redemption of mankind. Nevertheless, the Jews sinned when they delivered up the Christ, denied and rejected Him, preferred the wicked Barabbas to the Holy and Just One, and crucified the Lord of glory (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23). Notice the paradox in the words, "Killed the Prince (or Author) of life" (John 5:26; 17:2). He could not be held prisoner by the powers of death, and He rose triumphant from the grave (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18).

By the power of the glorified Christ the lame man had been healed. Faith had been the means by which he had received the blessing (Eph. 2:8). The man stood before them perfectly whole, not merely physically, but also spiritually.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

| | | |
|---|-------|----------------|
| Jan. 3—United prayer | | Matt. 18:15-20 |
| Jan. 4—Another beggar healed | | John 9:8-25 |
| Jan. 5—The joy of the lame when healed | | Isa. 35 |
| Jan. 6—Miracles in His Name | | John 10:22-38 |
| Jan. 7—Faith in His Name | | Matt. 9:20-26 |
| Jan. 8—Teaching and Baptizing in His Name | | Matt. 28:16-20 |
| Jan. 9—Witnessing in His Name | | Acts 4:23-30 |

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Take the name of Jesus. Brightly beams our Father's mercy. Far, far away. Tell the whole wide world of Jesus. Rescue the perishing. There are lonely hearts to cherish.

REMEMBER THE SEMINARY IN YOUR WILL

We suggest that our friends should remember Toronto Baptist Seminary in their wills. The proper form for this is: "I give, devise and bequeath the sum of to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada, associated with Jarvis St. Baptist Church." We are laying foundations for the future, and we are determined to make it as impossible as it is within human power to do, that one dollar given to Toronto Baptist Seminary shall be used for anything but the propagation of the gospel. No amount would be too large, and certainly no amount would be too small. We earnestly solicit the gifts of those who believe in ministerial and missionary education.