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Christmas—Again

MARRIAGE, as an institution, as an elemental social necessity, is as old as Eden; and is therefore a mere hackneyism, a commonplace in a commonplace social order. But ask any young bride and groom if there is anything commonplace about their wedding! In other words, marriage as an institution may be common and uninteresting: as an experience it becomes a thrilling romance.

Thus life is full of objective commonplaces. They acquire interest and importance only as they are translated into personal experiences.

This is true of Christmas. To the little child it is new, and is invested with an indescribable fascination. He may know but little about it historically, but prophetically it thrills him with a sleepless wonder. The passing years, increased burdens, and ever-multiplying sorrows and bereavements, inevitably wrap the soul about betimes with a spirit of heaviness, and with a loneliness which is all the more poignant because the soul sits in an aching silence that is thronged with haunting memories. Hence we say that Christmas is scarcely as welcome as once it was. We greet it with respect, but feel some measure of relief when the once-so-merry-season is again behind us.

Yet there must be a way of redeeming the commonplace. There must be a way of raising up children unto Abraham, even from cold and lifeless stones. No sane man can become enthusiastic about an historical event millenniums away. Even the graves of people once greatly beloved sometimes wear an aspect of age, if not of neglect. The greatest events have a way of receding into the distance, until, like a ship outward bound, they drop out of sight beyond the horizon.

Is there any way of keeping the Christmas bells perpetually ringing, and the Christmas choirs always singing their pastoral hallelujahs to poor shepherds in the fields? Is there any way of investing things that are good, and true, and pure, and honest, and lovely, with immortality? Must all our roses last only a few days? Must the treasures of life be broken and neglected like children's toys a week after Christmas?

Under the British flag for more than half a century the twenty-fourth of May was observed as the Queen's birthday, and when the "good Queen" had passed to the great beyond it was thought to perpetuate her mem-

ory by still observing the day. But it has degenerated into a mere holiday. We call it Empire Day, and the "good Queen" is all but forgotten—because she is dead! You cannot long keep the birthdays of dead men.

But in a few days it will be Christmas, and the world will greet it once more with ringing bells and singing choirs, and the laughter of millions of happy little children. Spring up, O Well! Ah, here is a Fountain! Here is a River perennially flowing! Here is a Birthday to be held in everlasting remembrance; for the Child that was born so long ago still lives! Hallelujah!

But the charm of Christmas is not the lovely decorations, nor the bountifully provisioned larder; nor is it altogether the visit of Santa Claus, nor the tree he leaves behind him dazzling with silver and gold and pretty lights—and oh, such wondrous gifts! Christmas is the home season. Christmas is a time for family reunions. Christmas is the season when we try to make the family circle as complete as possible. But, ah me, when Death has rudely broken it, it does but the more emphasize the absence of those we loved.

Shall Christmas pass? Shall we let it die, those of us who can have no Christmas in the way in which we once so rapturously enjoyed it? Ah no! The Star is still shining. The Babe may still be found. Like the wise men of ancient time we may still worship. And now we may understand more clearly than they the reason for the poverty and the squalor of His earthly surroundings; for we have known the Child Jesus as a Man, we have seen Him on the cross. And if the manger is empty, so is the grave! And Faith discerns a shining pathway where angels wait to minister to weary but eager pilgrims who declare plainly that they seek a city, and that they are hurrying on to keep Christmas at home.

Yes, some day we shall be at home. It is no figment of the imagination. Let no man dare to tell us we have followed cunningly devised fables. In the Father's house there are many mansions. He is expecting us home. And all things will be ready when we arrive. When at last we reach the Golden City, what inexpressible gladness we shall feel! What joys immortal will possess us when we find our loved and lost waiting, with the Saviour Who redeemed them and us, to bid us welcome to the city where they keep Christmas all the year round, because they have no need of the sun, nor of the moon,

nor of the stars to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

By way of the Manger, the Cross, the Empty Grave, and the Shining Track to the gates of pearl, let us all go home for Christmas.

A WORD TO ALL GOSPEL WITNESS SUBSCRIBERS

SOME time ago we sent a letter to all the members of Jarvis Street Church, suggesting that each should endeavour to secure five new subscribers for THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Many members have already done this, and others are still working at it.

While the Editor has always strongly objected to the use of his portrait in this paper, and in doing so, he lays no claim to unusual modesty; but it has seemed to him that the majority of his readers would enjoy the paper better if they had no idea what the Editor looks like! But we have observed that the most ordinary people in the world are often very fond of having their portrait taken, and apparently there is what the newspaper men call a bit of "human interest" in it, for the reason that portraits are so often used for advertising purposes.

With this in view, independently of the Editor's judgment, fine copies of the Karsh portrait, printed on superfine paper, have been printed; and these GOSPEL WITNESS promoters added a postscript to the effect that if anyone would send in five new subscriptions he or she would receive, if requested, the Editor's autographed photograph, suitable for framing. That is, of course, as suitable as anything representing the Editor could be!

However, we submit, and make the same offer to all our GOSPEL WITNESS subscribers. It will be easy for any one of our subscribers, if he or she would really undertake the matter seriously, to secure other new subscriptions, four or five. Will you not try it?

In offering THE GOSPEL WITNESS to your friends you may tell them that we will send either of the Blakeney books: "POPERY IN ITS SOCIAL ASPECT" or "ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINES EXAMINED" (over 300 pages in each); books which would sell from \$1.50 to \$2.00 each in England. Either of these books will be given, without charge, as a premium to every new subscriber; and to anyone who wants both books, the second one will be given for an additional 50 cents.

Or, instead of this premium, a volume of addresses entitled, "THE PRODIGAL AND HIS BROTHER" will be given as a premium with each new subscription. But please remember this is for NEW subscriptions only.

We have invested in these books as one way of advertising THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and endeavouring to secure new subscribers.

This book of 132 pages, entitled, "THE PRODIGAL AND HIS BROTHER" is in its fifth edition. It was published under the title, "THE ADVENTURES OF A MODERN YOUNG MAN", and four large editions were sold. Notwithstanding we found a great many people who had no idea, without seeing it, what the book contained; and so we have given it a new title, "THE PRODIGAL AND HIS BROTHER — OR THE ADVENTURES OF A MODERN YOUNG MAN". It contains a series of sermons (and we may whisper this: we have known of many ministers who found in it a useful suggestion for a series of sermons).

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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

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Here are the Chapter Headings:

How He Became Independently Rich
A Young Man's Trip Abroad
The Use a Young Man Made of His Fortune
A Young Man's Experience in a Foreign Country
Getting Homesick
Starting for Home
There's No Place Like Home
The Prodigal's Brother

The price of the book, if bought separately, will be \$1.00; but it will cost nothing as a premium for a new subscription to THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

When sending in new subscriptions, please let us know to whom they are to be acknowledged.

THE SPECIAL WESTERN EDITION

AS THE Christmas and New Year's seasons are so nearly upon us, we have decided that it would be better to postpone the special edition until some time in January, when people are less preoccupied.

We are most grateful to our Western subscribers, many of whom have sent us the names of persons to whom they would like us to send that particular issue. In the aggregate we have received many hundreds of names. We shall appreciate it if other subscribers will also send us lists.

We are, of course, aware that the Separate School principle was written into the Constitution of Saskatchewan and Alberta, when they were "erected", about 1905 or 1906. We know a great deal about it, because we fought it vigorously when in London; when the Autonomy Bills were before the House of Commons in Sir Wilfred Laurier's time; but what we are concerned about is the extension of these things, and that is why we desire to explain the evil of Separate Schools, as we shall do in our Special Western Edition.

The Angels' Christmas Music

(A Christmas Message)

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, on a Christmas Morning
(Stenographically Reported)

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."—Luke 2:15.

THE Christmas story is an historic fact. It is historically true that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king. And yet, in principle, it is not to be shut up to a particular point of time, nor to any geographical location. While the truth is historically based, it is a truth that is independent of time and place. Coming into this realm we deal with matters of eternity, and think of One Who had really neither beginning of days nor end of life.

I.

The text I have read to you is a record of A DIVINE REVELATION. The angels came from heaven to tell benighted men something they could not discover for themselves. The first Christmas present was securely hidden, and no man could ever have found its hiding place had it not been divinely disclosed. That principle lies at the basis of all understanding of spiritual truth: it is not by any means discoverable to the natural man. No man can find Jesus of himself.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God." No man ever finds his way to Christ until an angel has discovered him, until the Holy Spirit, by some means, reveals the truth to him. It was so in the experience of Mary, and of Joseph, and of Elizabeth. The wise men said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They enquired of that which was written, and, wise as they were, they were groping their way toward Christ. But they could never have found Him without the Star, and the written Word, and the goings of God upon their own spirits, to teach them the meaning of the Book.

It would simplify matters for us all if we could remember that there is a Star which no astronomer's telescope can discover; that there are matters of reality beyond the scope of science, and altogether beyond the reach of the human intellect. Only as God is pleased to visit us, and to withdraw the veil, and to make known to us His purposes of grace, can we see the Child, or in reality, worship Him.

Now this divine visitation came to men of very humble rank, and while they were engaged in their daily tasks.

What a blessing it is that the riches of divine grace are not reserved for a few; that God does not visit merely those of high degree, or those who occupy exalted positions among their fellows! There are things which are "hidden" from the wise and prudent, which are revealed

unto "babes" because it seems good in His sight. And it is possible for every one of us, howsoever humble our occupation, however mean the tasks to which much of our time must be devoted, however limited our mental capacities for the understanding of ordinary things,—it is possible for us all to be visited by the angels. And they are skilled teachers; they will ever be found to be competent guides; and they know how to make the path that leads to Bethlehem plain to the simplest understanding.

It is possible for us to find a place of worship in the fields, while we are keeping our flocks. It is possible that the kitchen, or the workshop, or the office, may become to any one a holy temple where the angels minister the things of God, as truly as Jacob when he laid his head upon a stone for a pillow saw heaven open and a ladder ascending from earth to heaven, with angel messengers ascending and descending; it is possible for us in all relationships of life, and in all legitimate occupations, to find God near to us, and to live in the experience of a revelation from the skies.

And then look at the content of that revelation. God always comes to men in mercy. The very fact that God speaks at all is an indication of His loving kindness. Had He not desired to do us good, He had never come to us.

Sometimes the postman—in fact not infrequently—the postman brings me a great pile of letters. I open them, and sometimes say, "What shall I find within this package of envelopes to-day? How many troubled hearts here? How many people seeking help? How many souls in sorrow?" Well, that is our privilege, to share the grief of others. But occasionally it is delightful to open a letter and find that it is full of good tidings, a message of cheer.

I wonder what is the content of God's revelation? What parcel did He leave on our doorstep? What news did He send us by the angel postman? What was in the letter? Oh, good tidings, but such good tidings as the world had never heard before nor since, save only as its message has been repeated,—a message of a Saviour, a message of a King, and of a kingdom from which has passed all sin, and sorrow; from which pain, and tears, and death itself, are to be forever banished; of which we are to be partakers; of whose riches we are ourselves the heirs. Oh what good tidings there are in the heavenly message brought to us by the angels at this Christmas season!

And then I would like to remind you that *Heaven's revelations are always set to music*; for scarcely had the angel uttered his marvellous message when suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host

praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." That is the message of Christmas. The world's sublimest music finds its inspiration in the Holy Child; for did He not come in order that He might attune a discordant world to the will of God, and to all the harmonies, and all the loveliness of heaven.

You have sometimes turned the little button of your radio when silence reigned, and suddenly your room was flooded with music, because the air was full of it. And if only you could be properly attuned to it, it would fall upon your ears, and fill your soul with delight. What is that passage in Tennyson—it just comes to me at the moment—where life's discord is described in these words:

"But where the heart is full of din,
And doubt before the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates
And hear the household jar within."

The Master of all music comes and stands without, and brings all heaven's harmonies within reach of the ears of our souls, that we may be enraptured with it. And very often He hears but the household jar, the crash of the human will with the divine, the discord of a life that is out of tune with God. But oh, when we are attuned, when the message has been received, and the whole life has been brought into agreement with its heavenly purpose, suddenly, as though from out of the air, coming down the skies, the very music of heaven's light shines; and the angel is not alone: he is accompanied by heavenly choirs singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will unto men."

What I want to make clear to you, dear friends, is this, that just outside there, right within reach,

"Closer to you than breathing, nearer than hands
and feet"

is all the light, and life, and music of heaven, if only the revelation be received and acted upon. You will never find it for yourself. You will never discover it, however you strain your ears, or seek to discipline the vision of the soul; until God stoops and the angels come, and heaven touches earth, we can never learn the true meaning of Christmas as did the shepherds in the long ago.

II.

But let me remind you that this divine revelation inspired A HUMAN RESOLUTION, for the shepherds said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem". When did they say it? "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven!" Do the angels go away? Do they leave us once again in the darkness, with nothing but the rugged hills about, the dewy grass beneath, and all the chilliness and loneliness of the midnight hour. Are we just visited occasionally by the angels, and then do they leave us? Well, the revelations of God are always more than a mere rhapsody. The religion of Christ is something vastly more than a mere emotional appeal, than a dream, more than a reverie, a speculation. We have our emotional moments; we have our special heavenly visitations. But when that high hour was past, and when the music had died away, and the glory had departed, and the darkness and silence of night came down again, what was there left? Ah, what was there left? What lies beneath our emotionalism? What is back of all our heavenly breathings, our aspirations, divinely inspired, when the angels have gone away from us into

heaven, when perhaps Sunday is past, or the companionship of some particularly spiritual man or woman is for the moment ended, and we are left in the fields again face to face with the unheroic and unpoetic and unmusical, and unattractive things of life—with only sheep? Oh, yes, I know what you say. Someone says, "Oh yes, Mr. Preacher, but I wish you had to work where I work." Or some woman says, "What about the dishpans, and all the labour of the kitchen?" When the choir have ceased their singing, and all the hallelujahs have died away, and you have to put on an apron and get down to the commonplace facts of life, what then?

What shall I say?—I had almost said these emotional experiences, these special visitations, leave us with a holy residue of fact. There is something to see. What was the revelation? Something had happened; Somebody had come. And the shepherds said, "Let us go and see, let us put to the proof this divine disclosure, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

My dear friends, the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea is not dependent upon a passing mood of yours; it is not dependent upon any emotional changes, any sort of variation in spiritual temperature. Though the angels have gone away into heaven, Jesus abides: He is here. It is forever true that the Son of God is come. Then you had better go and see Him; you had better add to the revelation your own determination, "I will find out what is in it; I will get to the bottom of this!" In other words, The parcel is there; you had better unwrap it, and find out what is inside.

Oh, would it not be foolish for anybody at this Christmas time, receiving some communication from friends, to say "I am glad they remembered me; I am glad they wrote me or remembered me with a little gift just for the sake of knowing I am not forgotten. Of course, I do not know what they have sent; I do not know what they have given me. I only know they have sent something." Nobody would be so foolish as that. You will open it and say, "I am going to find out what this means." That is what the shepherds did. They said, "We will go even unto Bethlehem, and we will see this thing, and we will find out what is the residue of fact: what is there that abides in the Christmas revelation."

Well, dear friends, have you done that? "Oh but," you say, "we cannot go to Bethlehem!" No. A great many people I have heard say, "I should like to go to Palestine; I should like to see the city where Jesus was born." Perhaps I shall surprise you by saying that I have less desire to see Palestine than any other part of the earth. I am not particularly anxious to see it. You say, "Why?" Oh, Jesus is more than Palestine, and I can find Him in Toronto. I do not care anything about the manger, or the geography of it. It is the spiritual reality of it, that Jesus has come: that is the thing I am concerned about. No, I need not go to Bethlehem literally. Are you not glad you do not need to go? Oh, if you had to buy a ticket to Bethlehem to be a Christian, what would you not do? But Bethlehem is here: we have not to go into the heavens to bring Him down, nor into the depths to bring Him again from the dead, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

If some man here this morning should say, "I have been hearing about Christ all my life; I have been hearing the story of His incarnation, and of His life, and death, and resurrection, all my life. Sometimes I have imagined that my soul caught just a strain of the heavenly music; sometimes I have felt as though Heaven had come very near to me. And then the angels have gone away into heaven again, and here I am just doing the same old thing, alone in the darkness with no heavenly accompaniment." Will you not say, "I will go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing; I will personally investigate, and I will know all that a poor sinner may know about the One Who was born a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord"?

What was their resolution? *To understand the meaning of that which God had said unto them.* That is the gospel. Here is the package. This is the record that God has given us of His Son. Perhaps somebody gave you a Bible this Christmas time. Politely you said, "Thank you". Will you say, "I will go and I will understand what is made known; I will explore the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of the love of God that is manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord"?

It is useless to sing about Christmas; it is of no use to say it is a sweet story, if we do not find our way to Christ.

III.

Well, what was THE RESULT OF IT? They came to Bethlehem, and they found there Joseph and Mary, and they found the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. In other words, they found exactly what God told them they would find. The wise men saw the star, and they followed the star, and it came and stood over the place where the young Child was; and following the star they came to worship Him. The shepherds heard the heavenly messengers with all their music, and they said, "We will go where they told us to go," And, obeying the word, they found Christ. And so will you. You will find Him. You do not need to leave your pew.

Sunday night I referred you to that word of Mary after the angel had brought her the promise. And then when Mary came to Elizabeth, Elizabeth spoke to her as one who had believed. Let me read it to you: "And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Just believe Him, and you shall find Him; and finding Him you shall find in Him all that you desire on earth, and all that you can need in heaven.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou art still with us. We bless Thee that it is still possible to come where Thou art. And though we do not see Thee with these natural eyes, nor find Thee, as did the shepherds, as a Babe lying in a manger, yet Thou art very real to us, and we have seen Thee, beyond all peradventure, and we have known, and we do know that unto us is born this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. May He become increasingly precious to every one who knows Him. And if there are any here who have never come to Bethlehem by faith, and have never worshipped God in Christ, may such an one come to-day and confess Jesus as Lord, for Thy name's sake we ask it. Amen.

"HE NEVER HAD AN ENEMY!"

I have heard it said of men that they died and had not an enemy. Well, they ought to have died a great while before! For a man that is true, a man that knows how, with holy horror, to rebuke wickedness, finds enough of it to do in this world. Has a man lived forty or fifty years, and has he never rebuked a wicked man enough to make that man hate him, so that you can put on his tomb, "He has not left an enemy"? Why, I could put that on a cabbage-field! What kind of patriot and soldier would he be, who, coming out of the three drenched days of Gettysburg, should be able to go home and say, "I never hurt anybody!" For what were you enlisted? for what were you sent there? Did not God call you into his army? and are you not sworn to hate the Lord's enemies, and make them yours? And yet, you go through the whole of your life, and at last die and leave fools behind you to say, "He never had an enemy!"

—HENRY WARD BEECHER

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don't you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You might succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup.
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt—
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
—It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

—Anon.

We shall preach to no purpose unless we have a purpose in preaching. Archbishop Whately said of some preacher that "he aimed at nothing, and hit it."

—R. W. DALE

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. F. SHIELDS

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The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTURE FROM BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

THIRTY-ONE years ago we first publicly called attention to the fact that McMaster University was headed for "the far country". We believed at that time that there were influences at work in the University that would alienate it from the strictly biblical position on which it was founded; and that the tendencies already apparent in its teaching staff and governing body would ultimately lead to its complete secularization.

But at that time in McMaster University itself, both on the Faculty, on the Board of Governors, and in the Senate, there was "a remnant according to the election of grace".

The only answer ever given to our charges was, "Dr. Shields is a liar".

Things waxed worse and worse; and at length Professor Marshall was appointed to the staff. When his theological position was challenged, a multitude came to his defence.

We have no mind to rehearse the conflicts of those years. But as we write, we have a very vivid recollection of a meeting of the Senate, held in the Faculty Room of the old McMaster University on Bloor Street. The particular business before the meeting was the consideration of the proposal to move the University to Hamilton; and we recall that some member of the Senate argued, among other advantages, that it would be likely to receive considerable support from the city.

The late Dean J. H. Farmer was at that meeting, and to this suggestion he responded, in a very vigorous and somewhat heated address. He most emphatically declared his Baptist position, and his strict adherence to the historic Baptist principle of the complete separation of Church and State; and that the acceptance of State aid; that is, of public money in any way, for the support of McMaster University, would be a complete betrayal of the principles underlying its foundation; and would meet with his utmost opposition.

Dr. Farmer never agreed with our protest against McMaster's doctrinal defection, first in I. G. Matthews, and later in L. H. Marshall; but we always believed that Dr. Farmer was, personally, sound. He was, however, so devoted to McMaster University, that, unconsciously to himself, he had allowed the University to become almost an obsession, and he would not tolerate any criticism of the University's orthodoxy. Whatever he may have really believed at that point, he practised principles of policy and expediency. But in the matter of State aid he was uncompromising.

What would Dr. Farmer say to-day, if he were living? We feel very sure, in our own mind, that he would say, to himself, if not to others, "After all, Dr. Shields was right."

Where is McMaster University now? Well established in "the far country". It has in fact, taken out citizenship papers for itself in "the far country". It never intends to come home again. It has had the Legislature completely change its Constitution, and Charter; and, by a piece of very subtle trickery, which there was no one shrewd enough, and strong enough, and logical enough in the Convention, to oppose, it secured consent to the establishment of an Affiliated College of Pure Science, that should be entirely free from the control of the Baptist Denomination.

Thus Senator McMaster's legacy has been looted, and used for the establishment of a purely secular institution.

We should have offered no objection if McMaster had had the decency, and honesty, to surrender the McMaster Legacy, and thereafter seek State aid as a purely civic and secular institution. Our objection is to their having taken the McMaster Legacy, and prostituted it to a purpose quite alien to Senator McMaster's design. They are living up to what an alumnus of the Institution remarked to us, with full approval, "We refuse to be ruled by a dead hand."

Why do we write thus, now? Simply to report that McMaster University applied to the City of Hamilton for a grant of one quarter of a million dollars. A Money By-law was submitted to the electors at the recent Hamilton election, and by vote of the people, it was defeated. Even the natives of "the far country" had more sense, and principle, than some who had once lived in the Father's House.

To say that the money was asked for a Hamilton College of Pure Science, would be to resort to a piece of rank hypocrisy. The College derives its academic authority from the Charter that was long ago given for the establishment of a Christian University, an integral part of which was to be a Baptist Theological College or Department.

There are many who recognize the change that has come over McMaster now. Between them and this Editor the only difference is, we saw and protested against its beginnings, thirty-one years ago.

So be it! Instead of saying, "We told you so," with greater politeness, we remark: "Wisdom is justified of her children."

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The following letter explains itself. Anyone able to render such assistance as is requested please write Rev. Wm. Sturhahn, Immigration Secretary.

Baptist World Alliance Immigration,
404B McIntyre Block,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
November 24, 1950

Dr. T. T. Shields,
130 Gerrard St. E.
TORONTO, Ont.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Permit me to introduce myself as the Immigration Secretary for the immigration of Baptists, appointed by the Baptist World Alliance. It is estimated that we have 8,000 fellow Baptists of German ethnic origin (Volksdeutsche) from Eastern European countries in Germany, without help and without hope. Many of them live in terrible fear of inhuman reprisals by Communism from which they have recently escaped. We would like to help them to come into Canada where they will again enjoy security and freedom. The Baptist World Alliance has placed a substantial amount of money at our disposal for the transportation of these people, but it is up to us to find somebody who will offer employment and housing. We should like to place the immigrants in Baptist constituencies wherever we can because many of them are devoted Christians to their church and to their Lord.

It occurred to me that there might be possibilities to place a number of domestic workers in some homes of your congregation. The procedure to secure such domestics is very simple. On the enclosed sample of an application form you will see that only a minimum of information is required. Realizing that you are a very busy man, I would appreciate nevertheless if you would find someone in your congregation who would donate some time and effort to this cause, and whom we might get in touch with.

Yours in the Service of Christ,

WILLIAM STURHAHN,
Secr., B.W.A. Immigration.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Formula for Perennial Gladness

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 10th, 1950

(Electrically Recorded)

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—Heb. 1:8-9.

THE thesis of this Epistle to the Hebrews, briefly stated, is that in all things Christ is pre-eminent. He is magnified here as the Ultimate of Divine revelation: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." He is described here as the "heir of all things", the possessor, the proprietor of all things that are. "By whom also he made the worlds:" the glory of the Creator is His. He is described as the "express image" of the Father's person, "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Thus the writer, by inspiration of the Spirit of God, contrasts the angels with the Son, magnifying the Lord Jesus as being so much better than the angels. In the text I have announced He is declared to be God manifest in the flesh.

We must, dear friends, train ourselves to entertain great thoughts of Jesus Christ. We should find any word which minimizes Him, that robs Him of the glory of pre-eminence, utterly distasteful to our souls. I hope we have learned to say with the Psalmist, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." The all-important thing to us this evening is that by faith we should behold Jesus Christ, and if possible, see Him a little more clearly than we have ever seen Him before. These are familiar verses which we quote often; let us see if we can, by the aid of the Spirit, unlock some of their treasures.

I.

To begin with, the text declares that JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.

Though there are few Unitarian Churches; notwithstanding Unitarianism is preached in many pulpits; some supposedly Evangelical churches are, in their teaching and testimony, practically Unitarian, inasmuch as they question the essential Deity of Christ. The basic doctrine of Unitarianism is that Jesus Christ was a man; that He was not God, but only a man. We need, therefore, frequently to emphasize the great truth of His essential and eternal Deity. Shortly we shall celebrate Christmas, which is a memorial of His advent among men, and the significance of that season is this—that we believe that the Son of God did actually come down from Heaven, and was made in the likeness of sinful men. We do not say that Jesus Christ *was* God, but Jesus Christ is God. If He was ever God, He is God still. In the text the Spirit of God Himself declares that Jesus is

God. "Unto the Son he saith . . ." This is a quotation from the forty-fifth Psalm, which was read this evening. By inspiration of the Holy Ghost prophetically our glorious Lord is there described, and the Spirit of God declares that Jesus Christ is God.

I must ask you this evening, first of all, do you believe that? I do not mean do you merely profess it, but do you actually believe that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"? that He who appeared in Bethlehem's manger was really the Infinite wrapped in swaddling bands, and that God Himself looked upon a sinful world through baby eyes,—that He is God? You and I need God for a Saviour. We are such sinners, so hopelessly undone, that no one but God could ever save us. It requires the power that made all worlds to re-make fallen human nature; to re-create us in the image and likeness of God. Let us open our hearts afresh to this great truth. I know that we believe it, but let us open our hearts afresh to the implications of this tremendous truth that God is more than the Great Unknown to us—more than an intellectual abstraction, more than a great Force which expresses itself in the material creation, but that we can, I had almost said, localize Him, personalize Him, think of Him in terms of His disclosure to us as a Man. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." He never said that to angels; He never said it to any of the prophets—He said it only to the Son. "When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." He receives the worship, not of men only, but of angels, of principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Jesus Christ, I say, is God.

II.

The text speaks of HIS THRONE, something that is significant of power. How many thrones have tottered of recent years! How many crowns have fallen! How many sceptres have been broken! But He is seated on the throne of the universe.

Now what power was manifested by Him in the days of His flesh? I tell you nothing new, I am merely reminding you for your encouragement and inspiration, that all the powers of nature were subject to the authority of His word. In that beginning of miracles which He wrought in Cana of Galilee someone thus described it, "The conscious waters saw their Lord, and blushed." He showed Himself to be the source of all human health

and strength. He touched the sick and healed them. He passes by, as we heard tonight in the song which the choir, and you yourselves, sang, and

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain,
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Think of all the elements of this material universe, which confessed Him as Lord. "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" He was able, with a word and a touch, to accelerate the processes of nature, and multiply five loaves to the proportions of a bountiful harvest; able to feed a vast throng with two fishes. "Thou madest him to have dominion," over what? "Over the works of thy hands . . . All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." He came and showed that He had dominion over earth and sea. Even the devils were subject to His power. He showed Himself to be the Source of life, right up to the minute. Science does not know what life is; science cannot tell you what life is; science knows nothing about the origin of life. It has sought for it, and it is still seeking for it; but "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." With a quiet word He brought the daughter of the ruler back from the darkness of death; with a simple touch He restored the dead son of the widow of Nain to his mother, and with a loud voice He cried, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth." More than that, He entered into death itself, and arose, its Conqueror. Master of all realms, Sovereign in all spheres. "Thy throne, O God . . ."

We read this evening about *His majesty*. "In thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness." How great is our glorious Lord! "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Now all that is said of the Lord Jesus in this Book, not merely in the New Testament, but in the Old, right from the very beginning—"In the beginning God . . .," that was Jesus "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made;" "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not;"—all things that are written in this inspired record which God hath given to us of His Son, from Genesis to Revelation, are still true. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

I said just now, *we have seen thrones totter*. Yes, and kingdoms pass. Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Japan, and a little longer ago, China—crowns have fallen. But not this throne. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." It may be, alas I have to confess it is true, that men and women, the vast majority, are indifferent to Him. It is still true that in the spiritual sense "He (is) in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world (knows) him not." But His day is coming, and His throne is established in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.

The Psalmist said, "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." I wonder how many here this evening find delight in meditating upon Jesus Christ, I ask you. I do not say reading about Him, but sometimes sitting alone in the silence, as the Spirit of God recalls from the sub-conscious mind the great words of Holy Scripture, magnifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you see Him? I haven't a television set; I do not know that I want one, but there is a kind of Divine television. He is the express image of God's person, and we may have the portrait of the Lord Jesus before us, and constantly meditate upon it. "My meditation of him shall be sweet." Do you love to think of Him, just to think of Him? to think such thoughts as defy expression? to see Him after the fashion that it would be impossible for you to communicate to others? Do you know anything about what Bunyan used to call "the goings of God" upon his spirit? Do you by faith see Him, and meditate upon Him? "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

III.

THIS GREAT AND GLORIOUS KING HAS A KINGDOM: "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Someone spoke to me to-day in conversation of a certain house that had been built upon what seemed to be a good foundation, but it was evidently built upon some place that had been filled in with rubbish, all sorts of collapsible things; and then with the weight of the house and the passage of time, it began to settle, and cracks appeared everywhere. You cannot build a house that will endure without a good foundation, and no kingdom and no government can long continue that is not established upon right principles. His kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. There are moral principles which are as inexorable in their operation as physical law. If you were to go through one of the big skyscrapers in New York, or even here in Toronto for that matter, if you had someone to explain to you the technicalities of the architecture of the building, you would learn, not only about its foundation, and how for these high buildings they had to go right down into the heart of the earth until they could find something that was forever established, but you would find too that principles of expansion and contraction had been recognized in the construction. Perhaps you do not know it, but a skyscraper has to move a little bit; there is wind pressure that has to be taken account of; there is the action of extreme cold and extreme heat, and all these physical laws have to be known by the architect, and he must fashion his plans in obedience to the laws of the physical realm in which that building is to stand, for if he neglects them, then there will be, at least first of all, deterioration, and ultimately collapse. These laws refuse to be ignored, they are part of the physical constitution of things, and you have to conform to them or you cannot erect a building.

Our Lord Jesus gave us a lesson in that when He spoke of the house that was built upon the sand. It looked all right until the storm came, but when that beat upon the house it fell, because it had no foundation. But the man who builds upon His word is likened to a man who builds upon a rock. What did He mean by His word? The actual words of Scripture? Yes, of course, but resident within that word are principles that are part and parcel of, and inseparable from the moral constitution of things, and you cannot ignore those moral principles without courting, and at last securing complete failure. Said Mussolini, "We shall meet our foes with eleven million bayonets." Wasn't that brave, and wasn't it silly? You cannot establish a kingdom with bayonets. King

Victor Emmanuel had to yield his throne and his sceptre; the same was true of other thrones and kingdoms in Europe; and my dear friends, the same may be true of the Dominion to which we belong, and the Empire of which we are a part, if we do not get back to God. Don't make any mistake about it. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," and at last it brings bankruptcy and ruin. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small, and the principles of the Divine constitution I said are inexorable. That means something that you cannot pray against, inevitable, it is of the essence of things, it is essential; you cannot change it. You must obey it or fail.

"A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." The kingdom of God is established in righteousness. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, and His kingdom partakes of His own nature. Remember that in this same Epistle, in a later Chapter, it is said, "first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace." King of righteousness first, and *after that* King of peace. I do not know what is going to come of these discussions between Prime Minister Attlee and President Truman and the Prime Minister of this Dominion. We are all desiring peace, and I hope seeking peace, but there is only one way to peace. There must be righteousness, and after that, peace. We cannot have it without. He is the Prince of Peace. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Men think they are very clever sometimes. You remember how Mr. Neville Chamberlain was acclaimed by the multitude when he came back from Munich? Some of you who can remember know that I did not join in it. I was as sure then as I was afterwards it was a tragedy. We were in Massey Hall at the time, and I said so. It was the blackest chapter in British History. Why? Because righteousness was sacrificed, and you cannot bring about peace by sacrificing righteousness. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "Let God be true but every man a liar." God does not change. He will not re-write the constitution of things.—They are talking about re-writing the Constitution of the Dominion. I do not know whether they will make it better or worse if they try it; in some respects it could hardly be worse; it might be better. And people do re-write Constitutions. We hear about the Atlantic Pact, and Article this and that of the United Nations, and the Russian veto and all that kind of thing. Sometimes it almost wearies one. There is a kingdom whose constitution abides—it is not changed. It never can be changed. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness . . ." no matter what it costs—His righteousness. There is no escape from that, no other way of peace. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of (His) kingdom."

But it costs a great deal to be righteous sometimes, doesn't it? It involves great sacrifices sometimes. It will never cost you as much as it cost Him, of Whom it is said, "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." We were at war with Him; we had drawn the sword against Him, and we had said, "We will not have Him to reign over us." We were sinners every one. How could a place be found for us in the kingdom of God? There was no Munich, there was no compromise of the eternal principles of righteousness. There must

be a moral balance, the moral equilibrium of the universe must be restored; somehow a righteousness must be found that could be weighed against our sins, as the mountains are weighed against the sea. No, the gates could not be thrown wide to any of us on a Munich principle. You know the story, don't you, that He, who is God, came down to earth, and took our place, that He might listen, purge our sins—"When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." But He made it possible for Him to maintain His throne and His Sovereignty without the sacrifice of righteousness, and still holds in His sovereign hand the sceptre of righteousness. How did He do it?

"Jehovah bade His sword awake;
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee;
Thy blood its flaming blade must slake,
Thy heart its sheath must be.
All for my sake, my peace to make;
Now sleeps that sword for me."

He made peace through the blood of His cross, and established His kingdom, of which we by grace are made citizens on principles of righteousness. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

What a blessing it is that when the soul is saved we may be sure there are no loose ends to be gathered up, there are no unanticipated or unguessed discoveries to be made that can be reckoned to our disadvantage; all has been taken cognizance of, all has been weighed in the balances, and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I am glad that my citizenship is in Heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Isn't that a great text? That is the kind of salvation He has provided.

IV.

Now let me go a step farther. I said I was going to speak to you this evening about the formula for perennial gladness. This is a sad world, isn't it? Aren't you almost afraid to read the newspaper? I do not know whether the Devil is come down, having great wrath, but it does seem as though this old world is out of joint somewhere. Not only the war, but everything seems awry—fires and accidents and drunkenness and murders, and I do not know what else. A bad old world, isn't it? and to a great many, a very sad world too. How can one be glad in a world like this? Anybody who can have a good time in forgetfulness of these eternal realities, I was going to say was seven-eighths of a fool, but I think eight-eighths. And yet, we want to be glad, don't we? O how thankful we are for just a little sunshine sometimes. There are some people here who are English people. A dear old Land, except for the government. You will see in an English newspaper, "So many hours of sunshine yesterday." They actually keep track of it, and publish it in the paper, and then they have cars, with a thing in the top that you can push back, and they call it a "Sunshine Roof". What for? "Well, let us get all the sunshine we can. Push the thing back, and if it only shines for a few minutes let us have it." Pull up the blinds, and let in the sunshine. Well, to use a colloquialism, I'm for it every time. I have said to you more than once that if anybody has a good wholesome joke that can provoke

me to laughter, he will be a welcome caller on me any time. But it isn't easy to laugh; it isn't easy to be glad. But here is one who is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. You say, "But I thought Jesus Christ was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. So He was. He became the Man of sorrows and the acquaintance of grief in order that He might be the Man of supreme, superb, transcendent gladness. It was for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame. Read the concluding Chapters in the Book of Revelation. In the first part of the Book, in the record of creation, it says, "And the evening and the morning were the first day." "And the evening and the morning were the second day." When God works he works from evening to morning; we always work from morning to evening. And if you turn the pages of this Book you will see the Lord marching on toward the morning, until by and by there is a picture of the City coming down from God out of Heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Among other things characteristic of that City it is said, "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:" "... and the Lamb is the light thereof." All sunshine there, and yet it is said, "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." No, it won't be an oppressive sunshine there. I have been in the tropics, where you run for the shade almost of a telegraph pole or anything, just to get away from that burning blazing heat. Not that kind of sunshine, but the sunshine from the face of Him Who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

V.

What are THE INGREDIENTS OF THAT OIL OF GLADNESS? Perhaps we might get a little of it. Wouldn't you like to have some of it? Wouldn't you like to have the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness? I should. Well, there are two ingredients, it is compounded of two principles. "Thou hast loved righteousness." In order to be really and perennially glad we must learn somehow, not merely to do righteousness, but to love it. A little boy is commanded to do a certain thing, and very reluctantly he proceeds to obey, and grumbles while he is at it. He doesn't want to do it, but he is forced to do it. Perhaps he even weeps a bit while he does it. There is no gladness in that kind of thing. While the law of God is objective to our natures, something that we are forced to do, there would be no joy in life,—were it not that here is One who has loved righteousness for its own sake. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of (His) kingdom," and He, in His own nature and essence, is in harmony with the moral constitution of His kingdom. He is right at home in it; He loves righteousness, loves it. Do you? Do you do what is right just because it is right? There are parents who pay their children for obeying them. I do not think that is a wise practice. I was never paid for doing as I was told; I had to do it anyhow. But this is what the Scripture says to Christian children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." Why? "For this is right." That is the only reason. Why should I do this or that? Because it is right. Why should I not do certain other things? Because it would be wrong. What reward am I to get for doing right? The reward of doing right. Righteousness is its own reward.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Did you notice that? "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." By having our natures changed, becoming a new creation, having Christ formed in us, so that by His grace we at last learn to love what He loves. "Thou hast loved righteousness." Do you love it? I remember hearing my father, who was a minister, say that the true children of the Lord would delight still to serve Him if the Devil were dead and all the fires of Hell were extinguished. That is true. "If a man love me, he will keep my words," "and in keeping of (His commandments) there is great reward." "Thou hast loved righteousness." Now that is one element in the oil of gladness — a love of righteousness, and until we have been taught of the Spirit of God, and enabled by the grace of His Spirit to love righteousness for its own sake, we cannot be perennially glad. Of course that does not always mean that we shall be shouting. There is a difference between gladness and happiness. Happiness depends pretty largely upon happenings; joy is a thing that comes from a deeper spring, and gladness too, and what we want is not something that will cheer us only superficially, but something that will make us perennially glad, so that in the time of storm and stress, when we may not be able to laugh, and we may have to groan a little because of the pains we suffer, or the losses to which we are exposed, yet deep down in our souls there ought to be a gladness of the Lord, which is born of a love of righteousness.

But that is not enough. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." Nobody hates nowadays. Oh, we ought to preach love, love, love. Why? You cannot love without hating. Hatred is the reverse side of love, it is an element in it. No mother can love her child without hating the thing that would hurt it. We have to learn to hate, and we are God-like when we hate. The Psalmist went so far as to say, "I hate vain thoughts." That "vain" is in italics. "I hate thoughts: but thy law do I love." I hate the vapourings of the human mind, the mental meanderings of men who think they are thinking, "but thy law do I love." "I hate thoughts." What is sin? The Scripture describes it as the abominable thing which God hates. There are certain religious observances about which God says, "I hate them. Your empty forms, your new moons, and all the rest of it," He said, "your worship, and offering of sacrifices when your hearts are as black as night"—He said, "I hate it. It is a kind of hypocrisy; it is obnoxious to me; I detest it." Now there are some things we ought to hate. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." We have to learn to hate everything that is contrary to the law of God; to hate everything that is at war with the Divine holiness. Yes, it is for the want of that element in modern religion that Toronto is getting to be what it is. If the professing Christians of this city, who are Church members, really loved righteousness and hated iniquity there would have been no Sunday sports, and we shouldn't have been flooded with liquor. There are a hundred things in our city's life which we shouldn't have at all if the people who profess and call themselves Christian loved righteousness and hated iniquity with an intense hatred.

That was said of the Lord Jesus. You remember when He came into the Temple and He saw the tables of the

money changers, the buyers and sellers, that He looked round upon them with anger, and He took a whip of small cords, and He drove them out of the Temple. What did He mean? He meant, "I hate that kind of religion." The only religion that is of any value is that which makes a man love righteousness and hate iniquity, and when that becomes our nature—it can be so, my dear friends, only by the power of the indwelling Spirit. You cannot do that, and I cannot do that naturally—no, not at all, but the Spirit of God can so change us, so dwell within us, that we shall love righteousness and hate iniquity, and then we shall share in the anointing of the oil of gladness. The body of believers are called in the New Testament "The Christ". We are a part, if we are really Christian, of Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bone. You remember how, prophetically, it is said in the Psalms: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Real brethren, not that goody-goody kind of Brethrenism. I cannot stand that. I know some people who make me ill, just make me ill. "O beloved! How are you beloved?" I say to myself, "You hypocrite! I am not beloved to you. What do you call me that for?" That goody-goodism is obnoxious: I like a little sugar in my tea, but very little. I have seen some people just take the sugar bowl and spoon it in, and then drink that stuff. I have seen some people who had a religion like that—a kind of syrup, sickly stuff. I don't want it. No, that isn't what the Scripture means. "How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," when they are really one in Christ Jesus.

In a family, where people love each other, they do not need (except when company comes) to use extravagant terms of endearment. When I hear a man always calling his wife "darling", I say to myself, "I should like to listen some time when they don't know I am around." They protest too much, to be Shakespearean. No, no, they dwell together in unity, and they love each other. They do not need to be always pouring on the treacle. Do you know what treacle is? They don't use it in this country I suppose. Well, it is a kind of syrup. Somebody who came from British Columbia told me that they were all living on treacle out there, black strap; that it was energizing, good for them. I suppose that is why the English people have such energy, I do not know. I always hated it, and I do not like it religiously, but just natural, spiritual affection. "How good and pleasant it is for brethren," the whole family, "to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments," until every part of the body shared in the anointing.

"Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," poured upon His head, our great High Priest, an element in His anointing, and it descends to us, and makes it possible for us to be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, to have in our hearts the gladness which all the storms of earth cannot destroy.

What I felt I wanted to do this evening—I do not know whether I succeeded or not—was to get you to think a little more highly, worshipfully, adoringly, of my Lord. He is a great Saviour! "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even

thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness," listen—"above thy fellows". We ought to be the gladdest people in the world, because Jesus is our Saviour. Let us pray.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast come to us in a way that we can understand Thee; Thou hast made Thyself our fellow. Oh, help us that we may abide in Thee, and draw all the springs of life from Thee, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

HOW TO FACE TEMPTATION

By Rev. John Poorter, B.A., Durban, South Africa

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13).

MMARTIN LUTHER said that there are three things which regulate a Christian's growth in grace. Knowledge; prayer; and temptation. In proportion as these factors are present the Christian's life is made more effective and Christ-like.

We commonly use the word temptation to mean enticement to evil-doing. But the word as used by the apostle Paul here has a wider range of meaning, and includes all those testings and probations in which we are called upon to make choices, to resist, to abstain, and to win. For instance, when you read in Genesis 22:1 that "God did tempt Abraham" the thought of testing or proving is clearly indicated. The New Testament writer James makes it clear that God cannot tempt any man, if by that is meant inducement to sin; but that such temptation comes within His permissive will is equally plain. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James 1: 13, 14).

In this larger sense, where temptation is inclusive of trial and probation, it is the one factor without which development is impossible for the Christian. Supposing for example I were to say to my two boys, when I am leaving home for an hour or two, "Now be sure not to play about with the telephone while I am out." That would be quite a normal sort of prohibition. But supposing that, in addition to this, I locked the study door securely so that they were unable to get at the telephone, you would think my warning to them a bit odd, wouldn't you? I would be robbing them of the possibility of true obedience in so doing. I am depriving them of any choice in the matter, and consequently on this point I make moral development impossible for them. There can be no such thing as virtue, obviously, apart from choice. Obedience implies at once the freedom to disobey. Temptation is the downward pull towards disobedience which vexes every one of us from day to day. But it is at the same time the very thing that makes conquest real, and which exalts the uttermost power of the Saviour.

Paul suggests three things to us in the text which we have quoted: Remember, however, that his words are addressed to Christian believers!

1. NO TEMPTATION IS UNIQUE. "No temptation has taken you but such as is common to man." In other words, your temptation, whatever it is, belongs to humanity. It has happened, and is likely to happen to others as much as it has to you.

Oddly enough there are some people who find this most difficult to believe. It is a strange but quite common conceit of human nature that makes people conceive of their temptations or difficulties as "special" or extraordinary. "My circumstances are different. I've been through the mill. Others don't understand." You have heard the like. Perhaps you have said the same concerning yourself, or secretly you have thought it. Most of us have done the same at some stage, and the reason is not far to seek. We like to feel ourselves different from others, a little apart from the common run. It breaks out in all sorts of ways. The illnesses of some people are always of a special kind. The affliction in their case is so complicated as to mystify the most capable physicians. "The doctor says this is the first case of its kind that he has come across." And so on.

Yet, no temptation is unique. True, not all men have identical experiences and testings. We are not ignorant of the enemy's devices, which are sometimes crude, sometimes subtle; now appearing as strong and irresistible, then, deceptively, as easily conquered. In all this variety of attack it might seem as if some temptations were unique. But basically they are strongly similar. They come from a common source. They are aimed at a common objective, namely the overthrow of the will and the imprisonment of the soul. Temptation is the battering ram that attempts to force an entry first at this door, and then at that. The door itself may be different from that of another man's. In one it is through vanity, and in another through passion that defeat comes. But the temptation itself is not unique.

"Common to men" is Paul's phrase. Fundamentally there is no trial or test which is new. Strong passions; Pain; Sorrow; Misunderstanding. You may think of these and of a hundred others, and there is none which is not woven into the experience of the saints.

I remember the case of Bill Smith, as we'll call him. Bill was a South African soldier who'd been shot up in North Africa. In the Cottesloe Military Hospital, Johannesburg, they amputated his right leg. Bill was no coward, but gradually, as the days of his convalescence gave him time to think, he was sinking into despair. He hated pity, yet without realizing it he was pitying himself, growing daily worse as he brooded on it. A frequent visitor to the ward was "Mac", elderly, cheerful, and a zealous Christian. He and young Bill had several talks together, but apparently without effect on Bill's oppressed spirit. "In a few months' time, when they've fitted an artificial leg for you, you'll be doing your old job, same as any other man", said Mac. But Bill wouldn't have it. Nothing could lift him. One day Mac's patience seemed to give way to annoyance. His face reddened visibly. He jumped up, took a few smart paces away from the bed, and,—pulled up his trouser leg! Bill Smith stared at him, then his eyes grew big and filled with slow tears as he looked at Mac's cork leg. "I didn't know," he said, "I didn't know."

In Peter's first epistle and the fifth chapter, perhaps you will recall, there are words which run parallel with our present thought, that other saints share the same temptations. "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in (all) the world."

But that is not enough to bring you courage in your conflict. Turn the pages of your Bible to read of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "though he were a Son, yet

learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Read again that He "was in all points tempted as we are." Or that "Himself carried our sorrows." Here is your Redeemer and Saviour, the friend who is the supreme sympathizer, "whom, having not seen, ye love." As man he was tempted and tried. He is blessedly able to succour them that are tempted, and to shield you from the blast of trial and affliction. In this is our glory, that He is a hundred times more than example to us—He is High Priest, Intercessor and Advocate at the right hand of the majesty on high.

"No pain that we can share,
But He has felt its smart;
All forms of human grief and care
Have pierced that tender heart."

II. NO TEMPTATION IS UNBEARABLE. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

Begin with those first three words. "God is faithful." Ponder them. It means that He keeps faith with His promises. A faithful man is one who does not let you down. "Shall I promise, and not perform?" God is faithful, faithful beyond our reckoning. Said the guide to the nervous climber, "Put your hand in mine; that hand has never lost a man yet." A thousand times more true is this of the faithfulness of God. Men break trust, in spite of their best intentions. But God is faithful. Oh, believe it. Hold to it.

He does not deal with us in the mass, or as if we were but so many "cases", all numbered and impersonal. He has taken pains to tell us that the hairs of our head are numbered. The minutest details of our life are the subjects of his care. What a blessedly comforting thought is this in a world where, more and more, people are being treated collectively, as so many cattle to be disposed of.

God is faithful; and because of His faithfulness He sends no raw recruits to the forefront of battle. No weak lambs are overdriven in the desert journey. Every test, every trial, is moderated and tempered by a wisdom which is as great as His power.

Three times His servant Paul made request for the removal of his "thorn in the flesh", you remember. And the answer was not relief, but re-assurance. "My grace is sufficient for thee." Surely MY grace is enough for THEE? it seems to say. Surely the mighty river is enough to water your little patch of garden? Well, then, when once the eye of faith sees it in this light, no onslaught will seem too terrifying.

There is much teaching gaining ground among Christians of the "let go and let God" type, which seems to reduce faith into a passive quality, a kind of resting, and nothing more. While it is partly true that faith is resting, confiding in God, yet the complementary truth must not be neglected, namely that faith is every bit bound up with conflict. Wrestle; fight; pray. This is faith's terminology. But it is wrestling, fighting, and praying in the invincible power of the Holy Ghost.

Believe God in this matter of your own conflict. It is not unbearable. He decrees its boundaries, saying, "Thus far, but no further". He is watching your resistance with a tender solicitude. He stands ready to lend you strength, and ready to carry your load. "He spared not His own Son"—for your eternal salvation. The greater (which is redemption) includes the less, which is preser-

vation from the power of sin. "The just shall live by faith" is connected with Christian victory as well as with the new birth.

Here is the third thought suggested by our text, and it is this:

III. NO TEMPTATION IS UNCONQUERABLE. "God . . . will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

A good many of us, no doubt, would wish that it read: "God will make a way of escape, that ye may be able to get out of it." But it doesn't say that. It does not say that the way of escape means that we shall successfully avoid the conflict. There is no thought here of "He who fights and runs away . . ." It does not mean that we shall be delivered from the discomfort of being tempted. Nowhere have we any promise of such a "way of escape". The conquest consists in being "able to bear it". Here is a Scripture to support it. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." (Coloss. 1:11).

To some of the saints of God this kind of victory is lacking in the spectacular. They are ever on the lookout for a conflict of another sort, where there is a gallery of spectators, and applause. But do you think, brother, that God has made the realm of conquest so narrow? When, for instance, I read John Bunyan's allegory of Christian's pilgrimage, am I to imagine that the scores of dangers through which he passes are all of the spectacular kind? Not at all. For though the language of battle is employed, yet often in personal experience the battle is for such unspectacular victories as patience and gentleness. Here is Christian in combat with the "foul fiend" Apollyon:

"Then did Christian draw his sword, for he saw it was time to bestir himself; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could . . . Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, but Christian with his sword gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back as one that had received a mortal wound. Christian made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon wings, and sped away, so that Christian saw him no more."

Be sure, like Bunyan's pilgrim, to sally forth to battle after you have been in the king's armoury, where you may receive sword and breastplate and shield to fight with. But having once received these, go forth with trust and FIGHT. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

When in the darkness of the night the sentinel on duty sees the stealthy approach of the enemy he does not start a warfare with them all by himself. He rouses the garrison! So it is that the sentinels of watching and praying keep in touch with the might of the Saviour.

When Edward the Black Prince was in the heat of the battle of Crecy he sent a call for help to his father, engaged elsewhere in the battle area. There was no immediate response. The prince repeated his call for urgent help. Back came the answer this time: "Tell my son that I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when help is wanted, nor so careless a father as not to send it."

Patience, then, and enduring faith be yours. Never

yield to doubt for a moment. The way of escape may tarry a while, or so it may seem to you as you are hard pressed on ever side. But your help does not depend on "some careless or miscalculating friend." 'Tis God with whom we have to do." No test, much less yours, is unconquerably difficult. You have His word for that. You belong, by the purchase of Christ's precious blood, to Him. Do you think, then, that God's salvation is so poor an inheritance that it yields no treasure in this life? I know that in the glory mine will be a wealth untold. But here below I am already drawing the interest, enjoying the income, as it were, of that eternal redemption. And some part of that interest is to be "kept by the power of God".

Among the last words publicly spoken by Charles Had-don Spurgeon were these:

"Christ is the most magnanimous of Captains: He is always to be found in the thickest of the battle. When the wind blows cold, he always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies upon His shoulders. If He bids us carry a burden, He carries it also. If there is anything that is gracious, generous, kind and tender, yea lavish and superabundant in love, you always find it in Him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh that you would enter in it at once!"

Oh that you would! And if you have already done so, that you would cleave to Him for strength through thick and thin.

"For in the battle's blazing heat,
When flesh and blood would quail;
I'll trust, and fight, and still repeat
That Jesus cannot fail."

'Twas A SHEEP—NOT A LAMB

'Twas a sheep, not a lamb, that went astray
In the parable that Jesus told;
'Twas a grown-up sheep that wandered away
From the ninety and nine in the fold;
And out on the hilltop, and out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd sought;
And back to the flock and back to the fold
'Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd brought.
Now, why should the sheep be so carefully fed,
And cared for, even today?
Because there is danger if they go wrong
They will lead the lambs astray.
The lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever they wander, wherever they go.
If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
Till the lambs are as wrong as they;
So still with the sheep must we earnestly plead,
For the sake of the lambs today;
If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost
The sheep will have to pay.

HOLINESS AND HUMILITY

"Stand by; for I am holier than thou!" What a parody on holiness! Jesus the Holy One is the humble one: the holiest will ever be the humblest. There is none holy but God: we have as much of holiness as we have of God. And according to what we have of God will be our real humility, because humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. The holiest will be the humblest. Alas! though the barefaced boasting Jew of the days of Isaiah is not often to be found,—even our manners have taught us not to speak thus,—how often his spirit is still seen, whether in the treatment of fellow-saints or of the children of the world.

—ANDREW MURRAY

THE KOREAN SITUATION

WE ARE amazed at what seems to us the obtundity of United Nations statesmen and military leaders. That observation may seem to some to be presumptuous, but let us see:

It ought to be patent to everybody that the overwhelming Communist attack from China is not a hastily improvised reinforcement to drive the United Nations back from the Manchurian border. It seems to us there is no doubt at all that this is the execution of a long-considered, and planned offensive. What surprises us is that General MacArthur thinks he can hold a line against it, and that Prime Minister Attlee "hopes" he may be able to do so. Is it not evident that the Red torrent is rushing down from the North like Niagara, with all the weight of the great lakes behind it. Behind this are the enormous reservoirs of manpower of China and Russia.

Whether the atomic bomb could stop them or not in the field, we are not competent even to guess; but certainly nothing short of the atomic bomb will stop them. Whether such destructive weapons used against their bases of supply in China and Russia would give them pause, or not, we do not know. But we feel confident that short of some such operations, Red China is determined to drive the last United Nations soldier out of Korea.

Then what would follow? Formosa would be another matter for the reason that in an attack upon Formosa the immense naval superiority of the United Nations would come into play. Apart from that, if Formosa could be overcome all Southeast Asia would be likely to fall into the Russian maw. Even Australia and New Zealand would not be safe.

In such a case we rather fear that India and Egypt would be in haste to make terms with Moscow.

It may be that the relative military nakedness of the United Nations in Europe justifies some reservation in utilizing atomic power; but unless that be true, the moderation of the United Nations seems to us to spell suicide.

We only hope we are entirely wrong.

LITTLE FAITH AND GREAT FAITH

Skilful swimmers are not afraid to go above their depth, whereas young learners feel for the ground, and are loth to go far from the bank-side. Strong faith fears not when God carries the creature beyond the depths of his reason. "We know not what to do," said good Jehoshaphat, "but our eyes are upon thee" (II Chron. 20). As if he had said, "We are in a sea of trouble beyond our own help, or any thought how we can wind out of these straits, but our eyes are upon thee. We dare not give up our case for desperate so long as there is strength in thine arm, tenderness in thy bowels, and truth in thy promise." Whereas weak faith, that is groping for some footing for reason to stand on, is taken up with how to reconcile the promise to the creature's understanding.

—WILLIAM GURNALL

MODERN PREACHING

"We believe and therefore speak," has been the device of the true ministers of the Church from apostolic times to our own. Judging from many sermons which are preached in our day, there are ministers who have taken a new motto—"We disbelieve and therefore speak."

—R. W. DALE

COMMUNISM

J. Edgar Hoover,

Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States

(EDITORIAL NOTE: Extracts from talk made in accepting the 1950 Distinguished Service Award of the Grand Lodge of New York.)

The following statements made concerning Communism are also applicable concerning another foreign movement in America which owes absolute allegiance to a hostile alien despot: we mean Romanism and its pope. The latter movement, however, is not small in numbers, influence or wealth, and hence all the more dangerous to freedom and democracy.

THERE are few walks in American life which Communists do not traverse. . . . Wherever they may be, they have in common one diabolical ambition: to weaken and to eventually destroy American democracy by stealth and cunning. Theirs is an organization built and supported by dishonour, deceit and tyranny, and a deliberate policy of falsehood.

They know that as long as the ideals of common endeavour, mutual respect and tolerance remain alive, they can never bring to fruition the Communist world revolution. That is why Communists consider America their Number One Enemy.

A strong America, materially and spiritually, is a constant beacon of light, buoying the hopes and aspirations of millions of men, women and children crushed under the yoke of Communist tyranny, which today controls the destinies of one-third of the peoples of the world.

The Communists possess a well-knit, closely disciplined, destructive force of approximately 55,000 members in the United States. In actual numbers their membership may not be large, nor have the Communists polled at any time a large number of votes in an election. This has been cited by the ignorant and the apologists and appeasers of Communism in our country as minimizing the dangers of these subversives in our midst.

The actual strength of the Communist movement in the United States is not something that can be accurately stated in just so many figures. It has to be measured largely by the general mass influence of the Party and its program. We no longer measure the importance of revolutionary organizations by size. In some places where there are only one or two men, more results are obtained than where they have larger organizations.

But, behind this force of traitorous Communists, constantly gnawing away like termites at the very foundations of American society, stand a half-million fellow travelers and sympathizers ready to do Communist bidding.

These individuals, though not identified as Communists, are extremely dangerous to the internal security of this nation, because as hypocrites and moral swindlers they seek the protection of the freedoms which they constantly seek to destroy.

They represent, for the Communist movement, a source of wealth, financial resources, the creation of valuable contacts, levers of social, economic and political pressures, recruiting grounds for espionage information and agents.

Moreover, they do their work anonymously, in "front" organizations, and wherever they can exert the greatest influence, each doing his share to the best of his ability.

These individuals are difficult to detect. They are disdainful of the very tolerance which enables them to betray their country. They practise their double-dealing,

double-minded, double-tongued and double-faced tactics on all fronts of our American life, whether it be in politics, in labour, in the press, in radio, in motion pictures, in the schools, or even in some of our churches.

The Communists have their membership concentrated in certain key areas of the United States—primarily in strategic industrial and population centres. This membership is co-ordinated through a national leadership and a dedication to an alien hate which looks abroad for its direction.

If additional personnel, perhaps for a political pressure campaign, for infiltration into a labour union, or for a militant educational program, is needed, National Headquarters of the Communist Party will peremptorily transfer members, temporarily or permanently, into the strategic area.

Communist members, body and soul, are the property of the Party. They scorn the standards of American democracy. They function like puppets on a string, ready at a moment's bidding to execute the will of the directing master—the Red "Hitler" at Moscow.

The Party, thereby, through mobility, central direction, and the disciplined fanaticism of its converts can, at any given moment, achieve power and strength in a limited sector. At times this pressure is so well-organized and expertly supervised that the Communists achieve gains out of all proportion to their numerical strength.

That is the secret of Communist success; the tragedy of democratic resistance. . . .

If every American faced the reality of what the fulfillment of the Communist objectives would mean to him, he would be inspired to work harder to protect and preserve the individual liberty and freedom which is part and parcel of our American way of life.

CEYLON AND INDIA GENERAL MISSION WITHDRAWS FROM WORLD COUNCIL AFFILIATE IN INDIA

By W. O. H. Garman

THIS was one mission which when it discovered that by its affiliation with the National Christian Council of India it had unintentionally tied itself up with not only the International Missionary Council but also with the World Council of Churches, did not resort to evasion or denials, but set itself to remedy the situation as soon as possible. It is to be commended most highly. In taking such action it was not, however, establishing a precedent, for the China Inland Mission and the Christian Missionary Alliance had made a similar move some years back in China.

At its General Conference October 28th, 1950, held in India, the Ceylon and India General Mission voted to withdraw from the National Christian Council of India "because of its affiliation with the World Council of Churches". We have always had every confidence that the mission would take this step. We are happy to be acquainted with no few of its missionaries and leaders and this is exactly what we would expect from them. We had close and precious fellowship with their missionaries when we were recently in India on our way to Bangkok. We trust that the mission will next be led by the Spirit of God to identify itself with the India Bible Christian Council, which is free from all apostate, World Council and compromising connections.

We also hope that the action of this mission will spur other missions to sever their connections on the field with

inclusivistic national councils affiliated in one way or another with the International Missionary Council and the World Council, and which are made up in certain instances of Modernists, Fundamentalists, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Universalists, and even Roman Catholic missions, and which councils are working to advance the World Council's one big all inclusive super world church idea. We can't understand why some faith missions have been so reluctant to sever such forbidden alliances nor why they seek to justify their remaining in such organizations because the Fundamentalists are supposed to be in the majority. According to our understanding of the Bible we are not justified in remaining in an organization because it happens to be sixty, seventy, or eighty percent sound. If it isn't one hundred percent sound as far as the fundamentals of the faith are concerned, then we haven't any right in such an organization. Furthermore, if the Fundamentalists are in the majority, why do they tolerate the presence of Modernists, compromisers, members of false cults and Roman Catholics?

It is to be deplored that representatives of the N.A.E., namely Doctors Wright and Taylor, are touring the mission fields of the world and not only spreading seeds of strife and confusion among Fundamentalists and doing everything they can to undo the work the I.C.C.C. has already done, and this primarily by circulating falsehoods, but they are encouraging missions to remain in compromising connections. These men are projecting the compromising position of the N.A.E. on to the mission fields of the world. Missions that are disinclined to take a forthright stand against apostasy, compromise and the World Council will no doubt receive Doctors Wright and Taylor with open arms. However, affiliating themselves with the compromise of the N.A.E. won't solve the problem many missions are in nor revive lost confidence and contributions. Only a clean break with apostasy, compromise, World Council and all other inclusivistic organizations followed by affiliating themselves with others who have separated themselves from such things can do that.

The present tour of Doctors Wright and Taylor is looked upon with marked disapproval by no few prominent men in the N.A.E., who deplore further division among Fundamentalists and we don't wonder. It is to be further deplored that Billy Graham lent himself to raising the funds needed to send Wright and Taylor on this trip, which will disturb the peace and fellowship existing among Fundamentalist missionaries and vitiate their testimony by encouraging them to remain in organizations which compromise their testimony.

A FRIENDLY CRITIC

IN OUR issue of November 30th we published a review of *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* by Le Roy Edwin Froom. In connection with that review we parenthetically remarked:

"The fact that this work is published by a Seventh Day Adventist Publishing Company does not invalidate the authoritative, historical, and completely documented facts set forth."

In the same review we said—

"Whether anywhere in later volumes there is a tincture of Seventh Day Adventism, we do not know, but even if there is, as we have before said, it cannot diminish the value of this volume as a compendium of prophetic interpretation."

A valued subscriber writes expressing surprise that we should recommend any book that might have in it "a

tinure of Seventh Day Adventism"; for he says he has most vigorously combatted the tenets of that Body, and is surprised at what we have written.

We were careful in the quotations we have made, to make it clear that we have no agreement with Seventh Day Adventism. We recommend the book as a summary of historical matter, every item of which is fully documented.

We say to our friend in New York: Suppose you were in a motor accident, and someone else than yourself were to blame for the crash; and suppose also that someone was standing by, who actually saw what happened, and was in a position to go into Court and swear to the facts as he had observed them; suppose, having obtained this witness' consent to give factual evidence, you should discover that he was a Seventh Day Adventist, would you refuse to take advantage of his testimony with respect to a set of facts which had absolutely no relation to his Seventh Day Adventism? Would you not rather welcome the evidence of any witness who from his own observation was competent to swear to the facts?

We do not know the author of *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*: but we do know that these volumes represent a large share of a lifetime of research—more than thirteen years of digging in European libraries and museums, and assembling the facts in respect to those who bore such powerful witness for Christ that their testimony brought about the Protestant Reformation.

Let it be clearly stated, we have no agreement whatever with many of the tenets of Seventh Day Adventism. We do not believe in the substitution of law for grace. Notwithstanding, the historical data assembled in this book, Vol. II. of *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, is of such value that no preacher of the gospel can afford to be without it.

Please do not run away and say Dr. Shields is a Seventh Day Adventist. He is not: he is an old-fashioned Andrew Fuller, Spurgeon, William Carey, Baptist.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 15 Fourth Quarter Lesson 13 December 24, 1950

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

CHRISTMAS: VISIT OF THE MAGI

Lesson Text: Matthew 2:1-12.

Golden Text: "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."—Matt. 2:10.

The history of mankind in general, as well as the history of every individual, exhibits many contrasts and contradictions. The poet Longfellow reminds us that "Life is chequered shade and sunshine." Especially is this true in regard to the age in which Christ was born into this world; "in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son." That age was characterized by the most intense darkness; but also, by reason of the coming of the Redeemer, by the most glorious light (Isa. 9:2; 60:2; Matt. 4:15, 16; Lk. 1:79; John 1:9; 9:5). Let us consider some of the contrasts suggested in the narrative of the story of our Saviour's birth.

"In the days of Herod the king . . . there came wise men . . . saying, Where is he that is born King?" These two kings were as unlike in character and destiny as two kings could possibly be. The man Herod was an ambitious, cruel and sinful monarch, while the child Jesus was mild, loving and absolutely sinless. The one ruled with grandeur over an earthly kingdom, but the other ruled with righteousness over a spiritual kingdom. One was a tyrant, ruling by force: the other one was a true King, reigning in love. The mastery of

Herod was uncertain, vacillating, ephemeral: the majesty of Christ was sure, constant and eternal.

The star of great brilliance which appeared to the wise men symbolized the rising of the "Star out of Jacob," promised by the prophet of old (Numb. 24:17). Christ is the Bright and Morning Star to His people (2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; 22:16). His star ascended into the heavens, but the star which represented Lucifer, the former son of the morning, descended from heaven to earth (Isa. 14:12-19; Lk. 10:18; 2 Cor. 11:14; Rev. 12:9, 10). Christ's triumph over the forces of Satan was complete (Eph. 1:20, 21; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14).

This conflict between Satan and God, between Christ and Antichrist, between evil and good, a conflict which has been raging throughout the centuries, is suggested also in the triumph of the birth of Christ, the seed of the woman (Gal. 4:4), in spite of Satan's many attempts to destroy the royal seed. Satan did all in his power to frustrate the sentence of judgment against himself (Gen. 3:15). To this end he put forth every effort to prevent the Christ from coming to the cross. It was probably with this end in view that the Arch-Enemy seems to have instigated the slaughter of the little children of Bethlehem, thinking thereby to take the young Saviour's life. But God overruled (Matt. 2:13-18).

Wealthy potentates, as well as humble shepherds, received the announcement of the Saviour's birth. The wise men opened their treasures and presented gifts to the young King, but the lowly shepherds had nought to give Him save the homage of their grateful hearts. And yet, however much the magi and the herdsmen differed in earthly station, they each adored the Infant Saviour. To Him must all men come for salvation, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, cultured or uncultured (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 10:12, 13).

Two questions were asked in regard to the Saviour's birth: "Where is he?" and "At what time did the star appear?" The wise men were not ashamed to ask their question openly: they seem to have addressed their question publicly to all whom they met, for all Jerusalem was stirred. Herod, on the other hand, secretly called the wise men and interrogated them in private. The magi enquired for the Lord that they might worship Him, but Herod, that he might slay the Saviour. The one group sought Him diligently in devoted love; the other group sought Him diligently in malicious hatred. The wise men found Him, but Herod lost track of Him (Jer. 29:13); their quest resulted in life, but his ended in death (Rom. 6:23).

One may also contrast the question found in the opening portion of the New Testament, "Where is he?" (Matt. 2:1) with the question recorded near the beginning of the Old Testament, "Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9). One question describes men seeking God, whereas the other depicts God seeking man. Logically the Old Testament question must come first, since it is only because God in sovereign mercy has chosen sinful men that they have a right to seek His face (Isa. 55:6; Lk. 19:10).

The knowledge of the birth of Christ brought joy to the wise men, but trouble to Herod. While the magi rejoiced with exceeding great joy, the cruel king was agitated in mind and heart at the thought that One had arisen who might supplant him. They whose deeds are good rejoice in the light, but they whose deeds are evil reject the light, lest their deeds be made manifest (John 3:18-21). The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:16).

May we all make our way to the Saviour, following the path which He Himself has laid out for us in His Word, and finding Him, worship Him with true and loving hearts!

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Dec. 18—The Saviour Expected Gen. 3:15; Numb. 24:17; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Job 19:23-27; Mic. 5:2.
Dec. 19—The Saviour Born, the Son Given Isa. 9:2-6; Lk. 2:1-20.
Dec. 20—The Saviour Worshipped Psalms 95; Eph. 2:9, 10; Heb. 1:1-6.
Dec. 21—The Saviour Worthy of the Best Gifts Rev. 5:1-14; Prov. 23:26.
Dec. 22—The Saviour of East and West Eph. 2:11-22.
Dec. 23—The Saviour Mocked Matt. 2:8; 27:27-31; Acts 17:30-32; Gal. 6:7.
Dec. 24—The Saviour, our King 1 Tim. 6:11-16; Matt. 21:4, 5; Zech. 14:1-9, 16-21.