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THE WORKING GOD

FOR from of old men have not heard, neither perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, a God beside thee, which worketh for him that waiteth for him"; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

We put these two Scriptures together, one from the Old Testament and one from the New; the one from the New being a quotation and a free translation of the one from the Old, because these verses tell us something about God. It is our hope and prayer that by a clearer knowledge of that aspect of the divine character herein revealed we may find that readjustment of our spirits to God, and to our fellows, and to our circumstances, which this particular day requires. "Give us this day, O Lord, our daily bread."

I.

We would begin by saying, that a saving knowledge of God is never obtainable through natural channels. We are not going to indulge in a theological discussion. Few people are interested in analyses of the characters of forgotten figures of antiquity; but who is not concerned in understanding the place and influence of vital, vigorous, and victorious personalities? The study of God is not to be classed with the study of dead languages, and obsolete sciences, and prehistoric remains; God must be studied as the ubiquitous, unescapable, penetrating, pervasive, sovereign Personality, upon Whose will the weal of the world depends.

When human affairs are more than ordinarily complicated, and when established order seems in so many directions to be giving place to chaos, no true Christian can fail to ask where God is, and what relation these things bear to His purposes. It was of some unusually distressing situation the inspiration of this Scripture was born. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible

things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, either hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Is it not a prayer that God would show His hand in the affairs of men? It was a day of religious indifference: "There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities."

The prophet declares there is no means of discovering for ourselves and by ourselves what God will do in such circumstances. Even history is not a sure guide: "When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for." His name has ever been called "Wonderful". Men were never able to anticipate the works of the Lord. Providence is a series of perpetual surprises. In the past—in individual, and national, and world affairs, He has ever been doing things that men "looked not for". And our Scripture tells us that the accumulated revelatory testimony of history affords no adequate knowledge of what God may do to-morrow. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard", or as in the New Testament, "Ear hath not heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

We say that this is an unprecedented day—there never was a day like it. Our Scripture replies that from the beginning of the world men have never even heard of a God like ours Who is always doing things which men looked not for. History has not exhausted the possibilities of Providence or the wonders of Grace!

Nor are we made wiser in spiritual knowledge by direct observation: "Neither hath the eye seen." When we read the historical records of the Bible, and see God irresistibly, majestically, gloriously, marching through affairs of men to victory, we wonder that the human contemporaries of those events, with the advantage of personal observation, failed to see God. But we should have been no wiser: "Eye hath not seen." Neither then nor now, was it, or is it, possible to see with the eye "the wonderful works of God". We recall the lesson of the one hundred and seventh psalm, O give thanks

unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy". The psalmist proceeds to describe the gracious providences by which men are brought nigh to God. Four times in the course of the psalm he exclaims, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" But how are men to understand "his wonderful works"? The last verse of the psalm tells us: "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even shall they understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." But mere observation, without that wisdom which cometh from above, will never enable us to "understand the lovingkindness of the Lord". "Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard."

Nor is this necessary knowledge of God born of our religious consciousness: "Nor perceived by the ear", says Isaiah. That is, there is nothing within us which, without divine aid, can lay hold of that which the eye sees and the ear hears, and translate it into a true conception of God, or into an understanding of His acts. Paul says, "Neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared."

A true spiritual understanding of God and His ways is never instinctive to our natural powers; it does not belong to our own moral or religious consciousness; it is not to be learned from observation, or from history. There is nothing in the natural realm by which such knowledge can come to us. Therefore we shall be wise to distrust our own reason and moral judgment as guides in these tremendously important and inscrutable days which are pregnant with such far-reaching issues. When the profoundest student of history has given us his reading of the events of our time; when the most keenly observant philosopher has projected his reasoned judgment into the future and prophesies what shall be on the morrow; when the poet, with an instinct that is truer than reason, has sung of the manifold but hidden glories which await the awakening and unfolding of the spring-time of the race; when the wisest statesmanship has instructed us in such duties as consist with their best efforts to make this a better world—the Christian must remember that even all these, in their collective wisdom, have not exhausted the significance of this unexampled hour! "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit"; "For from of old men have not heard, neither perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, a God beside thee, which worketh for him that waiteth for him."

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

II.

God may be known as He is only by divine revelation. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The importance of recognizing this principle will appear from the consequences attending its neglect. We are disposed to rely too much upon human understanding. We have nothing to say against the efforts of statesmanship to make the world safe for democracy—

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and

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

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though we are not yet prepared to worship Demos. We are ready to support any and every reform that can be shown to minister to the moral welfare of the race. But there is over and above all this, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." And to fail to view the events of our time in that light is to misinterpret life altogether: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Whenever we substitute human reason for divine revelation we incur the risk of failing to recognize the principles and person of the Lord of glory in our on-going of human affairs.

But how does God reveal these things to us by His Spirit? Are we to expect special personal revelations? Paul says, "God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit." It simply means that God's programme for the individual and the race exceeds all human power to conceive. But that "the deep things of God" are wrapped up in the promises and prophecies and principles and precepts of Scripture, and all summed up in the revelation God has given us of His Son. It is undoubtedly true that the deeply taught child of faith, who views a troubled world in the light of this divine revelation, will have a truer knowledge of the significance of the events of the day, than the wisest of men who have no interpretative faculty other than the powers of the natural man.

"Calm and blest is our composure,
When the secret is possessed,
That our God, in full disclosure
Hath to us His heart expressed:
Thou, O Saviour,
Hast been given to give us rest.

"Space and time, O Lord, that show Thee
Oft in power velling good,
Are too vast for us to know Thee
As our trembling spirits would;
But in Jesus,
Father, Thou art understood!"

III.

What is the sum of that revelation which is given for the cloudy and dark day? That exceeding our fondest imaginings, God worketh for them that wait for Him.

Ours is a working God. Unlike the gods of the heathen, ours is a God Who works for His people. That is the revelation of God in Christ: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Amid all the confusion, and the blackness of darkness which human powers can neither penetrate nor dispel, God says He is busy. He is working always. His first demands have not been complied with, but God does not go on strike. He is a working God!

"When He folds the clouds about Him,
Firm within it stands His throne;
Wherefore should His children doubt Him,
Those to whom His love is known?
God is with us,
We are never left alone."

God works for him that waits for Him. We beg our readers to receive that profoundly simple truth. That from the beginning of the world men have never heard with the ear, nor seen with the eye, nor hath it entered into their hearts, that there could be such a God as ours Who "worketh for him that waiteth for him."

It surely means that He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We are glad to know that God works for us. We know we need much doing for us which we cannot do, and know of no one else who could do it for us. Just what needs doing, we cannot tell. We have no light of our own by which to work. And in these days we can sing with a new and profounder meaning than we ever did before:

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

But our God works for those who wait for Him. That means those who do not ignore Him, nor go before Him, nor go without Him, nor go contrary to Him—but who wait for Him.

Sometimes we can do nothing but wait for Him. What else could Israel do at the sea but wait for God to work? Or Daniel among the lions? Or Mary and Martha? Or Paul on shipboard in the midst of the storm? But, waiting is not idleness. When we wait for a doctor we are not idle. Every faculty is in fullest exercise. We summon all our powers to wait. Waiting for God involves an intelligent faith, and an unwavering confidence: "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning." That implies more than a longing for light, and warmth, and beauty, and enlargement; it implies certainty of the coming of the morning. For those who are as sure of His coming as the coming of the sun—God is working while they watch for Him.

The way to wait for God is to rejoice, and work righteousness, and to remember Him in our ways. All such He will meet, and while they may not understand the larger issues, in the very act of working righteousness they shall discover that they are working with Him Who is working for them: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn

among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

PROTESTANTS often think of the Church of Rome as the one religious organization in the world that is untroubled by any sort of internal discord. This view results from an ingenuous acceptance of the descriptions given by Roman Catholic authorities of the unbroken peace enjoyed within the papal fold. But the idyllic scene of unruffled calm depicted by Roman Catholic apologists is too much for men of judgment and experience to accept without large reservations. It is exceedingly difficult to believe that human nature is radically transformed when it passes within the walls of the papacy, and a candid reading of the history of Romanism demonstrates that the worst passions known to the human race have found only too much encouragement to produce their worst fruits under the protection of papal absolutism. The story of the papacy is an almost unbroken record of strife and controversy, of schisms and divisions, often ruthlessly put down it is true, but ever and anon raising their heads with renewed insistence.

When a Protestant calls attention to the inner disputes that trouble the bosom of the Church of Rome, he is looked at askance as a biased witness. This, however, cannot be said of a recent document that exposes serious differences of opinion among the Doctors of the Church, for this document is none other than the papal encyclical *Humani Generis* issued by Pius XII, the present pope, last August 12.

"False Opinions Threaten Catholic Doctrine"

The encyclical to which we refer deals with "certain false opinions which threaten to ruin the foundations of Catholic Doctrine", to quote the title attached to it by the official paper of the Hierarchy in Paris, France. The pope begins by speaking of the currents of contemporary ideas and their repercussions in Catholic circles, and says that though in general Catholic Doctors keep themselves from these errors, "yet it is certain that there are some men in our day, as there were in apostolic times, who, becoming attached to novelties more than they ought . . . attempt to withdraw themselves from the direction of the Magisterium and because of that

find themselves in danger of parting company, without being aware of it, with the revealed truths and of drawing others into error with them." In other days, the pope goes on to say, there were those who questioned the wisdom of the traditional apologetic of the Church, but now some go so far as to question seriously "whether the theology and the method that they employ, such as are practised in their classes with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, ought not merely to be perfected, but even completely reformed. . . ." And the papal encyclical further adds: "If these things are spoken of with prudence in printed books, they are expressed more openly in writings privately communicated and in lectures and meetings. And these opinions are not only divulged among the regular and secular clergy but also among laymen, especially among those engaged in teaching. . . ."

Apparently the pope wishes to make it clear that there is a serious threat to the peace and unity of the church over which he reigns as Supreme Pontiff. To deny that this state of affairs exists would be to lay an accusation of gross exaggeration at his door, or to imply that he is guilty of downright dishonesty. We cannot see why the pope should wish to make a mountain out of a molehill, and if there is not a serious threat to the dogmatic structure of the church, the man who claims infallibility for his utterances has told falsehoods.

Protestants will be interested in reading this confession of divisions within the Church of Rome because its apologists have so often held up the dismemberment of Protestantism as proof of its inherent weakness and of Rome's strength. The chief difference is really this, that among Protestants there is free, untrammelled discussion, but within the papal church freedom of thought and of speech is muzzled by an enforced submission.

Scripture Threatens the Roman Church

The errors against which the pope inveighs are numerous but they may all be comprehended in the following summary: ". . . certain wish to reduce as far as possible the signification of the dogmas . . . in order to return, in their exposition of Catholic doctrine, to the expressions used by Holy Scripture and by the Fathers. . . . Unhappily, these lovers of novelty easily pass from contempt of scholastic theology to a lack of respect and even to contempt toward the magisterium of the Church. . . ." It is this lack of respect for the magisterium of the church that appears to be their chief crime in the eyes of the pope, for he reminds them "Christ Our Lord has confided to it the whole deposit of the faith, Holy Scripture and Tradition, to guard, to defend and to interpret. . . ." And he adds a severe warning against those who contend that the encyclical letters of the popes do not require assent. This is an important point to note for it indicates that in actual practice the pope claims for his ordinary ministry the same attribute of infallibility which is attached to his *ex cathedra* utterances. In other words, the errors which the pope feels impelled to condemn in no sparing terms may all be summed up under one head: a neglect or denial of his final and absolute authority.

The following paragraph is of special interest in view of a controversy that took place in a certain Jesuit institution in Boston within the last year or so:

"Certain hold the opinion that they are not bound by the doctrine that we expounded a few years ago in Our Encyclical and which is based on the sources of revela-

tion, to wit, that the mystical body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing. Some reduce to a vain formula the necessity of belonging to the Church to arrive at eternal salvation. . . ."

This is the shape taken by the old axiom, "Outside of the church, no salvation," when it is expressed in Italy or some other Romanist countries. We wonder what the Roman Catholic priests who were silenced in the United States for saying that very thing, now think of the honesty of their church.

Abject Submission Required

The whole tenor of the papal document is that all the "faithful", including not only the rank and file of the masses, but also the priests and the members of the Hierarchy, as well as the Doctors of the Church, the philosophers and theologians, must render abject submission, implicit obedience to the pope. When he has spoken, the last word has been said, and learned thinkers as well as ignorant peasants must neither speak nor think further on the matter. While the Dogma of the Assumption, which the pope has announced he will proclaim on November 1st, is not mentioned in this letter, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his barbed words are aimed chiefly at those theologians within the church who are opposed to the new dogma. There is not a word nor a hint of it in the Scripture, and tradition quoted in support of it is both late and equivocal in character. But the pope is determined to ride roughshod over Scripture, to twist tradition to his own ends, and so make another new addition to the already oddly assorted collection of papal dogmas. Little wonder that he has announced that he will not call a council to consider the proposed dogma and that the *ipse dixit* of one man has now replaced even a pretense of free discussion on doctrinal matters. Superstition rules supreme in the Roman Church; what pleases the masses of ignorant people in the most backward countries of two hemispheres now determines the religious policy of the Vatican rather than Scripture, or even the Fathers or the theologians and thinkers of the church. It is another example of the way in which God gives up men to their own evil desires when they have given up His Word and determine to hold down the truth in unrighteousness.

This latest papal pronouncement must also make it evident to the ecumenicalists that the door is shut, barred and bolted in their faces despite the fact that they have waited, hat in hand, hoping that the door would be left ajar for their convenience. We must suppose, however, that if the number and the monstrosity of the papal dogmas have not already discouraged so-called Protestants who yearn for final reunion with Rome, then this latest one, together with the proposed addition next November first, will also fail to do so. We may still expect to see them flitting about Rome, hoping to make some sort of terms with the papacy in spite of this additional iteration of the pope's demand of unconditional surrender. For our part we were never happier that we have neither part nor lot with the crude and unscriptural dogmas of Rome that enslave their adepts under the yoke of bondage from which Christ alone can set us free.—W.S.W.

Thou cam'st from Heaven to Earth, that we
Might go from Earth to Heaven with THEE;
And though THOU found'st no welcome here,
THOU didst provide us mansions there.

—H. VAUGHAN.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

How to Make a Friend of the Justice of God

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 15th, 1950
(Electrically Recorded)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1:9.

AT the close of the service last Sunday evening a young man said to me, "I wish you had pursued your argument just a little farther, and told us a little more of the significance of the condition named 'if we confess our sins.'" So that is what I propose to do this evening, taking the same text we had last Sunday evening, one of the simplest, and yet one of the profoundest of all texts: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Last Sunday evening I endeavoured to make it clear that because of the substitutionary work of our Lord Jesus in our behalf, because of His having rendered to the law of God a just equivalent of the punishment which our sins deserved, the justice of God required that that sacrifice be accepted, hence, He is "just to forgive us our sins." And further, that when the conditions named by Him are fulfilled, His faithfulness is invoked to implement the promises of God: Hence, "He is faithful and just". Thus the faithfulness and the justice of God, two of the sterner attributes of Deity, of which in our natural state we have good reason to be afraid, become our friends. They who were, as I said last Sunday evening, the guardians of the law, become the guarantors of the believer's salvation.

The question is frequently asked, I think usually by one who seeks some extenuation of his guilt before God, "Why, in the beginning was man so constituted by the Creator as to be subject to temptation? Why was he not so made that he could not fall, and thus the world's great tragedy would have been averted?" It is not an idle question, and it is well that we should look into that, into the *raison d'être*, into the philosophy of things.

God in the beginning said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Now in what sense was man, as he came from the hand of his Creator, fashioned after the image and likeness of God? It would be absurd to argue that that proposal found its fulfillment in our physical frame and form. There is a sense in which we are a part of the animal creation. We are creatures of flesh and blood, and have much in our constitution in common with the animal world about us; but there are some particulars in which man is sharply differentiated from all the lower orders of creation. God was really, if I may, without irreverence say it, shut up to the problem, the choice, of whether He would make a machine or a man, and He decided to make a man.

I say we have some kinship with the animal creation about us. The animals are endowed with instinct, with an instinctive love of life, and with an instinctive desire to protect themselves. There is a law of self-preserva-

tion running through the animal creation. When I see the squirrels gambolling about in the trees in my garden, up sixty or seventy feet, sometimes I hold my breath and say, "There is going to be a tragedy here surely," as I see them leap from tree to tree, for were they to fall it would seem to me to be fatal, even to those agile little creatures. But they never fail or fall; they know how to take care of themselves, and I see them now gathering the acorns, digging holes everywhere, and storing them up for the winter. How they expect to find them under the snow I do not quite know, but they are at least like the ant, making their preparation for the winter. We read that "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." They not only know when meal time comes, but they know where to find it, and instinctively they make their way to their master's crib.

The birds of the air are not less wise. It is written: "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming." Soon you may observe several bird conventions, if indeed they haven't already had them, gathering by hundreds and thousands where the trees are thick, and preparing to fly away to some sunny southern clime to escape the frost and snows of winter. But, though they have these instincts, you do not find in the animal world any moral quality. The birds and the animals look after their offspring, there is a natural affection there, but there is no faculty within that would enable them to distinguish between right and wrong.

Surely man was made in the image and likeness of God in the moral sense. He was endowed with conscience, with cognition, with intelligence, with will, which enable him to discern between good and evil, and to form a moral judgment, and then by the exercise of the will to give that moral judgment effect. You have observed perhaps in the accounts of certain criminal trials a common legal procedure. In the case of a capital offence it is not at all unusual for the accused, through his counsel, to plead insanity. That is to say, his counsel argues that the accused person was not morally responsible, that he did not know the difference between right and wrong, and was unable to make that distinction, and then to make a decision in respect to that judgment. He did wrong, yes, we plead guilty at that point, but our defence is that he did not know that it was wrong.

Then very often expert witnesses are called, doctors of one sort and another, psychiatrists, and the question propounded to them by the court is, "After an examination of this accused person, is it your judgment that this

person was incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong?" If it can be proved that he was incapable, of course it follows that he was not responsible, and therefore, instead of being hanged for the murder, he is committed to an asylum for the criminally insane. The whole question which the law demands is that it shall be accurately determined whether this man, in committing this offence, was morally responsible. Did he know it was wrong? Could he have made another decision and done right instead of wrong? If he did not know, then he is not responsible; if he did know, then he is responsible, and must bear the punishment of his crime.

Now that, after all, goes to the heart of the whole question. How far are we, as individuals, responsible? "So then," the Scripture says, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We are to be held accountable for our actions, because of that moral endowment which differentiates us from the animal creation about us. If we had been made a machine, with no capacity for moral understanding and ethical decision, then we should no more be judged than the creation around us. But we are brought to account because God made us in His own image and likeness. He said, when he had made man, "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him." Not an helpmeet, but an help meet for him, fit for him, appropriate for him, one who will share his desires, one of a common understanding, so that these two may sympathetically and understandingly live together. The teaching of the word of God is that the marriage relation is the type and not the antitype of the relation of the soul to God; and in creating man in His own image and likeness, God created an help meet for Himself, somebody with whom He could enjoy companionship, someone who would be so endowed that he would be capable of holding fellowship with the Divine. And therefore, He made him a man, with moral judgment, and with the power of volition.

Now man, having of his own choice, pursued a course which has led him to utter moral and spiritual bankruptcy, cannot be recovered by a new creation in violation of the principle of the first creation. He must still be recognized as a man; he must still be dealt with as a responsible creature, and a free agent, as one who can say, "Yes," or "No," to God; who can obey or disobey. And I venture to affirm that the whole scheme of salvation is predicated upon that assumption, and that the justice of God, having provided a salvation for us by the acceptance of the infinite sacrifice of Christ, and the faithfulness of God being ready to make application of all the benefits of that atonement to us, the faithfulness and justice of God await our consent, our acceptance of the Divine provision. If it were otherwise, and God were to superimpose His will upon ours, we should then cease to be men and become mere puppets subject to some external power that required no consent on our part.

I grant you that when, philosophically, you try to harmonize the absolute sovereignty of God with the complete responsibility of His human creatures, you find that you are dealing with matters that relate to the Infinite, and at many points are completely beyond our understanding. But though we cannot rationally explain these things always, yet we can fall back upon our own experience, and equally upon the field of observation, and as well upon the whole record of history—and history, observation and experience, the three main sources of information, all agree that man can do certain things, and

refuse to do certain things, that he is, whatever our theological view of it may be, a free agent.

Hence the Word of God makes it perfectly clear that salvation, the possession and enjoyment of salvation, is conditioned upon our free acceptance of it. We are commanded to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Our Lord said, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." He wept over Jerusalem, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." And again He said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." The responsibility was placed there, upon the exercise of the human will, and the deliberate rejection of that which Divine Providence had ordered for the city of Jerusalem.

That being so, the text I think becomes a little clearer to us. I say again, the justice and faithfulness of God await our acceptance, and when we accept they both become our friend, and we have no longer to fear the terror of the law, because the law has been magnified and made honourable by the willing obedience of our Lord Jesus, working out a righteousness for us, and our default has been liquidated by the shedding of His blood. Therefore He, who knew no sin, became sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

So then, a condition is here laid down: "If we confess our sins", if and when we confess our sins the faithfulness and justice of God immediately come into exercise.

We must look a little into that phrase and see what it means to confess our sins. No, it does not mean merely that the man should say, "It is true I got drunk the other night, and I am sorry;" it does not mean merely for a man to acknowledge that he lost his temper and spoke unkindly to his wife. If he did so he had better acknowledge it. It does not mean merely for a man to say, "Well, I know, I have sometimes been untruthful; I have sometimes been dishonest." Our sins, dear friends, are only the rash; they are the symptoms of our sin; and if we were not inherently sinful, then we should not be actual sinners, committing sin. And no man can sincerely, in the Biblical sense, confess his sins to a holy God without, first of all, repenting of the evil that he acknowledges.

That throws you back upon another great doctrine of the Scriptures. What do we mean by repentance? Does it mean mere sorrow for sin? Oh, it does mean that, but then again that is only symptomatic of something deeper. What is the meaning of repentance? Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? What does repentance mean? On the day of Pentecost when they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you," what did he mean by repentance? But a short time before Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified; Jesus of Nazareth had been done to death as an impostor. All the claims He made for Himself and on His Father's behalf had not only been rejected but repudiated entirely. They said, "Away with Him." "He is not fit to live," and that supreme and final disclosure of Deity, the unveiling of the Holy One in the Person of Him who was the express image of His Person—God came to this sinful world in the Person of His Son, and when they saw Him they said, "This is the heir, let us kill him," and they did kill Him! They not only rejected the Prophet of Nazareth, they rejected God, and all that the Only Begotten

had revealed of the Father: they would have none of Him.

When Peter said "Repent," did he mean, "Be sorry that you crucified Him?" Yes, in part. Did he mean, "Be sorry that you said, 'Away with Him, crucify Him'?" Yes; I doubt not that those who had joined in that angry cry, many of them, were there on the day of Pentecost. That was involved in it. What did he mean? I think he meant this—"Your whole attitude toward God is wrong; the only god you know is a god who is the creation of your own evil imaginations; you have changed the image of the uncorruptible God and made Him into an image like unto corruptible man; you have measured God by human standards, and do not know who and what God is." Now what had Peter declared? Peter had declared that the final revelation of God was in this Person whom they had crucified: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

What, therefore, does repentance mean? It means a complete change of mind; a complete change of heart; a complete change of attitude toward God. Whereas they rebelled against Him, now He has become Lord. And so it becomes their duty and their privilege to submit to Him and to obey, and they have the power so to do. Repent! The Spirit of God is here to enlighten you; to enable you to see the truth, but now, receive that truth and repent. I cannot understand it, but I know it is true that

"Man, as man, retaineth yet
Howe'er debased and sotted and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,
The immortal gift of God to him."

He can say "Yes"; he can say "No", and for his decision he is held accountable.

When thus one has come to see God in Christ, how it changes the whole complexion of life. Mr. Slade told me of an experience he had immediately following his conversion. He went somewhere to sing with a quartet, and he found that all the churches of the town were represented, their officers, there they were. Presently they cleared the floor, and there was a dance. The elders and the deacons, and I know not who else. He said, "I didn't know why, but there was something in me, only just converted as I was, that said, 'That ought not to be.'" Why? Because when the Lord comes into a man's heart He looks at everything in life, not only from a different point of view, but he measures everything by different standards, and the things that formerly were of no consequence at all now he sees to be wrong; things that he would have called blunders or mistakes, he says, "They are symptomatic of something inside. I should not have done that if I hadn't wanted to, and the fact that I wanted to constitutes the wrong."

I am not minimizing the seriousness of these things that we should ordinarily call sins. They are sins; but how many feel that in doing this or that they sin against God? You cheat a neighbour, get the better of him, and what have you done? "Well, I have treated him unjustly and unfairly; I suppose I might reckon that I have broken the second commandment of the law anyhow—I have not loved my neighbour as myself." But you cannot break the second without breaking the first. Mr. Whitcombe read the story tonight that when David was convinced of his sin, he said, "Against thee, thee

only, have I sinned." It was a sin against God. Remember the story of the publican who went down to his house justified. It is a very simple story. He prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The Pharisee prayed with himself, thankful for his morality, and his superiority to some other people, especially this publican. But it is said of the publican that he "Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven," because he had come to recognize that sin was an offence against God, so he bowed himself in the Divine presence, and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner".

Therefore, I say, notwithstanding all the provisions of Divine grace, in paying our debt, providing for the washing away of our sins, the cleansing of us from all unrighteousness, provision to fit us to stand at last without fault before the Throne of God, all that awaits our consent. But can you do it of yourself? No. The moment your will and mine comes into harmony with the will of God, and we want to do the will of God, He will enable us, by His Spirit, to do the thing that we ought to do. Hence, if in our hearts we repent, if we change our mind and our attitude toward God, and come at last to say, as a friend of mine of long ago said he heard a great preacher say in a New York meeting—he had been preaching on the Sunday before, and at a large ministers' meeting he was asked to pray, and like a little child he prayed, and said, "O Lord, Jesus Christ is the only God we know." That is true. There is no way of knowing God but through Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." If and when we see in Jesus Christ the one and only God, the Creator of all the ends of the earth, by Whom "all things (were) created . . . whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,"—when we see in Jesus Christ an emanation of Deity, a radiation of Deity, the Father and the Holy Spirit known to us through the Son, who was made in the likeness of men in order that we might understand Him—when thus we bow before God, as revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," "If we confess our sins, He is faithful,"—He must be; "and just"—He must be, "to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." May we all know that cleansing, for His Name's sake. Let us pray.

We thank Thee O Lord for the simplicity of Thy way of salvation. Thou dost not demand the impossible of any one of us. Help us, in complete dependence on the ministry of Thy Spirit, thus to bare our hearts before Thee, and claim that full and complete forgiveness that is ever awaiting the penitent sinner. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

Among those in the higher ranks of life who steadily attended his (Whitefield's) ministry at the Tabernacle was Lady Chesterfield. And one day, when she was at Court, the King noticing the dress she wore, which was not such as was usually seen at Court, said to her: "I know who chose that gown for you. Mr. Whitefield and I hear you have attended on him this year and a half." To which she replied, "Yes, your Majesty, and I like him very well." Whitefield was pleased with her boldness, and when relating the circumstances to Lady Huntingdon, observed, "Oh that she and all that have heard the Gospel may have grace given them to speak of their dear Redeemer even before kings!"

—Life of George Whitefield

WHAT IS THE FIRST-CLASS FARE TO HEAVEN?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
on a Sunday Evening

(Stenographically Reported)

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

—Psalms 107:30.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

O Lord, great art Thou, and greatly to be praised. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. A thousand years in Thy sight are as a day. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. Thou workest all things after the counsel of Thine own will. Thou workest, and no man hindereth.

How dare we who are of sinful lips and sinful hearts praise Thee to-night? We would make the words of the hymn our prayer,—

"O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me."

No man can call Jesus Christ, Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. How much less can we praise Thee apart from Him, apart from Thy grace! Enable us to praise Thee as we ought. Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, as Thy feeble creation lips Thy praise. We thank Thee that Thou art not a God Who is afar off, for though the heavens and the heaven of heavens are not great enough to contain Thee, yet Thou dwellest in the humble and contrite heart. Such, O Lord, are we. Thou art not far from any one of us. We would search after Thee, and find Thee to-night—yea, rather, Thou hast searched after us, and found us. So we rejoice in the God of all understanding, yet Who abides in us. Our faces are not hidden from Thee. Thou waitest to bless us, to bestow upon us the fulness of Thy mercy and grace.

"Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart, how near!"

Bring home to our understanding Thy nearness, O Lord. To those who have been many years in the Christian life, may Thy presence be very real to-night. To those who have but begun, those who have in Thine own appointed way witnessed before the world their oneness with Christ, be near to them in a special way. Come near, O Lord, to every one of us and bless us while we wait before Thee.

Come near to-night, O Lord, unto those who are distressed, and to those in sorrow, those whose hearts are burdened, the tempted ones here, and the tried. Come near, O Lord, to those who are afar from Thee, to those whose eyes have been darkened, who know Thee not. Draw them, O Lord, to Thyself. We thank Thee that Thou hast come near to us in the Cross where there is found plenteous mercy, and grace to cover all our sin.

We thank Thee for the gracious provisions of the gospel, that Thy offer is still open, that whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely; and that him that cometh unto Thee Thou wilt in no wise cast out. We rejoice that the feast has been spread. We thank Thee that Thou dost extend Thine invitation to-night. Come, for all things are now ready. We pray that the Holy Spirit, the divine Messenger, may bring us to Christ, that He may convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. May He draw men to the foot of the Cross. We remember in our own experience that,—

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin."

We beseech Thee, Who art a God of salvation, a seeking God, that Thou wouldst seek men out to-night, and draw them to Thyself where Thou shalt bestow upon them every blessing through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

"SO he bringeth them unto their desired haven." It is the veriest commonplace to compare the journey of life to a sea voyage. We have it in our hymns, in all the world of poetry; and one must immediately be struck with the aptness of the comparison. What a great adventure life in its simplest aspect really is! How much of mystery there is about it! How much of mist and of fog! How numerous are the perils to which we are exposed! And how pathless is the sea we traverse! Though millions have gone before, every life has its own peculiarities; and we must live our lives, in a certain sense, separately.

How full of loneliness life is sometimes, like the wide, wide sea! People who have not crossed the ocean, seeing the ships jostling each other in the harbour, may sometimes imagine that the sea is covered with ships. But I have sailed the Atlantic from New York to Europe without ever seeing a ship until we saw land. There are times when we feel as though we were a ship at sea, as though we were the only ship, all alone in the world. Wind and wave beat and batter us. Storm and calm succeed each other. Even the most favoured life is full of complexity and perplexity, and who can be a sufficient guide in these circumstances?

The text I have read to you is part of an inspired description of a sea voyage. There are those who "go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters", and of them it is said: "These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

I shall use the text this evening accommodatingly, taking this figure of the voyage of life, that we may learn something of how we may safely make that voyage, and drop anchor at last in a desired haven, under the guidance of One Who knoweth how to direct us thither.

I.

Let me remark, then, that WE ARE ALL SEEKING SOME SORT OF HAVEN, WE ARE VOYAGERS ALL. How quickly the days, and the weeks, and the months, and the years slip by! How soon the grey hairs appear! What evidences there are on every hand of the brevity of life!—when "the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken have no continuing city." There is no stopping place, at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."

We are all on the way, every one of us. "Here we whether we like it or not. We are moving hence. "The place that now knows us will shortly know us again no more for ever."

Well do I know that that is an aspect of life that receives but little emphasis nowadays. Men are urged to make the best of this life,—sometimes in utter forgetfulness of the life that is to come. But whatever our circumstances, however vigorous our physical frame, however strong our will, we are going on.

I remember a minister, a dear fellow he was, a lovely man personally. Not always did he emphasize the verities of the gospel, I fear; but he was advertised to speak on a certain Sunday evening on, *The Cultivation of the Will*, how to determine to do things, or, at least, an address entitled to that effect. When the congregation assembled, someone had to announce that the preacher was indisposed, and could not be there,—and before the day broke on the morrow his spirit had departed to God Who gave it.

You may exercise your will over some people, but when the grim Monster calls, when Death shall summon us, whatever our wealth, our learning, our strength of character, or force of will, we shall all have to obey him. We may just as well face it, and recognize the fact that life is but a voyage. We cannot go on for ever. We must reach a haven of some sort. There must come an end to this earthly existence. We are sailing on—but sailing whither? To what haven is our ship directed? To what sunny summerland do we believe ourselves to be voyaging? It is not an inadequate description of life as most of us find it. Some of us perhaps have learned to long for some kind of haven, for the stormy wind has blown, and the waves have mounted up to heaven, and again, they have gone down into the depths. Some of us have had a pretty stormy time of it.

There is a kind of sea-sickness that affects people who never go to sea. You have heard the saying that there are two stages to that dread malady? When one is rather ill, he is afraid the ship will go down: a little while later he is rather afraid it will not! Some of you have had experience enough of life to wish you were well out of it. Do not call me a pessimist. Do not say that I look darkly upon life, for I know very well there are seasons of tranquillity. I know there are periods of calm, and pleasure, and real delight. But let us be frank with each other this evening—I am not going to preach a sermon. I shall talk about your experiences—you have had a stormy time of it, have you not? Sometimes you have said, "I wish the voyage were over. I wish this ship would make port somewhere." You have felt not unlike one who has been tossed upon the deep. It seemed as though the voyage would never end.

Some of you, perhaps, have not been afflicted with homesickness—for alas! your soul is orphaned, and you have as yet no home to go to—if that be your lot, you may be weary of this life and know not where to go.

What a troubled world this is just now! Find me a bit of tranquil water anywhere. Tell me what sea to sail with the expectation of a pleasant voyage. Where can one go to get out of trouble and distress? I wonder if someone is trying to wean us away from things earthly and temporal? I wonder are we being taught in a wholesale fashion to say, as the wise observer said, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is

vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour, which he taketh under the sun?" What there may be above and beyond the sun is another matter, but "under the sun" there are stormy winds, and troubled seas, and weary voyagers who would gladly be out of it all.

That is not an exaggeration, is it? Is that not true to fact to those of you who have had experience of life for a few years? This preacher confesses it to be perfectly true. How often—how often could he have borrowed the Psalmist's saying, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." Thus in our weaker and wearied moments do we complain. Notwithstanding, all the days of our appointed time must we wait till our change comes.

II.

TO WHAT HAVEN, THEN, ARE WE SAILING? This text speaks of a "desired" haven, desired because desirable. It intimates that somebody has set sail with definite purpose, and is not sailing over uncharted seas without compass or pilot, but is sailing a definite course, with a definite haven in view, and is sailing thitherward because it is a land greatly to be desired.

Where can you find a desirable haven? To what land will you emigrate? Where would you rather live than in Canada? I suppose there was a time in early youth when most of us dreamed of an earthly paradise. We saw here and there the work of the grim Reaper, and we observed that old people died, and that they were passing on to some other land, but as for ourselves we had youth on our side, and life was full of happiness and of pleasant things, and we felt as though we could enjoy an earthly paradise. We dreamed of conditions of life which would be ideal, in which we should be perfectly happy. The visions we saw satisfied, for the time, our youthful imaginations.

I heard a missionary say, who had been long years in India under the scorching sun, when he came home to Canada in early June, that as he travelled through the country and saw verdure and beauty everywhere, the lambs gambolling in the fields, and all nature springing forth into newness of life, he remarked to someone, "It may be that heaven will be better than this, but for the moment this is good enough for me."

Yes; we can say that in June. Anybody in good health and reasonably comfortable circumstances can say that in June. What is rarer than a day in June? But can you say it in December? Can you sing about it in January? Are you still of the same mind when March winds pierce you through? Is it not true that we are soon disillusioned? I have seen people of great wealth lose all interest in life. I have seen people of great learning who found it very hard to learn the way to heaven, but easy to learn the barrenness and bitterness of earth. If we will be frank, we shall admit that we had not gone very far until we were forced to the conclusion that our dream of paradise could never be realized here. There are too many graves in this old hollow earth. There are too many broken pillars, too many disrupted families, too many blasted lives, too many ruined fortunes, too much wreck and ruin all about us, to find a paradise on earth. Is not that true? Must we not all say, "If I am to find my way to a haven of rest, it will have to be somewhere other than on earth. There is no haven to be desired here that can meet the longings of my immortal spirit."

Very well, then, let us emigrate, shall we? Let us set sail for another country.

If that be so, let us find out to what country we should sail. What sort of haven would you desire? What would fulfil your ideal? How many people would you take with you? How many would you gladly leave behind? How much baggage would you carry? And how much would you label, "Not wanted"—and forget even to put it in the hold? Life would have to be vastly different from this if we would realize our ideal.

I will tell you somebody I should like to leave behind. He is called in the Scripture "the old man". I do not see any possibility of getting to heaven if the "old man" is to be there. I do not see any possibility of having a heaven where he is. Years ago I had a man in my church who, before the days of tree-sitting competitions, used to climb up into the miff-tree—and I used to leave him there, because I soon learned that there was no use bringing him a step-ladder to help him down from one, for he would only use it to climb another. I thought it better to leave him to nurse the ills he had than acquaint himself with others that he knew not of. But he was a nice man, and had a splendid wife. One day I talked the matter over with her, at her suggestion. I said, "Suppose you and your husband take your church letters and go somewhere else and be happy?" She shook her head and said, "I fear Pastor, it would be as Dr. So-and-So used to say (naming my predecessor) we should take our miserable selves with us." Alas! That is the chief trouble with all of us.

You have heard of the Quaker who was met by a man with a pack on his back, looking for a home? The traveller came to the crest of a hill, and looked down into the valley where a village was snugly nestled. He stopped the Quaker and said, "Can you tell me what sort of people live down in the village?" The Quaker replied, "Friend, what sort of people did thee leave behind?" "They were a bad lot. They did not tell the truth; they quarrelled with each other. I left them because I could not get on with them." "Yes," said the Quaker, "and thee will find the same kind of people down yonder in the village to which thou art going."

What is your greatest trouble in life? "My circumstances." No; they are not! "Some people, who are hard to live with"—a husband or a wife. "It is the man down in the office. He is an utterly unreasonable man. I have no peace in my life. If I could get away from these people, all would be well." No; it would not. Your chief trouble is in your own breast—and so is mine.

The land to which we are going must be a land where the "old man" will never be known. It must be

"A land upon whose blissful shore
There rests no shadow, falls no stain."

It must be a sinless land. That is the kind of haven we all need. Circumstances may be difficult for you, people about you may harry you, and you may have just cause for complaint against many; but even if all these adjustments could be made, the root-cause of all your trouble to-day is the sin in your own life; and there is no haven for any of us unless some way be found by which that can be eliminated, and the "old man" left behind.

I read of a city of which it is said, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." That is the city I should like to live in, where there is no defile-

ment, where sin never comes. But we shall not find it upon earth. Of that you are as certain as I.

But that is not all. Even were we freed from these moral distempers, even if we were so purified that we might consort with angels, and find ourselves able to join in their songs of praise without discord—even then we should need something more than that, for while a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, he cannot very well get along without some of them. To read of some great men, one would think they never ate breakfast! One would suppose they were so different from ordinary mortals that they need only the food of the gods. But as a matter of fact, these matters of which Mr. Whitcombe read to you this evening, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?", while they are not the all-important matters, they are not wholly insignificant. While we are in this flesh, we shall have to give some consideration to these things.

Many people have emigrated from one country to another in order to better their condition. Thus Abraham turned aside and went down into Egypt. So, at a later day, did Jacob send his sons into Egypt because he had heard there was corn there. At a still later period Naomi, with her husband, emigrated to Moab's land because in Bethlehem, the house of bread, a famine prevailed. She went to a far and strange country in the hope of finding easier conditions of life.

How many people have left Europe to come to Canada or the United States, dreaming almost of picking up gold in the streets? One might suppose, to hear some people talk across the sea, that you could buy the best of motor cars in one of these red stores where they sell things for five and ten cents! From their extravagant view of this hemisphere's abundant wealth it might be supposed that everybody here were wealthy, and poverty were unknown. It is true that some people who have crossed the sea, for their want have found wealth. Many have come to this land, and made a new beginning. But inevitably at last they too have had to go for the shadow waits for every one of us.

Is there a haven of which it is said, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat"? Is there a land where there are no climatic difficulties, where the plain and the valley are as salubrious as the hills, where everlasting health obtains, where there are no cemeteries, and no breaking hearts?

Tell me of a haven where I can get rid of all these earthly limitations, so that I can find at last the satisfaction for which my soul longs. I want a salvation that is good for the mind, so that my mind can find exercise in great matters through all eternity. I want something that satisfies the heart, that satisfies spirit, soul, and body, the whole man. Let us set sail for such a desirable haven where we shall all be comfortable and happy at last.

It is not on the American continent, nor in Australia, nor Europe, nor Asia, nor Africa. We shall have to leave this planet and sail to another world to find a haven like that.

Then, my dear friends, we do not live in things. We live in our affections, if we live at all. Home is not the house you live in. It is not the furniture you use; it is not the clothes you wear. Home consists in association with kindred spirits whom you love. If you

can find a place like that anywhere, that is the nearest thing to heaven that you will find on earth.

But that does not last. The chaff is soon vacant. Oh dear, how well do I know it! And how well do you know it! Why are we so foolish as to live as though we were going to stay here for ever? We think of those whom we have loved and lost. We sometimes sing—

“One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of His host hath crossed the flood,
And part is crossing now.”

And they are crossing. Others may cross to-night. Shall we see them again? Can you tell me of a haven where Death never comes, where disease is unknown, from whose golden shore sorrow is for ever banished, where there is no night, no shadows, no shortening day, no deepening night, where a tender hand will somehow, at some time, wipe away all tears from our eyes?

I should like to find a place like that somewhere, would you not? Would you not like to set sail for it?

There is such a haven. There is such a land beyond. There is a place where everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers. Did you ever hear of such a city, a city in which there are no cemeteries, a city in which there are no hospitals, a city in which there are no orphan asylums, a city in which there are no sighs, no groans, no pain, no tears? I say to you again, let us seek that city. That is the desired haven! God help us to set our faces toward it.

III.

I wonder could I tell you in a few words A LITTLE ABOUT THE VOYAGERS? Here are some who go down to the sea in ships, and who do business in great waters. What a world of business this is! A few years ago there was a political earthquake in Great Britain. Old party alignments were obliterated, perhaps never to be rediscovered; and the whole kingdom was turned upside-down. New standards were set up; new philosophies were adopted; new sets of opinions, once objectionable, are now lauded to the skies. What was it all about? Just a new way of doing business. There was not a word in it all about the vanity of earthly things. It was simply a plan to devise new ships to do business in great waters, new ways of recapturing the world's trade in order to do more business.

This is Sunday. Tomorrow will be a business day, and even in hard times in what a whirl this city will be found! Thousands, and tens of thousands, will be running hither and thither, trying to make money, to do a little business to keep body and soul together, to live in this dreary land a little longer. Men are building banks that challenge the clouds,—towering buildings everywhere. But they are all “under the sun”, and there is nothing of abiding value in Time. In but a moment they may pass, and we shall be left empty-handed. It is not worth while going down to the sea in ships, merely to do business in great waters.

Do not misunderstand me. Of course, I know these things are necessary. Of course, I know, as I intimated just now, that we must deal with these mundane affairs. It is perfectly legitimate that we should, so long as we keep them in right relation, and look for a “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” It is right enough, if we do not lose our per-

spective, and spend all our energies on the things of Time, to the utter neglect of Eternity; if we do not set our affections on things of the earth rather than on things above.

But even those who go down to the sea in ships soon find themselves in the storm. What a picture that is of the sea of life in general: in the face of all their difficulties, which threaten to engulf them, men “reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man.” Did you ever see a land-lubber trying to walk the deck of a ship in the storm—reeling “to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man”; their soul melted within them, and they are at their wit's end.

I wish I could find a man at his wit's end to-night, some man who says, “I am out on the storm-swept sea, and I do not know which way to turn.” Occasionally, I say, there are quiet hours at sea, not many of them—for soon the storm comes again. Is that a description of your case? Have you plumbed the depths? Have you found out how vain a thing this world is?

IV.

If so, I must tell you of A SHIP AND A PILOT THAT ARE BOUND FOR THIS MUCH DESIRED HAVEN. I am here to tell you that there is a liner that is guaranteed to transport all who desire to go from this sorrow-stricken world to that desired haven, and that there is a Pilot who never lost a passenger. There is a heaven-bound ship. That is what salvation is. Dropping the metaphor, I am here to tell you that God has provided a way whereby immortal spirits may be transported from this life into a world beyond in perfect safety, without any possibility of loss by the way: “He bringeth them unto their desired haven.” Are you glad of that (chorus of hallelujahs)?

Once when crossing to England, we reached the Mersey near Liverpool one day before the sun was down. As everybody does, we had packed up all our traps, and everyone was ready for landing. The heavy pieces of baggage were out of the deck ready to go down the gang-plank. We were coming up the river, and stopped for a few moments to let the pilot on. He was soon on the bridge, and within five minutes I heard the engines stop. The ship dropped anchor, and inside of fifteen minutes the stewards were going around saying, “We are not landing to-night, sir; everybody back to their state-rooms.” I asked my room-steward what the trouble was. He said, “It is Old Cautious.” “What do you mean?” I enquired, “Could we not have got in?” “Sure. The captain could have taken us in. But Old Cautious will run no risks. He is so careful that he will not face the possibility of trouble. We could have got in before the tide was too low—but he would not have it.” “What sort of pilot is he?” I then enquired. (The ship hands were going home, and were rather irritated because they had expected to land that night.) “What is his record?” “His record is all right. He never lost a ship. He could not! He never got a ship into trouble in his life. He will not get anywhere near trouble. Old Cautious is all right.” I said, “I am glad he is on the bridge. I will wait until morning.”

You and I have run on to so many sand-bars, and have narrowly escaped destruction so many times, that it is a marvel of mercy we are here to-night. It is a wonder that we are not in some other haven than a desired haven.

It is only the mercy of God that has spared us. It would be a good thing to have a safe Pilot to take us in.

I wish you would have my Pilot. I wish I could see Him taking command of your soul-ship. I wish I could know that before you leave this place to-night the helm were in His hand. No reefs or rocks can trouble you then when Jesus has taken command. Do not make any mistake, however. Even if you become a Christian you may have troubled seas. I do not know that a Christian enjoys a funeral any more than anybody else. A Christian mother is anxious about her children when they are ill. She is full of trouble if anything threatens them. We are mortal. We are human. Sometimes the stormy winds will blow, and even as Christians we shall have a stormy time of it. We read in the Book of a time when Jesus Christ was on board and the disciples said, "Carest thou not that we perish?"

I knew an old man once who was rather a melancholy brother, and who found his only pleasure in being melancholy. You have known some people like that. But he was sound in the faith, and I think his gloom was partly to be attributed to his physical condition; he was a dyspeptic of some sort. But he knew the Lord, and although he did not show it in his face, I think he rejoiced in Him. Somebody went to him for advice about his soul's salvation; he had believed in Christ, but did not now know whether he was saved or not: "I have so much trouble, so much difficulty in my business", said he, "and my children cause me trouble. Even this old body of mine troubles me; and I have wondered, if I am a Christian, if I should not be free from all these things." This old brother said, "Did you ever cross the sea?" "Yes." "Did you have a good passage?" "No; a dreadful passage." "What was the matter with you?" "Well, it was terribly stormy." "Did you get off the ship?" "Oh, no; I had to stay on." "You had your ups and downs?" "Yes, I did." "But," he said, "you did not have your ins and outs, did you?"

The old man was a good theologian. Though there were storms, he was in the ship, and was perfectly safe—although not as comfortable as if the sea were calm.

Some people are more troubled by storms than others. I have in mind a stormy passage. I like a storm at sea. I saw myself described once in a certain city, I think it was by the Ottawa press, as "the stormy petrel". I said, "I am not much of a naturalist, but I will find out about that bird." I studied it, and found out its habits. I discovered that the petrel had nothing to do with making the storm, but it is unlike other birds in this, that when a storm comes it stays out in the storm and does not run for cover. Then I said to myself, "I do not care if they call me a stormy petrel. I like a storm at sea. I think it is glorious."

The one to which I refer was when I was crossing on the *Mauritania*. I climbed to the ninth deck, right under the captain's bridge. For three days we pitched, and for three days we rolled. While we were in the pitching process I was under the captain's bridge watching that mighty ship go down into the trough of the seas and then mount up again. But at last we nosed into a wave, and although I was on the boat deck, the water swept that deck, and I was drenched to the skin. I kept the hat that got that drenching, with the mark of the salt water upon it, for some years. As I shook myself free of water, I looked up at the bridge. There was a man walking back and forth—not a bit troubled. The ship could pitch

as much as it liked. I had sea legs, and as long as the captain was as calm as that I did not need to worry. I went down and changed my clothes—and went out for more of it.

Turn your eyes toward the Captain. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." If you are a Christian all will be right. By and by we shall reach the heavenly shore.

Would you like to know the fare? How much does it cost? I read of one prophet called Jonah who went down and found a ship of Tarshish—and paid his fare. Somehow or another people always have money enough to pay their fare to run away from God—and if you have not, the devil will provide it for you. Jonah paid his fare. I have known many people come to this country whose passage had been assisted, partly paid by the government; then they had to repay it. There are many people who would like God to partly pay their way to heaven. They say, "I should like to have a little hand in it myself." But you cannot do it that way.

What is the price? Nothing at all. The name of the ship is "Grace". The ticket is marked, "Without money, and without price." You get a ticket for nothing if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The wonderful thing about it is that there is no difference between the price of first-class and third-class.

I remember before the days of Church Union in Canada I met a friend who was a Methodist, a real Christian. He said, "How are you? I am glad to see you. I have a warm spot in my heart for you Baptists. After all, it does not make any difference whether we are Baptist, or Methodist, or Anglican, or Presbyterian. We are all going the same way, are we not?" I said, "I hope we are. All the cars in one train, pulled by one engine, are going the same way, but there are first, second, and third-class carriages. If you travel third-class, that is your choice; but I am going first-class."

You have to pay no more to get all that God has provided for you than for just a little of it. Why do you want to travel to heaven third-class? Why not prove the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of the love of God, and by faith appropriate His boundless grace, and live in the luxury which His love would provide us while we sail on the stormy seas? I have no objection to that kind of luxury. It is hard enough to go to sea, and I should like to have the largest measure of comfort consistent with a stormy passage. You will get the storm—why not get all God has for you, to help you through it?

And when we get off the ship yonder we shall find that the "old man" has jumped overboard, or, at all events, has disappeared. He will never be given a "landing ticket". He will not be there. But our Pilot will be there. We shall awake in His likeness, and we shall be satisfied. Having left behind us every element of life that would mar the perfection of our joy, we shall come at last to the desired haven.

When the ship is at the dock, and most of the passengers have got on board, and the time for departure has come, at last you hear the cry up and down the deck, "All ashore! All ashore! Visitors, all ashore." And when all the passengers are aboard, and all the visitors are ashore, the gang-plank is withdrawn, the ship is loosed from her mooring, and she sets her prow toward the open sea.

There comes a time in every man's life when the Pilot, for the last time, bids men come aboard. So with Noah:

"Come thou and all thy house into the ark." They all went in, and the Captain Himself lifted the gang-plank: "And the Lord shut him in." They went safely through the storm, while others perished.

Shall we come aboard this evening? I want to read a prayer for you. Please do not look at it. Please do not open your book until I tell you where it is. I want you, if you will, by God's grace, to pray this prayer for yourselves:

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass come from Thee:
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!

"As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boisterous waves obey Thy will
When Thou say'st to them, 'Be still!
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!

"When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,—
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
May I hear Thee say to me,
'Fear not! I will pilot thee!"

THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

A SEASON of rich blessing and fellowship was enjoyed by the friends from a number of churches who met last week in Jarvis Street Church for conference. Reports of blessing and progress on various fields encouraged all to look for still greater things in the future. All felt that the magnificent financial report, as printed in these pages last week, was cause for special thanksgiving. We hope to have a more detailed account of proceedings from our faithful secretary, Rev. H. C. Slade, next week.

One item in the financial report requires rectification: The footnote reported by error that \$14,000 had been donated for the purchase of a lot at North Bay. This should have conformed to the correct amount as reported in the Auditor's Statement to which it was appended, namely \$1,439.15. The error would be apparent to all who studied the report as it was inconsistent with the figures in the financial statement, but we call attention to it for the sake of the record.—W.S.W.

FIFTY YEARS AS PASTOR IN FRANCE

Dr. Robert Dubarry of Nîmes Writes of His Great Church in the South of France

IT IS no easy task to introduce before friends unavoidably distant from our very special foreign conditions a brief and lively record of the rather imponderable matters involved in missionary action. Artificial picturesqueness or undue emphasis are alluring there the perplexed scribe who means to be rigidly honest and a bit interesting. But the right way seems open if we give due priority to what is decidedly "lasting" over what is simply "happening". Oh! for the perennial freshness of the Gospel News, which are mixing the astounding and the durable with ideal sobriety!

Along that safe line, we are here reminded of the famous "sailed on" recording so many eventless but historic days in the obstinate advance of the Columbus venture. And that recollection well describes recent situations in our French Bible Mission fields. Humble thankfulness best expresses here our experience of quiet and persevering divine faithfulness.

Since we are approaching the fiftieth milestone of our own Nîmes' effort—the one which we happen to know best—we feel bound to testify here to the patient leadership and help of the Lord.

A Discouraging Prospect

We were very dangerously young when we first came for one month of prospection to our field. There were, in that Southern City of about one hundred thousand inhabitants, a handful of survivors of an unfortunate attempt to gather into a church a few isolated Baptists. Whilst entirely unawares of the existence of a similar people anywhere else, their sires had individually come to our own Bible views. As soon as divine Providence had brought them together, satanic reaction planted its bush of thorns. Hence a speedy and almost complete ruination of the fragile initial scheme. Our inexperience prompted us to accept such a gloomy challenge. But when we came back for good, under the heartbreak of leaving a beloved Paris church, much distress was added. For in the short meanwhile, most of the few remaining members had become enslaved in circumstances which, top often, blocked for them the way to the meetings, so that my good wife and I repeatedly happened to come absolutely alone to the rather miserable Gospel Hall. We opened, lit and warmed it. We waited, sat at the organ, sang, read, commented and prayed with no other soul coming. Every prospect proved adverse. Many fancied that we were nothing but stubborn Mormons. Others affirmed that we were no disciples of Christ, but simply belated followers of John the Baptist. It thus took us five dreary years to gather an audience of some twenty, and five other years to get some fifty.

Yet, we were induced to persevere as we realized the strategic possibilities of our world-known Huguenot centre of heroism, close to which, four hundred years before the Reformation, Peter de Bruys, that ancestor of all Baptists, had been put to death as a reward for his fearless testimony to our very faith.

Building for Eternity

When, forty-three years ago, we removed to our much larger present place, very few were hopeful, and we well understood the fears of many. But our forced material limitations had at least taught us a wise lesson. If we were squeezed within narrow possibilities forbidding horizontal extension, could we not try to build vertically,

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

- "Other Little Ships" \$2.00
- Beautifully bound in blue cloth with gilt letters, 280 pages.
- "The Plot That Failed" 2.00
- Special Illustrated Number of Sept. 2825
- "Russellism or Rutherfordism", 71 pages25
- "The Papacy in the Light of Scripture", 26 pages25
- "The Oxford Group Analyzed"05
- "Does Killed in Action Mean Gone to Heaven?"05
- "The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements"05
- "The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

as deep and high as it might be possible? Thank God, it proved worthwhile to attempt it with His aid!

France is not a country of record productivity. Its specialty is quality products, and its calling is to minister to a whole world demand for luxuries. That national bent led our church to pay as much attention to its training duties as to its rescuing obligations. Whilst our vision of what a Christian should be ever grew more exacting, we were inexpressibly cheered by a rather fine realization in the life of our beloved converts. In that way, our evangelization burden became theirs. Soon, their teaching gifts provided for that kind of need. Zeal increased, along with knowledge and efficiency. Besides and without a single exception in spite of two wars, annual contributions unceasingly increased in the most spontaneous and unsolicited way. Thus, without any outside support, provision was made for our workers. And one out of four of these has, for over a decade, been gladly lent to our other F.B.M. fields.

A Church Home Purchased

The latest experience of our happy church life is just being unexpectedly enjoyed. We had ever had to be satisfied with rented premises. We originally occupied three large dirty shops, which we first merged into two, and finally into one. Practically all the work involved therein was done at no cost whatever, by a clever and devoted membership. Yet, many repairs and improvements had to be regretfully given up, through lack of security of tenure.

Sentimental consideration had led our kind landlady to resist for some thirty years our persistent offer to buy a property where she was born. Yet, we could never afford to build elsewhere, all our time and vitality being absorbed by the patient upbuilding of the real "church". However, we constantly yearned for the final privilege of leaving that precious jewel in an appropriate casket.

And now, toward the evening of our little task, there arose a strange surprise. We were driven to report to the owner our discovery of the urgency of entirely rebuilding the vast roofing of the whole place, in order to prevent a most dangerous disaster. Finding herself unable to afford that heavy expense, our landlady became approachable to our renewed proposals. So that we have just bought and paid for our familiar, commodious and well-located church home. And now, God-given contractors are busy reconstructing a safe roof and renovating the whole plant. Since we had already the most convenient Gospel place in our city, the new one will remain so, and much more. Our rejoicing people are helping in every possible way and we venture to believe that, somehow, the financial and technical problems involved will prove entirely commensurate with their fine spirit of stewardship. And we expect that everything will be ready for a blessed use towards the end of September.

Thus, our French Bible Mission churches, which formerly were all housed in old rented or mortgaged places, are one by one getting entire possession of convenient equipment of their own, and that, most generally at their sole expense.

As we are looking behind, which is the best way to straighten our forward look, we find that our particular vocation has simply been to endeavour to carefully fulfil each next duty facing us. Chains of obligations have thus linked for us what was forbidden to long-distance planning. In that divine guidance of our clumsy steps, we have learned that the commonplace itself does reasonably pay.

SEMINARY ACTIVITIES

First Issue of *The Seminarian*

THE first issue of the students' paper, *The Seminarian*, is now off the press. The front page photograph adds much to the paper's fine appearance, and especially valuable for all friends of our work are the reports from students of their activities during the summer on various fields where they served. There is also a fine article from Rev. John Knight, one of our earliest graduates, who has been serving faithfully in Jamaica with evident fruitfulness since 1929.

Once Again, Hearty Thanks!

Kind friends from various churches have once more made us their debtors by generous gifts of foodstuffs for the Student Dining Room. One truck from a suburban church came loaded down with good things. Our heartiest thanks to all!

Graduate Takes Chapel Service

It is the custom for one of the graduates to take charge of the chapel service after our annual meeting. This year we were happy to have a return visit from Rev. B. Oatley-Willis, Pastor of the Essex Church. He gave us a fine word out of the Scripture and of his own recent experience on the necessity of separation. We hope to have other former students speak at chapel services this week also.

Progress in the North

It is always especially encouraging to meet pastors who have once been students in these classes and to know that the blessing of the Lord is resting upon their efforts. Time would fail us to tell of those whom we met and rejoiced with during the past week of our conference. It was a particular joy, however, to hear from Pastor George Stephens of North Bay that six had been baptized in the French Church at Lavigne, only the week before our meetings. We trust this will be the first-fruits of a rich harvest in that Gateway of the North.

—W.S.W.

NOT PHILOSOPHY, BUT A PERSON

If man's religious wants are to be answered, his creed must speak, not merely to his intelligence, but to his heart and will. He cannot really rest upon the most unimpeachable abstractions. He needs something warmer than the truest philosophy. He yearns to come in contact with a heart; and no religion therefore can really satisfy him which does not at least lead him to know and love a person. An unseen Friend, who will purify, and teach, and check, and lead, and sustain him:—this is his great necessity. And this want, this last but deepest want of man's religious life, Christianity has satisfied. "As humanity, "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," pleads with the Power Whom it feels but cannot see—"Shew Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee" — lo! the heavens drop down from above, and the skies pour forth righteousness. And One fairer than the children of men presents Himself to all the centuries and countries of the world with the gracious bidding, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

—H. P. LIDDON.

BOOK REVIEW

DWIGHT L. MOODY, *Volume I, Great Pulpit Masters*. Fleming H. Revell, New York. Price in U.S.A., \$2.25.

The sermons of Moody may be looked down upon by supercilious persons who think of him as a plain man who spoke in unadorned language to men of like passions concerning sin and salvation in order to urge them to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour. But those who remember the impact that his preaching made upon his contemporaries in the last century will take up this volume of sermons with a deep interest to discover for themselves, so far as the printed page can give it, the secret of his power with men. In his Yale Lectures on Preaching, R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, who was neither uncultivated nor uncouth, gave this piece of advice to young preachers: "The sermons which have been preached in great revivals deserve special study. If they did their work, you may take it for granted that there is much to be learnt from them. For the practical ends of your ministry you may find it far more profitable to study the sermons of the late Mr. Finney, and to listen to my friend Mr. Moody, than to spend your strength on the preachers that were admired by the Court of Louis-XIV."

The brief introduction by Charles R. Erdman to this volume informs us that "these sermons have not been revised or edited. Here we have the original, the real Moody. This was the language he used." Few will read these sermons to improve their mastery of English, or to acquire a pulpit style, or even to learn theology. Yet there is theology here, for the great truths of the Gospel are made simple in order that those outside of Christ may know the way. The English language is used with great effectiveness, judged by actual results, to persuade men to make the great decision *now*: that word echoes and reechoes with pressing urgency through every message and on every page. The simplicity and warmth of these messages will not deceive those who know what preaching really is to disdain them on that account.—W.S.W.

TO THE CHOIR OF LLANGRYFFYTH

(OR WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN)

"O choir of Llangryffyth, your office high
Is to 'teach and admonish,' and edify—
To wield an influence deep and strong,
The heart to touch and the soul to raise,
In God's own temple to lift the song,
To bring a tribute of holy praise
Before the Lord, who entrusts to you
His gift of music, so high and true!
Be it your preacher's words to meet,
He choosing wisely, ye singing sweet
Of the bright inheritance kept above,
Of the Living Water, the Fount of Love.
May He who gave you voice and skill
So tune your hearts that ye may indeed
Your ministry of song fulfil,
And 'with understanding' His praises lead.

"P.S.—It might be well if the whole congregation
Could join in the Canticles' grand adoration,
But the few that try at your speed, you will find,
Are speedily distanced and left behind.
It might be well for the Kyrie to bear
Some slight resemblance to penitent prayer;
Not tripping it off in cheerful repeat
To a pretty tune with a lively beat.
It might be as well in the hymns if we could
Take breath where the writers intended we should,
Not hunting and racing the sense to death
By aiming at singing a verse in a breath."

—FRANCIS RIDLEY HAVERGAL

THE PATH TO THE HIGHER LIFE

Brethren here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus ever said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the kingdom, and of sitting on His right hand and His left. Seek not, ask not for exaltation; that is God's work. Look to it that you abase and humble yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of servant; that is your work; let that be your one purpose and prayer. God is faithful. Just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. He that humbleth himself—that must be our one care—shall be exalted; that is God's care; by His mighty power and in His great love He will do it.

—ANDREW MURRAY

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 15 Fourth Quarter Lesson 5 October 29, 1950

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

THE VISION CONCERNING THE CANDLESTICK

Lesson Text: Zechariah 4.

Golden Text: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zech. 4:6.

Zechariah, the prophet of the Lord, was Divinely prepared by a series of visions for the difficult mission which he had been called upon to fulfil; namely, to inspire leaders and people to rebuild the temple. God never sends us to warfare at our own charges; the heavenly Commander arranges that His soldiers and messengers are fully equipped for carrying out His commandments (2 Tim. 2:1).

As a prelude to this new Divine vision, the angel or messenger of the Lord awakened the prophet, as it were, out of his sleep. Revival must ever precede revelation; only when we are quickened by the Holy Spirit can we receive knowledge of spiritual truths (Psa. 119:37, 107, 108; Eph. 5:14). The Lord Himself must open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law (Psa. 119:18).

The seven-branched candlestick or lampstand resembled in material and general appearance the golden candlestick of the tabernacle (Exod. 35:31-40; Lev. 24:1-4). It consisted of a pedestal with an upright shaft and three arms or branches on each side. Each of the seven arms was evidently surmounted by a bowl for the oil and burning wick. In the candlestick which Zechariah saw the decorations were not so elaborate, and there was just one large bowl covering all the branches, the fountain of supply of oil for the lamp. On either side of the candlestick was an olive tree, which supplied the golden oil through the golden pipes for the light.

Zechariah was first shown his own ignorance; he realized that of himself he could not understand the significance of the vision. Only those who humbly acknowledge their helplessness will receive a knowledge of Divine truth (Psa. 111:10; Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:19, 27; 2:8).

The candlestick of the tabernacle had been situated on the south side of the holy place, thus shedding light upon the table of shewbread, which was on the north side. The shewbread or "bread of the face" represented Christ, the Bread sent down from heaven to make possible reconciliation, and fellowship, and to provide sustenance (John 6:33; 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19; 1 John 1:3).

Light is symbolic of testimony (Matt. 5:14), and God had ordained that the Jews should give testimony to the nations concerning Him. In this vision the candlestick, which was one of the main articles of furniture in the tabernacle, stood for the temple which was being rebuilt. The temple was to be the habitation of God, the place where His honour dwelt (Psa. 26:8), and would be a constant testimony to the living God for all the people who beheld it. Similarly, the Church of God collectively (Eph. 2:19-22; Rev. 1:12, 13; 2:1, 5), and

each Christian individually (Matt. 5:15, 16; Phil. 2:15) should witness to the presence and power of the Lord.

How could this renewed temple, the Church and the Christian maintain a consistent testimony before the world? How could they keep the light burning? The lampstand could hold the light aloft, but the light must be supplied by the One Who walks among the lampstands; God the Holy Spirit must provide the light (John 8:12; Eph. 5:8).

At the time of the vision the children of Israel were experiencing intense opposition in their efforts to rebuild the temple (Ezra 4:23, 24). Zechariah was to inform Zerubbabel, the leader, that these difficulties would be overcome, not by means of great armies or by the power of human persuasion and influence (Dan. 2:34; Hagg. 2:21-23), but by the Holy Spirit of God (Hagg. 2:5).

Mountains stand for hardships, difficulties and opposition which may beset our path (v. 7; Jer. 51:25; Matt. 21:21, 22). The angel of the Lord addresses the metaphorical mountain facing Zerubbabel as "Who", indicating that the opposition it represented was personal (Ezra 4:1, 5, 7, 23; Zech. 3:1). It was also great. But that opposition would be completely overcome by Zerubbabel; the mountain would become a plain, along which he might easily travel (Isa. 40:4; 49:11). Furthermore, the prince of Israel would have the privilege of placing the headstone upon the temple, to the accompaniment of shoutings of joy (Psa. 118:22-24; Ezra 6:13-22). All men would be compelled to acknowledge that it was by grace alone that the temple stood complete.

Although the primary application of the vision to Zerubbabel and the temple of the restoration is clearly indicated in the context, surely it speaks also of the Christ Whom Zerubbabel, as the royal prince of Judah, prefigured. Our Saviour would overcome all opposition (Lk. 3:5), and would Himself be the Headstone of the corner (Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6), as well as the living Temple, the Dwelling-Place of God (John 1:14, 2:20, 21). Then, too, by the grace of God the Church, His temple, will be finally completed (Eph. 2:1-10; 4:13-16) and will be presented to the Father amid great rejoicing (Eph. 5:25-27).

It is not always the case that one shall sow and another shall reap (John 4:36-38). Sometimes even on earth, and certainly always in heaven, the one who sows in sorrow may himself reap in joy (Psa. 126:6). Zerubbabel, the one who had commenced the work of rebuilding the temple, and had carried on amid loss, sorrow, opposition and disappointment, would be given the privilege of completing the task (Ezra 3:10, 11). Our Zerubbabel will bring to fulfilment the work which He has begun in our souls (Psa. 57:2; 138:8; Phil. 1:6).

The final success of the work would silence all critics; they would know that the Lord had undertaken for the one whom He had sent. So will the ultimate triumph of the Christian leader prove to his opponents that God is on the side of those who trust in Him and do His bidding (1 Kings 18:36; Psa. 40:14, 15; 109:22-27). To the outward eye His work may seem small, weak and insignificant (Judg. 7:7; 1 Sam. 14:6; 2 Chron. 14:11; Hagg. 2:3), and men may despise his feeble efforts (1 Sam. 17:28, 42-44), but the plummet in his hand as a sign of his activity would be reinforced by the mighty workings of the seven-fold Spirit of God (Isa. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; Rev. 4:5), Who sees and knows all that is taking place (2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 3:9). Human weakness and apparent failure would issue in marvellous success through the strength of the Lord (Hos. 1:7; 2 Cor. 12:9, 10; Heb. 11:34).

The living olive branches which stood one on either side of the candlestick, ensuring a continuous supply of oil for the light, represent "the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of all the earth." Primarily these were Zerubbabel and Joshua, who stood ready to serve the Lord, and then possibly all true witnesses who are channels of His grace (Rev. 11:3:4).—Christ our Saviour as King and Priest stands before God. It is He Who would supply the children of Israel with the oil of His Spirit to enable them to maintain their testimony before the world (Isa. 63:11; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:4). He will also give His Holy Spirit in perennial flow to His Church and to His faithful servants in this age (John 7:37-39).

Thus was Zerubbabel encouraged in the midst of all the disheartening difficulties which beset him in the work of God. So, too, may we all receive new inspiration and strength for our tasks.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Oct. 23—The Golden Candlestick	Exod. 37:17-24.
Oct. 24—Christ among the Candlesticks	Rev. 2:1-7.
Oct. 25—The Headstone of the Corner	1 Pet. 2:1-10.
Oct. 26—Victory through Weakness	1 Cor. 1.
Oct. 27—The Power of the Spirit	1 Cor. 2.
Oct. 28—The Earthly Temple Completed	Ezra 6.
Oct. 29—The Spiritual Temple Completed	Eph. 2.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

God make my life a little light. The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin. Ho, reapers in the whitened harvest! Holy Spirit, faithful Guide! Sowing in the morning. To the work! to the work!

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