

"A Faithful Saying"—p. 3.  
Spain—Tolerance or Persecution?—p. 12.

The Virgin Birth—p. 7.  
Why I Am a Protestant—p. 13.

# The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 29, No. 36

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, DECEMBER 28, 1950

Whole Number 1492

## How 1951 May Be Really New

**T**HIS is the last issue of this paper for 1950. What has the year brought to us? What have we done with its multiplied opportunities for spiritual improvement? Let us fling off all sense of failure and loss, and face the New Year with a new and richer faith in Him Who has been anointed "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

This is the programme of divine grace. What a prospect faith opens for the New Year!

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them."

The Lord of grace gets no glory for Himself in Laodicea, for He is allowed to "stand at the door and knock", by those who think they are "rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." Grace finds no function where self-complacency reclines; Grace has no message for one

"Who does not cast  
On the thronged pages of his memory's book,  
At times a sad and half-reluctant look,  
Regretful of the past."

Grace is for the soul that has loved and lost, whose brain and heart have been parents to ideals which have perished at the birth; and whose past is scarred with the mounds of buried hopes. Grace is an angel of mercy to the soul that has failed, unmistakably, utterly, criminally failed, and knows it, and is sorry for it. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Yes, and grace is for the soul that has been twice disappointed, who has left the bondage of Egypt only to feel the hunger and weariness of the wilderness. "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion"—who has met the tempter within the gate, who has stained "the best robe," and soiled the new shoes, and lost the ring. Grace is for the one who has fallen asleep on the mount of privilege, and for the one who missed a spiritual fortune by turning aside to run after butterflies when Opportunity passed down the King's highway.

Yes, Grace is for those who mourn; for those who have

missed something, who have lost something, who are not content with their position or possessions; who feel a holy hunger, and an insatiable spiritual thirst, and who ask their way to the river which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Blessed be God, there is someone ordained and anointed "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion."

But what will Grace do for those who mourn? Rather, what will Christ do?

He will make the ruined life beautiful: "To give unto them beauty for ashes." Not as the kindly ivy covers the ruins of some ancient temple: this is a richer promise than that.

"Ashes"! What is the significance of the metaphor? "Sackcloth and ashes" were the apparel of mourners, as when Mordecai mourned the threatened destruction of his people, and was especially the sign and symbol of repentance and abject abasement, as when Job said, "I repent in dust and ashes."

This figure then, "ashes" represents the last result of sin, the utter, moral bankruptcy of our human nature. It represents the resolution into their elements of all the fair fabrics of our dreams, the castles of our building, our ambitions, our hopes, the ruins of palaces wherein we dreamed of finding pleasure, of temples wherein we fancied we might worship. "He feedeth upon ashes" was said of the idolator. It is the end of the creations of our affections. Love comes to where its treasures were stored, as David came to Ziklag, only to find the choicest things of life, the joys of friendship and the delights of home and family, all turned to "ashes."

But most of all, it means the decay of moral character itself, when the holy and beautiful house is burned with fire. When the temple's beautiful gate called the Will, and its holy place, its reason and judgment, its Intellect, and its holy of holies, the place of the Affections—when these are all turned to "ashes", and life has lost its summer-time, and only disappointment remains! Alas, who of us does not know how the glories of life come to "ashes"?

But here is "beauty for ashes"—a garland for the unworthy, a crown for the defeated! That is the promise.

It is amplified in the next verse: "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations." It means that nothing is lost by sin which grace cannot restore. You have the two extremes—"Ashes" when sin has done its work, and "beauty" — a garland or a crown when grace is finished. The one is significant of failure, of lawlessness, of all that is destructive and unlovely—"ashes"; the other speaks of success, of worthiness, of definite achievement, and recognized victory—beauty—a garland or a crown. It is thus grace destroys the works of the devil—and gives beauty for ashes.

Christ makes the mournful life joyful. Nothing is more destructive of joy than the cherishing of vain regrets. The waste of yesterday must be converted into wealth or I can never be happy. Supplemental grace can never bring me the oil of joy. The mourning cannot be turned into joy by any work of repair. Not supplemental, but substitutionary grace. Not a power that will fill this day so full of brightness as to balance the gloom of yesterday. Grace must use my yesterdays to make the oil of joy with for tomorrow. Ah, this is the mystery and the miracle—that ashes can be made into the oil of joy! No, no, notwithstanding our sins and mistakes life could not have been richer than grace shall make it. Bitterly as we must mourn our sin, our tears have clarified our vision, and our highest joys have been born of our experience with ashes. It is true that extremes meet. You may reach the east by going west; mourning is the groaning of sorrow's press whence the oil of joy is squeezed. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Where Christ doth really minister to the mourner He makes the thankless life praiseful.

"The spirit of heaviness." It is not born of a reasoned judgment. It is a spirit that is out of tune with God. It paralyzes the will, it silences the tongue, it grips the heart with a leaden, deadly discontent. No soldier can fight with a spirit of heaviness, no teacher can teach, no preacher can preach, with a spirit of heaviness; no singer can sing with such a spirit; the church cannot be victorious with a spirit of heaviness.

But for this we are to have "the garment of praise."

Not a song for the voice, not an instrument for the fingers, but a garment for the whole man, as comprehensive and all-embracing as the spirit of heaviness. It is the outward expression of a victorious life. Where beauty is given for ashes the character is transformed, and a garland is put about the brow of the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. And where a new temple rises on the ashes of the old, the emotions are pleasurably excited, and the oil of joy abounds. And where a new character finds a new joy there is a new expression, and the new life is robed in a garment of praise. The whole life becomes vocal, and every act is an act of worship and every breath an ascription of praise.

Thus the contemptible life is made glorious.

"Ashes" excite no emotion but contempt—they are the refuse which men cast out. They may have had a proud and exalted origin—but who cares? A proud cedar of Lebanon defying the storm—now prone and burned to ashes! A temple glorious, now a heap of ashes. A man fallen and decayed—now but dust and ashes—undistinguished and indistinguishable.

## The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Published every Thursday for the propagation of the Evangelical principles of the Protestant Reformation and in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

\$3.00 Per Year. Postpaid to any address. 10c Per Single Copy.

Editor

T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editors

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

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

S. S. Lesson and Exchanges

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

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada

Telephone RAndolph 7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

But when grace has wrought the transformation, it is "that they might be called oaks of righteousness." I have heard of an oak being in an acorn, but here grace finds oaks in "ashes", and righteousness, where sin has fiercely flamed.

But it is for this we have been saved: that we may not be as reeds shaken by the wind, but that we may be called oaks of righteousness—the bulwark and stay of righteousness in the earth; even a character that is never broken by the storm. Not that we may be as willows by the watercourses, but as oaks—"steadfast, unmoveable." What a standard for a Christian character and life: Beautiful, garlanded, victorious, and crowned, abounding in joy, and vocal with praise, and established in righteousness, and uncompromising as the oak—the stuff that foundations are made of!

And grace proposes to exhibit us as specimens of divine husbandry: "That ye might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

May our gracious Lord thus be glorified in every reader of the WITNESS during 1951.

So let our lips and lives express  
The holy gospel we profess,  
So let our works and virtues shine  
To prove the doctrine all divine.

### YOUR 1950 INCOME TAX RETURNS

We are allowed only ten per cent exemption for religious and charitable purposes. If you have not already exhausted your ten per cent in your givings for 1950 we venture to suggest that you remember THE GOSPEL WITNESS, or Toronto Baptist Seminary, or Jarvis Street Church and its Missionary interests with the unpaid balance. We shall, of course, be glad to send you a receipt, which you can use when making your income tax returns. There will still be time to fill out your ten per cent after this paper reaches you.

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## "A FAITHFUL SAYING"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 24th, 1950  
(Stenographically Reported)

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."—1 Tim. 1:15.

I READ in one of our evening papers last night an article entitled "The Message of the Manger". So far as it went it was very good. It said that the manger had a message for those of humble origin: they were not to be discouraged by small beginnings. Many great men had come of humble birth. That is perfectly true. So we were told that Jesus was born in a manger, in a stable.

Then it was said it had a message for the man of the common lot. Jesus was called "The Carpenter, the Son of Mary"; and He was also called "the carpenter's Son". So the common people, the ordinary average people, found kinship with Jesus, Who was a carpenter.

It was said there was a message for the family. It magnified motherhood, parenthood, the family life. That is all true: it does.

It had a message for the nation. Indeed, that is true. I say, so far as it went, it was all true, but it did not go far enough.

I have seen the log cabin preserved now as a national shrine, in which it is alleged, and I suppose it is true, Abraham Lincoln, the great Emancipator, was born; and from such humble origin he became President of the United States. Abraham Lincoln was sometimes called "The rail-splitter". From such a menial occupation he became one of the world's greatest legislators. Andrew Jackson was a harness maker and he became President of the United States when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Innumerable biographies of great men illustrate all these things.

But was Jesus nothing more than that! The manger a message for men of humble origin? True, He made the ascent from the manger to the throne of the universe. But that was not so great a miracle as the condescension of grace which stooped from the throne of the universe to the manger.

A message for democracy! Yes; but that the universal sovereignty of Almighty God should have condescended to be wrapped in swaddling bands—that was the miracle!

A lesson for the family, the holy family! Yes. But the miracle of all is that a multitude of poor sinners are all now included, by reason of Him, in the household of faith.

A lesson for the nation! Yes. The writer made one very valuable quotation. He referred to Mr. Clynes of the first Labour Government, who staggered the British House of Commons by saying that British policy at home and abroad, should be based upon the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. To which one honourable Member raised the most serious objection. He said, "You would base British policy, domestically, and for the Empire,

upon the Sermon on the Mount, if you do that, then God help Britain!" Mr. Clynes aptly replied, "That is exactly what He will do."

But my dear friends, we can never understand Jesus in meeting with Him at the manger, unless and until we see that the days of His flesh, His manifestation among men, was but a parenthesis in the eternal circle of His existence. We can never know Jesus otherwise.

### I.

But what does my text say? It says that CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD, voluntarily—a premeditated, a divinely ordered advent. We must ever keep in mind the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God. We must ever remember that it is written of Him: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

"Yes; Jesus lived and reigned before men saw Him: 'To whom bare all the prophets witness.' Said He, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: he saw it, and was glad.' They mockingly replied, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' To which He answered, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' He always was the Eternal Son, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, from all eternity One God. Keep that in mind. You have not spoken properly of Jesus while you ignore or neglect that aspect of truth.

The scripture says that He was the Son of the Father. He was God's Messenger to the world. The Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world: "My Father hath sent me into the world". Jesus came, commissioned of His Father, to fulfil His Father's will. But He did not come as a reluctant Servant, not like the man in the parable who said, "I will not (go): and afterward he repented, and went"; nor like the man who said, "I go, sir: and went not". "I am come". He came Himself, voluntarily: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"; but He came not reluctantly: He came of His own will: though in the form of God He thought it not robbery to be equal, not a prize to be grasped at. Dare I say, without irreverence, that His Deity was a holy commonplace to Him; not a prize to be grasped at. It was something He had enjoyed from all eternity. Yet He took upon him "the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

So Christ's coming was a fulfilment of the Father's purpose; and its execution by the willing obedience of the Son. He came also by decree of the Holy Ghost, and by the Spirit of God He was begotten.

Thus you see the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were engaged in this arrangement. Jesus Christ came into the world by deliberate plan, and in fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God, that He might implement the provision of that covenant of grace, which was made between the Persons of the Godhead before the foundation of the world.

## II.

Christmas is much more than the birth of a Babe of unknown parents, in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem. He came into the world, AND HE CAME INTO THE WORLD FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE. He came for one exclusive purpose. He came into the world to save sinners. What a blessing that is.

Sometimes, I am told, it is not easy to find an appropriate name for the new baby. Father and mother have their ideas, and aunts, and uncles, and cousins, and brothers, and sisters, and I know not who else. And what strange compromises are effected, at least I suppose they are compromises! Think of calling a girl Hepzibah—notwithstanding it is a biblical name. Think of calling a boy Ezekiel. What would they ever call him? But it is an honoured name, and a biblical name! But there was only one Ezekiel.

But there are all sorts of names. A poor child is sent into the world with a severe handicap, sometimes. I knew a minister, whose surname was Pickles. I don't know why his parents did so, but they named him Jeremiah. Rev. Jeremiah Pickles! That is enough to sink any man.

But, my dear friends, the name of this Babe was selected millennia before He appeared on earth. Joseph did not name Him; Mary did not name Him; an angel in fulfilment of the divine plan, said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS". That was His name, Joshua. Joshua was a type of Jesus. It means the same thing—Saviour. In one place in the New Testament Jesus is translated, Joshua. His name was no accident. After the long ages in which a world had waited for its Redeemer, He came with a name divinely assigned—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS".

We look upon little children, and we wonder what they will become. Will he be just an ordinary boy, just an ordinary man; just one of the common herd; just an average human personality? Or will he display, will he reveal at last unsuspected qualities which will bring him to a place of distinction and honour among his brethren? No one can tell what the little baby will become. But there never was any doubt as to what this Babe would become. Named from Heaven as a Saviour, He was divinely ordained to be a Saviour.

If I had time, it would be really delightful to me, and perhaps helpful to you if I could remind you of some of the qualities of this marvellous One: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"; "The Son of man", "The Morning Star". "He made the stars also",—each of them assigned an appointed task, and each of them qualified, no doubt, possessed of such potentialities and powers as would make the fulfilment of that task possible.

What little ideas people have of things! We have to begin, because we cannot see far in advance, we have to begin with most things in a very humble way. A year ago to-night I was in Singapore. I went around the world by air, without touching the deck of a ship; and in all the airports from which I left; and at which I arrived, among them all around the world, until I got back to Toronto, and including that, I did not see one that was not in process of enlargement and reconstruction. No one had been able to see far enough in advance, or to see things large enough to plan from the beginning. And so they did like the man whose barns were inadequate. He had to build bigger and better barns. They had to pull down their airports, and build larger and greater ones. Why? Because we are only men, and cannot see very far.

Has it occurred to you that our God is a Maker and Builder who has never had to enlarge, or to amend, or in any way, to correct His original creation? The sun is still large enough, hot enough, and mighty enough, to fulfil its duty; and the moon and all the stars. The same laws of assimilation and growth, which bring us our bountiful harvest, were in operation in Joseph's time, in the days of plenty, when the earth brought forth so abundantly. All the rivers run into the sea, as the wise man said, and still the sea is not full. The mountains are established; the created order stands as it came from the Creator's hand, maintained and preserved by His unlimited powers. He never made a mistake. Ask the scientist. Ask your doctor if he can improve on your body. I heard a surgeon say "All we can do is just to remove the obstruction from the operation of natural law, and let nature do its work." Like the street cleaners, and repairers, we can only move things out of the way of progress.

Is it to be supposed that God, Who made this material world with such meticulous care, and such absolute perfection, when He designed to send a Saviour into the world, He would send Someone Who needed the help of the Pope! or the Moderator of some General Assembly, or some priest, or preacher! I cannot conceive of a salvation that is of God that could be other than all of grace. He must be the Alpha and the Omega. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and He came duly qualified for His unique ministry. "Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, made under the law" to work out a vicarious righteousness on our behalf; to fulfil our life's day for us, to render in our behalf all a Holy God required of His human creatures—then to put it down, and say "Put it to the credit of that sinner—that sinner—that sinner!" He came into the world to save sinners.

My dear friends, when the mountains shall disappear, and the rivers cease to flow and the seven seas shall be evaporated, and the sun and the moon, and the morning stars shall fail to give their wonted light—when that happens then you may question whether Jesus can save you or me. But until then, that can never be. For when at last we shall have no further need of sun or moon or stars, we shall live in a created order, in a redeemed universe, where the Lamb is all the light thereof. I wish I could lay that truth to the heart of all; but I cannot: only the Spirit of God can do that.

There are many by-products to His vicarious life: "There were also with him other little ships." A Teacher! Yes; as a further by-product and in a certain sense an integral part of His ministry of salvation, teaching us

how to live the life He lived: but teaching was not His primary work. A Reformer! Every age brings forth some crack-brain charlatans who propound their plans for a Utopia with which to deceive the public. A pope! He claims Jesus Christ as his authority! Even the Roman Catholic Church calls itself "Christian".

He came into the world to save sinners—at a great price. When you gave someone a Christmas gift; you did the best you could, did you not? For someone you love, your wife, your husband, your children, some friend, to the limit of your resources you expressed your affection. How terribly commercialized this Christmas season has become! But I remind you, it is a commonplace, I know, of the greatest of all gifts.

Do you understand what President Truman is talking about when he asks the American Congress to authorize so many billions of dollars for defence? Did you ever see a billion dollars?

I went into an assay office in New York some years ago, and they showed me a crude box, full of bars of pure, refined, gold ingots just like pig iron. One of the men said "That box contains about one hundred thousand dollars. You may have it, if you will carry it away." I stooped down and laid hold of the crate to try to lift it. I could not even move it.

But this little Babe was made "heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." The wealth, not of this world, the silver and the gold are His, the cattle upon a thousand hills, the liquid wealth beneath its surface, which He put there, all are His. This little speck in the universe which we call the earth, is a very small thing. It used to seem to me to be large, but when I had flown around it, it did not seem so large. It did not exactly seem as though I could walk around it—there is too much water! but it did not seem to be so big as it used to seem. In comparison with worlds upon worlds which comprise this ordered universe, it is just a little speck; and He is the Lord of all, and through His veins flowed the blood that was the life of Deity, as well as of humanity. Begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, the wealth of all the worlds in solution, He counted down the ruby drops, until there was not a drop of blood left. And when they pierced His side there came out blood and water. It cost Him that, my dear friends, to make Christmas for us: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Christ Jesus came into the world—what for? I wish someone could pay for the last war, and the war before that, and stop another war from coming. I wish there were someone rich enough to cancel the incalculable indebtedness of the United States, and of all the other nations. I wish there were someone rich enough to pay off all debts, and give this bankrupt earth a new start, don't you? Morally and spiritually; that is exactly what Jesus did. He came into the world to save sinners; paid the last farthing of our indebtedness, that He might save us every one. What a Christmas gift that was!

### III.

Well now, Paul says—this story that I have tried to relate to you, inadequately, of course—"is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance"—it is a true saying. This story is literally, finally, absolutely—I use the strongest word I know—absolutely true, with no admixture of error: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true."

"This is a faithful saying"! You don't need to be worried about what the critics say. The historic Jesus actually lived, actually died, born in Bethlehem. His birth, and subsequent life, and death and resurrection, are indisputable, established, historical facts: "This is a faithful saying," no "cunningly devised fable." Receive it as being true.

And "worthy of all acceptance". I think that means worthy of acceptance by all the faculties of your mind; that with all the faculties of our minds we may give hospitality to this great truth.

It is "worthy of all acceptance" intellectually. If you want to prove whether or not you have a good brain, try it on the gospel. I have a little book on my shelves somewhere entitled "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation". A very eminent lawyer, a secularist, who believed not a word of the gospel, set himself to analyze this Book, in order that he might discredit it, and refute its every contention. He failed, of course, as do all who try that. What happened? He fell at the feet of the Saviour crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Later he wrote, "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation", declaring that its logic was inexorable, its arguments irrefutable, worthy of the acceptance of the whole intellect, no matter how intellectual you may be.

And of the heart too! He died for us. We may receive Him with our affectional nature, opening our hearts to the incoming of this great truth, that the Lover of our souls came from heaven, and went to the cross and through the grave to save us.

"Worthy of all acceptance." Let there be no reservation. Yield heart and intellect to the truth of the gospel, and say, "I believe."

And it means, of course, worthy of the acceptance of all, all the humble and the noble, the despised and the exalted; the poor and the rich; the foolish and the wise—everybody: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

### IV.

The Gospel is "worthy of all acceptance", and we may receive Him just as Paul did, with the conviction THAT OF ALL SINNERS WE ARE "CHIEF".

I say to you Christian workers, that in your dealing with a man or a woman who has professed some interest in salvation, as long as he or she excuses himself or herself for their own sin, there is something more for the Holy Spirit to do, something that you cannot do. When we are really ripe, by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, to receive this truth, with all acceptance, we shall be like the publican, who did not so much as lift up his eyes, but beat upon his breast, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner".

He came to save bankrupt souls. "I was one," said Paul; but now he says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." "This is a faithful saying." No wonder he said that. "A blasphemer", "a persecutor, injurious"—everything that was bad. "But," said he, "He saved me. I was the chief of sinners, the most unworthy to accept this truth that

is worthy of all acceptation.

Can we take that place to-night? Can we, the vilest sinner, the oldest sinner, the youngest sinner, the poorest, the richest—any kind of sinner? Yes; every kind of sinner? It includes all—Christ Jesus came into the world to save you.

Someone left a gift at your home last night, or yesterday, instead of to-day, because to-day is Sunday. You looked at it and you said, "I know who sent it. I cannot accept it. I will send it back." Could you offer your friend a greater insult than to write on the card which accompanies the gift "Wishing you the compliments of the season", could you write, "Returned, unwanted." You would not be guilty of that!

"Behold a Stranger at the door,  
He gently knocks, has knocked before;  
Has waited long, is waiting still;  
You treat no other friend so ill."

Let us pray:

We remember, O Lord, that it is written that when the prodigal returned to the father's house, they began to be merry. It was for him, in truth, A Merry Christmas.

Whatever our state this evening, bring us into fellowship with Thee, and help us that we may put our hands in Thine, and that from now to the end of the road, up the shining steeps and through the gates of pearl into the city of light, we may be with Thee for evermore. Amen.

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and power.  
He is able;  
He is willing: doubt no more.

Now ye needy, come and welcome;  
God's free bounty glorify;  
True belief and true repentance—  
Every grace that brings you nigh—  
Without money,  
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him:  
This He gives you—  
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,  
Bruised and ruined by the Fall;  
If you tarry till you're better,  
You will never come at all:  
Not the righteous—  
Sinners, Jesus came to call.

View Him prostrate in the garden,  
On the ground your Maker lies!  
On the bloody tree behold Him,  
Hear Him cry before He dies,  
"It is finished!"  
Sinner, will not this suffice?

Lo, th' incarnate God, ascended,  
Pléads the merit of His blood;  
Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude:  
None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.

A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough to-day to last him for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at once to sustain life for a week to come. We must draw upon God's boundless stores of grace from day to day, as we need it.

—D. L. MOODY

## CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES

The best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. A Welsh minister, when preaching at the chapel of my dear brother Jonathan George, was saying that Christ was the sum and substance of the gospel, and he broke out into the following story:—A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done, he foolishly went to the old minister and inquired, "What do you think of my sermon, sir?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon!" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." Why, then, do you say it was poor; did you not think my explanation of the text to be accurate?" "Oh, yes," said the old preacher, "very correct indeed." Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes," they were very good, as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that *from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England*, wherever it may be, *there is a road to London?*" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old divine, "and so from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not a plain and direct road to Christ in it; and if ever I should find one that has no such road, I will make a road, I would go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for a sermon is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, unless there is a savour of Christ in it."—SPURGEON.

## NOVEL CHARITY

Strange zeal, indeed! which gets angry at those that censure public faults, and not at those that commit them! Novel charity this, which groans at seeing error confuted, but feels no grief at seeing morality subverted by that error. If these persons were in danger of being assassinated, pray, would they be offended at one advertising them of the stratagem that had been laid for them; and instead of turning out of their way to avoid it, would they trifle away their time in whining about the little charity manifested in discovering to them the criminal design of the assassins? Do they get waspish when one tells them not to eat such an article of food, because it is poisoned? or not to enter such a city, because it has the plague?

Whence comes it, then, that the same persons who set down a man as wanting in charity, for exposing maxims hurtful to a religion, would, on the contrary, think him equally deficient in that grace were he not to disclose matters hurtful to health and life, unless it be from this, that their fondness for life induces them to take in good part every hint that contributes to its preservation, while their indifference to truth leads them, not only to take no share in its defence, but even to view with pain the efforts made for the extirpation of falsehood?

—BLAISE PASCAL, *The Provincial Letters*.

## THE VIRGIN BIRTH

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Sunday Evening, December 23rd, 1923  
(Stenographically Reported)

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.— Luke 1:35.

I WANT to speak to you this evening of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ—a doctrine which is everywhere being assailed, and which, by many, is said to be no necessary part of Evangelical faith. Those who contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, are described very often as contentious persons. We are contentious in the sense that we contend for the faith. We are described, too, as disturbers of the peace; but what are the facts of the case? We have fallen into the habit of describing the deniers of the faith as "modernists". I have felt like taking a week off from other duties, to see if I could find in any dictionary a name that would be more fitting. I think the term "modernist" is altogether too complimentary. I do not think it carries with it all that ought to be embodied in the name that is given to this present movement in opposition to Evangelical truth. We might, perhaps, more appropriately describe those who would destroy the foundation of things as insurgents, as insurrectionists, as rebels, for they are not the King's loyal subjects—as theological revolutionaries—or, if you like, as theological bolshevists; because this thing that calls itself Modernism is anything but progressive: it is the philosophy of religious reactionaries; it is a movement that, so far from delivering us into a larger liberty, would carry us back again into the darkness of the middle ages, or, indeed, into the outer darkness of paganism itself. I say, those of us who contend for the faith are described as disturbers of the peace sometimes. There was an editorial in one of the city papers during the week on the conflict between Fundamentalism and Modernism, in which the writer paid me the compliment of quoting something I had said. And, in that connection, he said that this conflict was being waged with much bitterness. He ought to be a little more careful of his terms. There is no bitterness necessarily involved in strong speech; although the man who speaks plainly of this issue is in danger, I suppose, of being misunderstood. I said in New York the other day that, so far as I was concerned, I refused absolutely to fraternize with those who denied the Deity of my Lord; I would accord them no recognition as Christian teachers or even as Christians—that I would refuse to number them among my friends, nor would I eat their bread. Is that what you call "bitter" speech? Can you imagine any of the disciples breaking bread with Judas Iscariot after that terrible act of his? Can you imagine anyone who knew and loved the Lord Jesus extending the hand of fellowship to Pontius Pilate—the man who washed his hands in innocency, and said, "I will have nothing to do with it"? It was even necessary for Peter himself publicly to confess his allegiance to Christ, and implicitly to acknowledge his fault, before he was restored to the full confidence of his fellow-disciples.

Before the war, Lord Roberts frequently warned Great

Britain that she was in danger, and that it was necessary that she should arm, that she should be careful of her defences; and everywhere he was described as a militarist, as a man who loved war. Probably there was not a man in the world at that time who knew what war was better than Lord Roberts; nor, therefore, who hated war more intensely; but he had sense enough to face the facts of the international situation, and he warned his country, as a true patriot, not to shut its eyes to the impending danger.

In the Spring of the year in which the war broke out, I was travelling to Ottawa, and I met a gentleman who had been Speaker in the House of Commons. He took from his bag a speech which he had delivered in the House of Commons, opposing our making any contribution to imperial, naval, or military defence. I did not read the speech then, but I said, "Give me the gist of it." "Well, it is simply this," he said, "that human nature has changed, and that war on a large scale is now impossible." I said, "What do you make of a man like Lord Roberts?" "Oh, he has war on the brain," he said; "he is a professional soldier, he loves fighting, and that is why he talks like that." "Well," I said, "what do you make of the great editors of the leading London dailies, for instance—men who ought to feel something of the responsibility of their position, who are constantly warning the country of the peril to which they believe we stand exposed?" "Oh," he said, "they are simply in the pay of the Armament Trust." I then told him that I was present in the British House of Commons just the year before, when I heard some man deliver a speech in criticism of the government's proposals for the expenditure on armaments, and he declared that it was a waste of money, that it was a disgrace to a civilized country to appropriate so much money for the army and navy. After he had delivered his speech, I heard Mr. Lloyd George reply, and in his reply he said in effect: This gentleman's speech reflects great credit upon his sentiments, upon his feeling toward other nations, and he wished very much that he could join with him in believing that there was no danger; but he said that those who were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the inviolability of His Majesty's dominions could promise no reduction. "We regret to have to tell the country," he said, "that so far as we are able to judge of the present situation, we shall probably have to spend much more money in the future in national defence." And I said to my friend on the Ottawa train, "What do you make of a man like Lloyd George? He was looked upon as a pacifist at one time. During the Boer War he boldly avowed his opposition to that campaign." "Oh," he said, "he is in the same category. He, too, is in the pay of the Armament Trust." I then said to him, "If that be true, that these great editors and leading statesmen and soldiers are in the pay of an Armament Trust, if there is such a trust, it is the most damning characterization of human nature I have ever heard in my life, and you had better get ready for war." That was in April, 1914. In 1917 I made a few political speeches, the only political speeches I ever made in my life; but I was especially asked to go and stand on the platform beside this man who had said there would be no war, and plead for his election in order that he might reinforce the government in prosecuting the war to victory. And I told the audience on that occasion of the talk I had had with this ex-Speaker about war.

What has this to do with the subject before us? Simply this: that the day will come, and it is not far distant, when multitudes of Christian people will awake to a realization and a recognition of the fact that the people called Fundamentalists have been the seers; they have seen the sword coming; they know the implications of this assault upon the foundations of the faith, and are calling upon the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem to put on the whole armour of God that they may be able to stand in the evil day.

We are told that the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth, for instance, is no necessary part of Evangelical faith. That is a favourite position of Modernists. They, of course, do not take the position of openly denying the Deity of Christ and making an assault upon the whole body of Evangelical truth; but they say there are certain parts of what is called the gospel that do not belong to a modern man's thinking. One of them says, "The virgin birth involves a biological miracle which is unthinkable to the modern mind." Now, does it matter? That is my point this evening. I have said again and again that I have no fear for this Bible. Men will be preaching from that Bible, if the Lord tarries, centuries after the last Modernist has been buried and forgotten. This is "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." We have no fear about that; and, as a matter of fact, if it were possible to gather every single copy of this Book and make one great bonfire of it so that there should not be left anywhere upon earth a solitary copy of the Word of God, God could produce it again the next morning without one jot or tittle omitted, for He has a copy which He keeps Himself: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." We do not fear the theological seminaries, nor all those blatant infidels who strut around calling themselves professors and college presidents: the Word of the Lord stands. But, I say, it is well for us to ask how much we can wisely surrender, or whether we can surrender anything in the interests of peace.

The attitude of a great many people is simply this: I believe the Bible; and I believe the great body of truth which Evangelical Christianity has always represented. But, then, is there not some halfway place of meeting? Can we not, somehow or another, have peace? Why this contention about the things of God? I remind you that the gospel was given to the world in contention. Paul disputed in the synagogue; he argued; he debated the great fundamentals of the faith with those who held contrary opinions, and trusted to the power of the Holy Ghost to carry that truth to the hearts of the people. In the days when the Church was worthy to be called a militant Church it had victories to its credit; but nowadays we are told that if there is any way by which we can maintain our positions as Christians and not insist upon acceptance of the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth, by all means let us do it.

I am reminded of the great prescience of that man of God, C. H. Spurgeon, who knew more in five minutes than some of these men will know if they live to be as old as Methuselah. He had the gift of spiritual discernment; and in one of his great addresses on this downgrade controversy long ago, when those whom we call Modernists had taken positions which would be classed today almost as conservative, Spurgeon, dealing with this principle of being willing to surrender this, that, and the other thing, in order to placate the enemy, said: "Yonder, galloping over the plains of Russia there is a sleigh drawn by six

or eight horses. A pack of hungry wolves are in pursuit. The driver lashes his horses in an endeavour to make headway and get away from the devourers. But he sees the wolves are gaining upon him, their cry comes ever nearer and he sees his only salvation is to stop for a moment and cut loose two of the horses and leave them to the wolves. They do so; they take off the first team, and presently they hear the pack as they hungrily feed upon these two horses. But when they have gorged themselves with them they hear them in full cry again. Again they are being outclassed in speed, and they decide to cut off another two horses. And so they turn back two more, and go on with the remaining four. Presently the wolves gain on them again, and now they make the last desperate effort, and they cut off the third team, leaving only two horses harnessed to the sleigh. Then the driver urges his horses on and they gallop along with what remaining strength they have; but their sacrifices have been in vain, for presently the cry is heard again. What shall they do?" says Spurgeon. "They have only two horses left. What shall this driver do? Do? Why, man, do the only thing now possible, throw out your wife, of course!" Exactly!

What are we to do? Give up the inspiration of Scripture? Give up the Virgin Birth? Give up the Deity of Christ? Give up the Vicarious Atonement? Give up the doctrine of the Resurrection? Give up the doctrine of the New Birth? Give up the promise of His coming again? Give up everything, and throw it all to the wolves? Not for a minute! We might as well stop first as last. There is a point beyond which we cannot go; and I shall endeavour to show you, by giving you the simplest possible outline, that this is a doctrine which cannot be surrendered without surrendering the whole body of Evangelical truth.

Let me remind you, my friends, that the Modernists are not especially concerned with the Virgin Birth alone; they direct their attacks upon that, upon the inspiration of Scripture, upon the Deity of Christ, upon the Second Coming of Christ, or some other aspect of Evangelical truth. And they are disposed to say, "Now, if you will yield us this, we will be content." But anybody who knows the history of this movement, anybody who is at all conversant with the currents of the time, knows that the difficulty is, that the type of mind that is opposed to the Virgin Birth is opposed to every doctrine of supernaturalism. It is simply the natural against the supernatural. And when they say that the virgin birth involves a biological miracle that is unthinkable to the modern mind, I say, "Yes; only I would like to change one word: it involves a biological miracle unthinkable to the carnal mind—that is, entirely beyond the ken and experience of natural men." It belongs to a realm which they have never even glimpsed; they have never caught sight of it; they do not know of its existence.

I suppose I ought to stop now. (No!) One cannot resort in a sermon even to such technicalities as perhaps are allowable in a lecture; nor can one deal with a subject like this from the pulpit as one would be justified in dealing with it in a classroom. Therefore I shall try to give you a simple outline of a subject upon which volumes have been written, and upon which volumes more may yet be written. Will you allow me to say this? There is one advantage, at least, to a congregation in having the messages of the pulpit printed, for if a man gives the result of years of thinking, it is not likely that

the average hearer will grasp all that is said in one hearing. He gets the impression, he remembers much; but he goes away, if he has been interested at all, saying, "I wonder what the speaker meant by such a statement? I wonder what was the connection? I wish I could recall exactly what he said." But when it is reported and written down, you can take and study it. I hope you will take that message of last Sunday evening—a very simple statement, but I want you to think of that which differentiates Evangelical Christianity from Roman Catholicism. Study it for yourself, and think it out for yourself. And do the same thing with this subject.

## I.

Now, let me state this simple proposition: THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT AFFIRMS AND NOWHERE CONTRADICTS THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH. It is set forth in detail, of course, in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and if you carefully study those two narratives you will find they are mutually complementary. One evangelist records what another has omitted to mention; but if you put the two together you will find they are in perfect agreement, and they complement each other. Now, we believe in the inspiration of Scripture, but inspiration does not necessarily preclude the possibility of the writer's receiving information from human sources; inspiration does not necessarily require that every word of that which is written should be directly received by divine communication: it does require that in the writing of that record, the writer should be so completely directed by the Holy Spirit that he would write exactly what God willed should be written. But he may have received his information respecting certain matters through human channels. Where did Matthew and Luke get their information about the virgin birth? That sacred secret belonged to two people: it belonged to Joseph and to Mary herself—and to nobody else, except as they learned it from their lips, unless, indeed, by direct divine communication. And I do not think it requires a very keen observer to recognize, when you come to read Matthew's story of the birth of our Lord, that Matthew is writing that story from Joseph's standpoint. It looks as though he had talked with Joseph. Joseph has told him certain things, and Joseph has told him of his fears, of how he himself was shocked at a certain discovery, until God came to him and explained it all. Then, when you come to read this matchless story contained in Luke's gospel—and for beauty of expression and noble reticence, I question whether you can find a sublimer passage in literature than Luke's account—when you come to read the story of Luke you will find that Luke is writing from the standpoint of Mary. Mary has opened her heart. She has communicated her secret. And these two writers write as they have learned it.

Into the details of that I cannot go, except to say this: that these stories of the virgin birth of Christ are integral parts of the gospels. You cannot delete that story from Matthew or from Luke without invalidating the whole gospel narrative. There is the same authority for that as there is for any word in the gospel. There is no part of either of these gospels that is more firmly settled, that is more generally attested, than the fact that these birth-stories of Jesus, in the oldest manuscripts, are part and parcel of Matthew's gospel and Luke's gospel, and if you delete them you may delete everything in those two gospels. Dr. Fosdick says that the apostles never made

the virgin birth a fundamental; that the apostles never preached it; that only two evangelists record it; that if it had been so important a matter, it certainly would be in all the gospels. It is not necessary that God should say anything more than once. In the beginning He said, "Let there be light; and there was light." He did not need to repeat it, and if that be the Word of God, it is quite enough for me to have the complete story written once without having it written over and over again.

Take Mark's gospel. Mark does not say one word about the early years of Jesus. He does not refer to the infancy of Jesus at all. He begins with His public ministry, with His baptism; but how does he begin? "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Surely we are justified in saying that it is there by implication! Then, when we come to John's gospel, oh, what a wonderful word that is! Somebody says, "But John did not say anything about the virgin birth." No; but do you remember that on the cross the dying Saviour looked at His mother and at John, and He said: "Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." Don't you think that somehow or another the sacred secret came out? How does he begin? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Is John speaking of a mere man, think you, in these words? And you remember how he goes on: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which was born, not of bloods (R.V. Marg.) nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He says that those who received Jesus were born from above; and that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And in that matchless chapter, the third of John, John records as having come from the lips of Jesus the great doctrine that inasmuch as Nicodemus and all like him were born of the flesh, they must also be born of the Spirit.

Why was it not necessary for Jesus to be born again? Why? Because He was begotten of the Holy Ghost. He was human, but He was divine; He was both God and man. And this marvellous miracle which John in his first chapter insists must take place in the experience of every one who receives Jesus had already taken place in the experience of Jesus Himself, because He was born from above: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." "The Word was made flesh"—what does he mean? "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." And then, if you will follow all the way through John's gospel, as through Mark's, you will find that if in so many words the virgin birth is not stated, it is certainly there by implication, and one cannot by the wildest stretch of the imagination, it seems to me, conclude that Mark or John has said a single word that is contrary to the two records we have in Matthew and Luke which declare that Jesus was virgin born.

But these men say that the apostles did not make it a fundamental of the faith, and that Paul had nothing to say on this subject. I am not at all sure of that. You take that wonderful passage in the first of Romans—and I will not weary you much longer with these matters—that wonderful passage in the first of Romans where he says he is writing of the gospel of God “concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared—or defined, or proclaimed—to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Dr. Orr points out in his book on the Virgin Birth that in the passage which I have quoted as a text this evening, the definite article is omitted; that it is not “the Holy Spirit” but “Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” And a similar phrase occurs here: He “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,” and then He was “declared—defined, proclaimed—to be the Son of God with power, according to Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” That is to say, the resurrection from the dead was the revelation of that fact; but He was the Son of God according, not to the Spirit of holiness, but according to Spirit of holiness. He “was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh,” but the Son of God by “the power of the Highest”—and that fact was declared, manifested, by His resurrection from the dead. Thus, if I had time to take you through Paul’s Epistles and to remind you of the many times in which he refers to the pre-existence of our Lord Jesus, God sending His Son into the world, and saying that he was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those which were under the law, I think I could show you that implicitly the doctrine of the Virgin Birth runs all through Paul’s epistles.

Take, for example, the fifth chapter of Romans, which I referred to in our baptismal service this evening. Paul there plainly declares that “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” There is no exception to it in Paul’s theology: he speaks of Jesus as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, exempted from the stain of sin, coming into the world as no other man did ever come into the world. If I carry you forward into the Epistle to the Hebrews—“He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham”—He took on Him deliberately the seed of Abraham, identified Himself with us.

## II.

Let me ask this question: WHAT PRACTICAL BEARING, AFTER ALL, HAS THIS DOCTRINE UPON THE BODY OF TRUTH WHICH WE ARE TO BELIEVE IF WE ARE TO BE SAVED?

We are represented, particularly in newspapers; sometimes, as men who are quarrelling over shibboleths, striving about words to no profit. But, my friend, these words represent certain truths. If you are entering into a contract, if you are buying a house, for instance, when the lawyer puts the title deed before you, you say, “Wait a minute, I must get my glasses.” And if he says, “Don’t bother about the words,” you reply, “I must see what I am going to sign. These words mean something, not as words, but they represent certain obligations I assume.” Our Lord Jesus said: “Every idle word that man shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day

of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” We need, therefore, to be careful of our words. We are not striving about mere words, but we are trying to strive for the body of truth which these words represent. We are not thinking of a dead Christ, of some historical figure. One brother got up last night in our prayer meeting and read an excerpt from a speech delivered in London in 1888—something about the Jews and their persecution in the Russian Empire. The trouble with it all was, that the Jews who were then persecuted, were dead, the Russian Empire was no longer, and the man who made the speech had passed away. We are not talking about something that belongs to the dim and distant past; we are talking about something that is of vital interest to every believer today. What vital relation has the doctrine of the Virgin Birth to the body of Evangelical truth?

In the first place, *If you reject the doctrine of the Virgin Birth you reject the inspiration and authority of Scripture.* Is that anything? It is impossible for any man to call that in question without denying the divine authority of the Book that records the fact. Of course, when he has done that, he has paved the way for the denial of everything. Anybody can understand that. There it is in Matthew and Luke, plainly stated; implied through the whole New Testament; declared, I omitted to say, in Matthew, to be the fulfilment of prophecy: “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel—God with us.” Thus, you not only deny the inspiration and authority of the New Testament, but of the Old as well. So far as I am concerned, I part company absolutely with the man who does that. I would put him out of any pulpit if I could. The man who denies the inspiration and authority of the Bible has no business in any Christian pulpit; he has no right in any Christian college as a teacher. And I will try to make it easy for him to get out and to make it as difficult as possible for him to stay in.

What else? *What relation has that to the person of our Lord?* If He was the son of Joseph and Mary, what then? What bearing has that upon His sinlessness? How can He possibly escape the taint of sin? I do not mean to say that the Virgin Birth necessarily itself implies sinlessness. In order to effect that, the Roman Catholics have invented the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception: they have taught that Mary herself was sinless; but that only puts the matter back another generation. All have sinned — Mary included; but “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” A miracle! Of course, it is a miracle, but how else could Jesus have escaped the taint of sin? That He was sinless, there is no question, but, my friend, had I time I could point out to you that this affects the whole record of His life. Let it be sufficient to say that the gospels represent the Lord Jesus as a supernatural Person from beginning to end, supernatural in the sense that He was free from sin as no other man was free from sin; His birth, according to the record, was accompanied by supernatural manifestations — the star, the angel; not the birth of a man only; it was the birth of a God. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” As Dr. Orr points out, there are some who are fond of saying that John did not teach

the doctrine of the Virgin Birth; Mary had "kept all these sayings in her heart." Mary knew that this child of hers was superhuman, that He was more than a natural child: what He was she may not clearly have understood, but she kept these sayings in her heart. She was always wondering what would come of that Boy of hers. When in the beginning of His ministry He came to that marriage feast, "and when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Oh, I think just at that moment Mary wanted to tell her secret. She knew the power that flowed from those fingers, that life itself would spring from that word of His. How and to what extent, she did not know. But it is John who records her as almost standing back in awe and wonder to see what this marvellous Son of hers would do.

What bearing has it upon His miracles? Granted that He was supernaturally born, miracles are quite explicable. I do not mean to say the Virgin Birth is necessary to the record of miracles. Elijah performed miracles, so did Elisha and the apostles.

*But it does have a bearing upon His death.* What was the meaning of His death? What was the meaning of His resurrection? In a word, it seems it is necessarily involved in the whole doctrine of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of Reconciliation, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." And let me remind you that whoever puts his finger upon that doctrine, and professes a rejection of that as well as any other aspect of the supernatural life of our Lord, that it is not that particular doctrine he is assailing, but the carnal mind is in rebellion against the whole revelation of God in Christ. It is not a question whether we are to have a Christ Who was virgin born or not virgin born; the whole question is whether ultimately we are to have any Christ at all; whether we are to have a revelation from God, or a light from heaven.

Well, my friend, it not only affects the Person of Christ, the Deity of Christ, and His atoning work, but *it affects your personal experience as a Christian.* "Well, I just changed my mind, I changed my religious opinions, and I came to accept things I had formerly rejected." If it was but a change of mind, you have never been saved. It is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." And if I were to ask you to tell me just now what happened, I think, first of all, there would be a profound silence, and if I could take you one by one, you would say, "Pastor, I would like to have a month to think about it, because something happened that I cannot easily explain." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The miracle of the virgin birth was repeated in your conversion. The miracle of the virgin birth is no greater miracle than the conversion of the soul dead in trespasses and in sins; and it takes God to do both. You will always find that those who attack the doctrine of the Virgin Birth attack the whole body of Evangelical truth; they attack the doctrine of sin and regeneration — the whole matter of Christian experience, and they leave us utterly out in the wilderness.

I want you to remember, therefore, that these things are of practical importance, and that we do not propose

to let the men who have removed themselves from the actualities of life to discuss these things in theoretical fashion before their classes in class-rooms, to have it all their own way, because if some of these gentlemen would try their theories out on the poor man who needs help, who is dead in trespasses and in sins, they would find it would not do. We need an almighty Saviour; we need a supernatural Saviour; we all need the power of the Holy Ghost to overshadow us. What is salvation? Not a change of mind only; not a change of religious opinion, but "Christ in you, the hope of glory." There is no other hope of glory but that Christ shall be born within your heart.

Thus everything is at stake, but we are glad that some of us have not any doubt about it. I like to make my confession of faith sometimes. This is a grand old Book. I have no doubt whatever of its inspiration. When I come upon a subject such as I have been discussing this evening, and begin to look into the marvellous depths of God's Word, I feel like saying that if God Himself did not write this Book it must have been written by a lot of clever men; that if some of those men who call themselves "scholars" can get men to discuss what they have written for twenty centuries together and keep at it, they may be entitled to a little respect. Their books wear out and pass away. A man who used to be a deacon here, our late brother, G. R. Roberts, told me that after visiting the British and Foreign Bible Society book store in London he went into a great publishing house one day. He was up on the top floor and he saw a man wheeling load after load of well-bound books, coming to a chute, and upsetting the books, so that the books went down to the basement. On enquiring what the man was doing, he was told that he was sending those books back to the paper manufacturer to be ground all over again into paper. They were no good. They were out-of-date. Nobody would buy them. When he asked what the books were he was told they were copies of Colenso, on the Pentateuch—one of the first of the modern higher critics. "But," Brother Roberts said, "over in the Bible Society I did not see them sending the Bibles back to be ground up into paper." Oh, no; the Bible is still here, and you had better believe it. What, then, does the story of the virgin birth mean?

That God came down, was begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, lived our life for us, died our death for us, went down into the grave for us, came out in resurrection power and glory, ascended into the heavens, commissioned His disciples to go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, to bid every poor sinner to look to the Cross, and believe and rest upon the promise of God, Who cannot lie; and to believe not only that our sins are forgiven, but that some day these bodies of ours will rise again in the likeness of His body, glorified, separated from sin, and that He Himself will again come down the skies. For my part, I am going to stand by that old Book. There is nothing else worth preaching, and it is because I believe it to be true that I want everybody else in the world to believe it too.

I want somebody to believe it tonight. Hear this testimony in the Name of the Lord. It is a true Gospel, and Jesus will be your Saviour, but if you do not yield to Him, He will be your Judge. Jesus is coming again. May we all be numbered among those who love His appearing.

## SPAIN — TOLERANCE OR PERSECUTION?

SPAIN continues to occupy its place in the news, either as a supposed bulwark against Communism and hence a candidate for American largesse, or else as the persecutor of Protestant minorities. Official Roman Catholic propaganda is deeply concerned with magnifying the importance of the former and denying the truth of the latter. Several documents on the matter have come to our attention in a missionary magazine published by a French Protestant society which carries on work in Spain, the "Pro Hispania Mission". On the one hand it prints excerpts from official declarations made by General Franco on the matter of religious liberty in Spain, and then it prints an eye witness account of conditions in evangelical churches in that land. We translate the following selections, leaving our readers to draw their own conclusions:

### General Franco on Religious Liberty

To Representatives of the American Press  
(Summer, 1946):

"In Spain, confessions other than the Catholic, enjoy full liberty and are guaranteed by the article of the Fuero de los Españoles which respects freedom of conscience. Protestant churches exist in the same places in Spain where they existed under other régimes, although they are necessarily few in number in view of the fact that the religion of almost all Spaniards is the Catholic religion, and the majority of those who do not profess it are atheists. The number of Protestants is therefore limited to foreign districts or to those of foreign origin, or to those who have lived for a long time outside of Spain."

To the Editor and Publisher of *The Mirror*,  
Los Angeles:

"I asked the Caudillo what were, at the present time, the relations between Spain and the Vatican. Those fitting for a Catholic nation which, thanks to the national movement, has seen its spiritual values reborn, and in which a free and independent church may fulfill its mission without the slightest interference on the part of the state, which in its legislation is inspired for its part, by Catholic orthodoxy," replied the General." (Madrid, June 7, 1950, A.B.C.)

To a Pilgrimage from Colombia and Venezuela:

"It is a genuine joy and a satisfaction for every Spaniard to see you on Spanish soil where you bring the greetings of the sons of America...."

"You find here the same Spain of the 15th and 16th centuries which kindled our faith, the same Spain, not decadent and calumniated, but Spain eternal and renewed, the same noble, intransigent Spain which defends the truth as it did at Trent."

"It is not that we are intransigent for life, seeing that as Catholics we have a deeply rooted sentiment of comprehension and tolerance; but that does not mean that we are disposed to compromise on basic questions which threaten our faith, because in these questions we cannot nor will not compromise. Compromise is for those who have not sufficient force to overcome their enemy. Such come to terms when victory is not possible, but when it is possible to obtain the victory, there is no reason to come to terms."

"When nations have received from God the advantage of possessing a single faith, and when they all speak the language of the true religion, no concession can be made

to error, since 99 per cent. of their sons have communion in the true faith, and an exceedingly small number of dissidents is composed of those who do not believe." (A.B.C., Madrid, June 8, 1950)

### Actual Conditions of Protestant Churches in Spain

The following report is written of a visit to Protestant Churches in Arragon, Spain, in *L'Etoile du Matin*, the organ of the French-Swiss Mission "Pro Hispania". Speaking of the various missionary stations visited the writer says:

"Station' is indeed not the right word, since there are no longer any stations in existence, except at Saragossa. There are no longer any pastors, no school teachers, nor evangelists nor colporteurs. The pastor of Saragossa single-handed carries the responsibility for this vast region.

"There are no longer any chapels: those of Saragossa and Barbastro, which were rented, have been wrecked, the furnishings burned and the buildings occupied by others. That of Jaca, so prettily decorated, is still there, but permission to hold services there, requested by letter of July 27, 1948, has not yet been granted, despite numerous attempts made by Don Benjamin. The answer is always that the higher authorities have not given their opinion on the matter. And yet Franco has declared, 'Protestant Churches exist in the same places in Spain as they existed under other régimes!'

"The schools, too, are closed, without the slightest hope of being opened while the law on education remains unchanged. It is a pity to see these marvellous instruments of work useless, while so many parents say to us: 'If you re-open your schools we should be very happy to send our children to you!' But they say it in secret for it is better that that should not be repeated to the wrong persons.

"Here is a picture of the last home we visited before returning to France. In the dining room, a large poster affirms: 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.' And that is indeed the experience of this father and this mother, whose two sons were shot. Their heart is bleeding, but their faith consoles them. One of their daughters was not able to be married according to civil law although the marriage was performed according to the Protestant ceremony. Her children are considered as illegitimate. Her husband had been baptized a Catholic as a child and retains the 'indelible mark'. Although he became a Protestant in later years, the state continues to consider him as a Catholic and will not recognize any other marriage for him than that performed according to Canon Law, that is to say, blessed by a priest. This situation entails many difficulties and material disadvantages for the new household. But again, the motto holds true, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me'. It is by the grace of God that they find the strength to live from day to day. And in family worship, in which we joined before saying farewell, we felt lifted up to the heavenly places where our friends continually dwell."

### The Same Spain as in Inquisition Days

It is not necessary to point out the contradiction between the assurances of liberty coming from Franco and the actual conditions of Spanish Protestants as recounted by a first-hand witness. Official statements of policy are always to be interpreted in the light of their actual outworkings, and in this case the fair words of

the Spanish dictator, the last remaining ally of Hitler and Mussolini, are not worth very much. Over and above this, it is interesting to note the self-contradictions in the statements of General Franco. On the one hand he speaks of the infinitesimally small number of Protestants and yet confesses that the majority of those who do not profess to be Catholics are "atheists". Is he proud of Spanish atheism, always an indigenous product of Rome, or does he mean to suggest that a Protestant is worse than an atheist? Again, while affirming that Spain is a Catholic country, the same as when she defended her faith at Trent—not a battle but a reactionary theological council, the same Spain that is celebrated and execrated on account of the Bloody Inquisition—Franco assures the South American pilgrims that "Compromise is for those who have not sufficient force to overcome their enemies." This is the very genius of the Inquisition in a nutshell: Torquemada himself could not have put it more aptly nor more crudely. It is the principle upon which Rome always operates when she outnumbers her opponents whether it is in Spain or Italy, in Latin America or in Quebec.

—W.S.W.

### WHY I AM A PROTESTANT

IT IS well for us to review some of the distinguishing features of Protestantism. In order to effect a reformation it was necessary to go against the tide of almost 1,500 years of tradition, authority, and organized formalism. To resist this powerful momentum was almost impossible. For anyone who broke through the established bounds of scholasticism was considered a heretic, and in turn quickly disposed of. But Luther, "placing himself in the hands of the living God," was able to successfully carry on the revolt against Rome. This was possible because his political theory brought the Elector of Saxony to his aid, and because his spiritual ideals brought a great following from among the general public. Some of these religious principles constitute the subject matter of this article.

1. I am a Protestant because I believe "in the priesthood of believers". I rejoice to know that each believer has been invited to present his personal case at the throne of grace. It is not necessary to go through a super-spiritual representative of the Church who has a special corner of religious power to have your petitions placed before God. The proclamation has gone forth that each believer is welcomed into the presence of the Father to make known his own needs and desires. An ecclesiastical order that has certain spiritual prerogatives which are beyond the reach of everyone but those within the order is abolished. Through a levelling process all distinctions have been removed. In Protestantism a religious democracy is established which entitles all believers to the same amount of spiritual benefits. The most ordinary Christian is in line to receive as much spiritual power and grace as any one else. We can all have just as much of God as we are willing to pay the price for. He is now equally accessible to every person in the same measure.

2. I am a Protestant because I believe in being "justified by faith". Faith is the only medium whereby we make the provisions of the atonement vital to our personal lives. Redemption does not come by the penitent performing deeds of righteousness which purify the soul. All of our effort and striving is of no avail unless it

places us on trusting ground. No amount of scourging and lashing of the soul in discipline can bring the forgiveness of one sin. The prescribed way to receive pardon for all sins is found only in the hand of faith reaching up to God's hand of pardoning power and the clasping of these two hands brings deliverance. The burning of candles, the paying of money for special services, the repetition of prayers just for the sake of numbers, is not sufficient to gain one moment of divine favor for the remission of sins. It takes the blood of Christ to perform this miracle, and that remedy is applied only to the believing heart.

3. I am a Protestant because I believe that there is redeeming merit only in Christ's suffering and death. The bookkeeping system that sets the amount of merit necessary to be saved and then proceeds to hoard all of the merit above that standard is based on the wrong principle. In other words, certain saints have been better than was required for their salvation, thus the surplus merit which they accumulated becomes the property of the Church. The content of the "treasury of merit" can be applied by the authority of the Church to those who are deficient and that will bring the account into balance. This supererogation of moral units is out of keeping with the whole appeal of Jesus. He insisted that we were to walk in all the light that we had, and to do less than that was sin. So if one person has more goodness than his neighbor, then his responsibility is increased by that much. So instead of accumulating a surplus he is only keeping up with God's program for his life, and to do less would bar him from salvation.

4. I am a Protestant because I believe in laity participation in public worship. The use of congregational songs which engage the contribution of each member of the audience will add to the total interest in the service. The exchange of experiences through the medium of testimonies brings benefit to all who are in the service. The opportunity to do personal work in inviting others to the altar gives added interest in kingdom building to those who are laymen. Thus, by spreading the number of those taking part in the worship the interest of the congregation is intensified and a greater variety of activities is injected into the service.

5. I am a Protestant because I believe that the public worship service should be centred around the pulpit. To have a service in the form of a ceremony which practically no one understands and to listen to scripture in a foreign tongue which practically no one can interpret is to lose the dynamic of the gospel. The reading of the Bible and the exposition of the same is indispensable in bringing hearts to a decision and in providing the greatest amount of constructive materials for the believer. The power of the Word is to be found only in its direct application to the listener as it comes forth from the burning heart of an anointed minister. If that pulpit-centered type of worship is lost, then the evangelistic fervor which is so essential in the propagation of the Gospel is absent. This quality of evangelism must be present if the Church fulfils its obligation to the world.

6. I am a Protestant because I do not believe in the infallibility of human judgment. To set up one person as being without error and incapable of making a false interpretation is not in keeping with our human frailties and limitations. To set up Biblical doctrines so that a person must accept a certain interpretation of necessity or be guilty of heresy is going too far in trusting finite

judgment. The finest type of devotional character is developed where an individual believes a certain doctrine through divine revelation and is loyal to it because he gives personal sanction to its meaning.

7. I am a Protestant because I believe that every believer should combine the secular and the spiritual aspects of life into a functioning whole. Instead of letting the priests do only spiritual thinking and the laity do only secular thinking there should be a working combination of the two fields of thought. The spiritual should be made practical by the secular and the secular should be made sacred by the spiritual. These two thought areas should not be divorced and left in separate compartments, but the ideal is to let them influence each other so that both will be made stronger.

—WENDELL TAYLOR.

### FRIENDS OF THE GOSPEL WITNESS

WE ARE happy to record that we have received a letter from another United States subscriber enclosing a cheque for \$100.00, and only to-day, December 26th, another letter from Western Canada, enclosing \$100.00. We are profoundly grateful to these good friends for their Christmas gifts to THE GOSPEL WITNESS. These gifts came independently of our article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS of last week, because those gifts were mailed before that article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS left Toronto.

During the depression of some years ago when so many thousands of people were out of employment, and some were reduced to dire want, Jarvis Street had a tremendous job to do at Christmas time in sending out hundreds of baskets, not containing luxuries, but bread, and meat, and potatoes, and other necessities of life.

These contributions, to which we have referred, are received at THE GOSPEL WITNESS office almost as were those baskets received by the poor, whose larders and pockets were empty; by which we do not mean that THE GOSPEL WITNESS has fallen upon evil times, for apparently it was never more popular than it is to-day, and our readers were never kinder in their expressions of appreciation. Our only difficulty is with the ever-increasing publication costs. It is the only substantial paper we know which even tries to maintain an existence without revenue from advertising. But we shall carry on, and live in hope that some one of the Lord's stewards, to whom He has entrusted much, will send us a gift of thousands to relieve the tension.

### RUTS

The world is full o' ruts, my boy,  
Some shaller and some deep;  
And every rut is full of folks as  
High as they can heap.

Each one that's growlin' in th' ditch  
Is growlin' at his fate,  
An' wishin' he had got his chance  
Before it was too late.

They lay it all on some one else, or  
Say 'twas just their luck—  
They never once consider that 'twas  
Caused by lack o' pluck.

But here's the word o' one that's lived  
Clean through, from soups to nuts;  
The Lord don't send no derricks around  
T' hyst folks out o' ruts.

### AMONG THE CHURCHES

By H. C. Slade

#### Another Church Debt Free

Under the capable leadership of Rev. W. C. Tompkins, the Fundamental Baptist Church at Fort William, has attained unto the enviable position of being debt free. The highlight of the Annual Business Meeting of the church, held a few weeks ago was the burning of the parsonage mortgage. The church now owns two valuable properties, well situated in the busy city of Fort William. A few years after Mr. Tompkins became pastor, the church building was moved to a better location, and in order to accommodate the growing congregation was later enlarged. Through the weekly radio broadcast called, "Midweek Meditations", which has been carried on for eight years, the ministry of this church has been greatly expanded. Literally hundreds of shut-ins who cannot attend church services, and thousands of unconverted souls throughout the Fort William and Port Arthur district are by this means reached with the Gospel every week. As a result many have been saved. Three were baptized a few Sundays ago and others will follow their Lord in this ordinance shortly. Besides meeting their own local expenses, this congregation has consistently made generous contributions to the missionary projects now being supported by The Emergency Missionary and Educational Committee of the Union. The experience of Fundamental Baptist Church is a glowing example of what can be done by a consecrated leader and a people who are concerned for the cause of Jesus Christ.

#### Lanark

On a recent Sunday in Lanark, two young ladies responded to the Gospel invitation to accept Jesus Christ and to confess Him openly as their Lord and Saviour.

Along with his other pastoral duties, Mr. Duckworth has been lately making periodical visits to the County Home and Perth Hospital, where a number have expressed real interest in the message of salvation. One elderly man admitted that he was not satisfied and when Mr. Duckworth read the Word of God and showed him how Christ bore our sins on the cross, this man, who is past eighty, accepted the Lord. Although the room was filled with other people, it did not hinder him in the least from calling audibly upon the name of the Lord.

The pastor and members of the Lanark Church are greatly encouraged by the Lord's manifest blessing and are earnestly praying that these conversions may be but the first fruits of a great harvest to follow.

#### Evangelism Flourishes at Calvary, Ottawa

Pastor D. G. Olley writes:

"God has been graciously visiting us in salvation. Some weeks ago a French-Canadian Roman Catholic, who had been visited by Rev. W. Wellington, came to our service and professed to accept Christ as his Saviour. Since then he has been attending the services regularly.

"A woman came to our services as a result of the letters we put in the "Ottawa Citizen" in connection with the persecution at La Sarre and Val d'Or. Though she knew that Roman Catholicism was the masterpiece of Satan, she did not realize that she needed to be born again. It was a joy to see her a little while ago come to the parsonage expressing her desire to be saved. We would solicit for her the prayers of God's people, as her

husband is an ardent Roman Catholic, and is bitterly opposed to salvation by faith alone in the finished work of Christ.

"Another young woman, after one of our services, burst into tears and said that she wanted to be right with God. She accepted the Lord and left rejoicing. Since that night she has been a great joy to our hearts.

"Recently we had Mr. Michael Flowers, a coloured evangelist from the Bahamas, whom the Lord had richly blessed in our church in Newtownards, Ireland, conduct a two weeks' Campaign in our church. God again honoured our brother's ministry. Souls were saved and believers led to a closer walk with Him.

"It was a great joy, on the closing night of our mission, to see a neighbour of the young woman mentioned above, come along with her and confess that she had not realized the need of salvation until this young convert had spoken to her of the things of God." (We just learned that eight were baptized by Mr. Olley Sunday evening, November 26th.—H.C.S.)

#### Bethany Baptist Church, Harriston

A day of marked blessing was experienced at Bethany Baptist Church, Harriston, recently when the students of Toronto Baptist Seminary took charge of all the services. The announcement of their coming to the church was the means of bringing in a number of strangers and the result was a genuine up-lift for the work.

On the Sunday of December 17th, a Jarvis Street Octette brought special Christmas music and in so doing made a real contribution to the witness of the Church.

The prayers of all friends are coveted by the group at Harriston, that glory may rebound to the Lord through its labourers in this community.

#### Feeding the Hungry at Malartic

Below we print an interesting letter just received from Pastor Yvon Hurtubise of Malartic, in which he relates some of the highlights of recent activities on his field at Malartic. Mr. Hurtubise writes:

"Although we have not been able to get out to the outlying places for visitation recently, yet we are glad to report that in our last visit around Amos and Barraute we found not a few very interesting families. Many said that they enjoy the radio broadcasts and also the ministry of our French paper. It seems a shame not to be able to visit them oftener. One man, who welcomed us with open arms, said, 'We like to hear about the Gospel.'

"The need is very great, both materially and spiritually. We thank God for the boxes of clothing which we have received. I am planning on going to these districts again on Thursday to distribute a few boxes to some of the needy families, and also to break to them the bread of life.

"As for our work in Malartic itself, we have found a few more promising families both French and English, to whom New Testaments have been given. One young chap from England has been attending our services regularly, but is not saved yet. In another home, a young Jugo-Slavian couple, where we have a Bible study almost every week, bombards me with a new set of questions every time I go. Their interest is growing, and we pray that soon they will come to accept Christ as Saviour.

"We especially rejoice in the presence of a young French-Canadian couple amongst us. They do not miss attending the services, together with their two little boys. The woman, Mrs. R., accepted a New Testament about three

years ago and has been reading it constantly ever since. However, her husband showed a great deal of opposition and even threatened to burn the Testament and the French papers, until about four months ago when he came into contact with another Frenchman who is interested in the Gospel and had a long discussion with him. He then discovered that the Bible not only contained the truth but is the truth. Arriving back home he started to read his wife's New Testament and was simply amazed at the truth revealed. It was a pleasant surprise for us to see him at Sunday School a few mornings later. This couple have not yet made an open profession of faith in Christ, but we feel sure they will soon do so.

"Just this past week we came across another interesting case. A man who came from Quebec City to work here, after working for two months, was laid off at the moment his family arrived. He was caught here without any work and a family of seven to support. Being a Roman Catholic he sought help from the local priest, who literally took him by the shoulders and threw him out of his house, calling him a good-for-nothing. In his distress and discouragement, someone told him he might get help from the Baptist preacher. We have found that they are also very deeply interested in spiritual things, and trust that this little contact might lead to the salvation of these lost and wandering sheep."

#### "THRICE BLEST IS HE"

Thrice blest is he to whom is given  
The instinct that can tell  
That God is on the field when He  
Is most invisible.

Then learn to scorn the praise of men,  
And learn to lose with God!  
For Jesus won the world through shame,  
And beckons thee His road.

For Right is right, since God is God;  
And Right the day must win!  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin!

—FABER.

There is a tradition that our Lord, though He often wept, never smiled. I should like to know on what that tradition rests. I know that instead of affecting a rigorous and austere life, He was found at the tables of all sorts of men, so that His enemies called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber; and instead of discouraging the harmless festivities of life, He turned water into wine, that the rejoicings at the marriage of His friend might not be abruptly closed.—R. W. DALE.

#### BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"Other Little Ships" .....	\$2.00
Beautifully bound in blue cloth with gilt letters, 280 pages.	
"The Plot That Failed" .....	2.00
Special Illustrated Number of Sept. 28 .....	.25
"Russellism or Rutherfordism", 71 pages .....	.25
"The Papacy in the Light of Scripture", 26 pages .....	.25
"The Oxford Group Analyzed" .....	.05
"Does Killed in Action Mean Gone to Heaven?" .....	.05
"The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements" .....	.05
"The God of All Comfort" .....	.05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

## THE NEXT WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

FOR more than a half century one of the most important features of Jarvis Street's life has been its New Year's Morning Prayer and Testimony meeting. It may be that that meeting has been part of the church's life for even a century. But it is always a great meeting.

For some years we held a Watchnight Service from 11 o'clock forward on New Year's Eve. But we found that a number of people coming to that service, and remaining to past midnight, did not come to the New Year's morning meeting, and of the two services we reckoned the latter to be more important, and so we omitted the Watchnight service.

However, 1951 begins with Monday, and as a great company of people will be already present at the church Sunday evening, and because a large number of people have requested the resumption of the Watchnight Service, we propose to have a Watchnight Service Sunday night, beginning at 11 o'clock, or perhaps before, as the people will be there, and closing just after midnight.

So then, this is the programme: Regular Service at 7.00, Watchnight Service at 10.30; New Year's morning meeting, Monday morning at 10 o'clock.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS wishes all its readers A Happy New Year.

## THE SERMON ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH

AS THE publishers were closed for Monday and Tuesday, we had to try to get material in hand in advance. We selected a sermon, preached twenty-seven years ago, on The Virgin Birth, and not until it was in type did we discover that it had already been published a couple of years ago. But hundreds of new subscribers are now reading the paper, who were not on our list when this appeared, and it may not seem old to them, and even those who have already read it, may find profit in going over it again to "read, mark, and inwardly digest".

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 First Quarter Lesson 1 January 7, 1951

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

### HOW THE WORLD BEGAN

Lesson Text: Genesis 1:1-19.

Golden Text: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."—Gen. 1:1.

#### I. The God of Creation: verses 1, 2.

God existed in the countless ages of eternity. He is the great I.A.M., the Self-Existent, eternal, Sovereign God (Exod. 3:14). The Scripture record of God's revelation to man commences with a statement of the fact that from everlasting to everlasting He is God (Psa. 90:2). God was God "in the beginning", before time was; He is before all things, and above all things (John 1:1, 2; Col. 1:17, 18).

The name by which God revealed Himself in creation was "Elohim", meaning "The Mighty One". In Chapter two, which describes God's first dealings with man, He is called by the name "Jehovah", a name which is associated with Him in His covenant relations with His people.

God created the heaven and the earth out of nothing. The Hebrew word translated "created" signifies that He caused them to come into being without the aid of pre-existing material. Scripture positively contradicts the evolutionary hy-

pothesis. God issued a supreme command, and of His sovereign volition worlds came into existence.

We learn from verse two that the earth became a desolation and a ruin ("waste and void", Revised Version). God did not originally create the world a waste (Isa. 45:18, Revised Version reads, "Thus saith the God that formed the earth and made it; that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited. . ."). It may be that verse two is a record of an event subsequent to creation, some judgment from God, some devastating catastrophe which affected the earth and left it a ruin (compare Isa. 24:1; 34:11; Jer. 4:23-27). If that be the case, since there is no mention of time in verse two, there would be room in the interval between the events of verses one and two for all the geological ages and formations of the earth, as suggested by an examination of the earth's crust.

It is possible, then, that the work of God during the five days is rather a work of restoring the earth from the state of confusion, chaos and darkness, which resulted from the catastrophe, into one of peace and order. The word "made" in this chapter signifies in the Hebrew "to fashion" or "to prepare" from pre-existing material.

God the Father (Exod. 20:11; 1 Sam. 2:8; Job 38:4; Psa. 8:3); God the Son (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) and God the Holy Spirit were associated in the task of creating and preparing the earth. This fact is also emphasized later: "Let us make man in our image" (v. 26).

#### II. The Works of Creation: verses 3-19.

How powerful is the word of the living God! He speaks, and His will is done (Heb. 11:3). Light is typical of life, knowledge and purity. It represents the first necessity in the revelation which God makes of Himself to men (2 Cor. 4:6). According to their response to God's command, people are divided into two classes, the sons of light and the sons of darkness (1 Thess. 5:5-9).

There is no reason to understand the word "day" as an indefinite period of time, rather than as a literal day of twenty-four hours.

On the second day, the waters above the earth were separated from the waters upon the earth and formed into the firmament of heaven. The omission of the statement "God saw that it was good", may imply that in this instance God withheld His complete approval. Possibly the Satanic host, the demons and the spiritual powers of wickedness immediately occupied those regions where they now dwell (Eph. 6:12).

On the third day God caused the waters to retire to their destined bounds, so that the seas were separated from the dry land (Psa. 104:5-9).

On the fourth day the great light-holders made their appearance by the command of God. The morning-stars, at least the material of which they were composed, probably existed before (Job 38:4-7), but now God caused the sun, moon and stars to be made visible to men, that they might perform their destined function of attracting and diffusing the light.

Each species of animal was distinct from every other species when first created, and each was to reproduce "after his kind" (1 Cor. 15:39). Thus does the word of God expose the fallacy of the theory of evolution, which claims that the so-called "higher" orders of animals were evolved from the simpler forms of life by the process of natural selection and spontaneous generation.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Jan. 1—Christ the Creator ..... John 1:1-18.  
Jan. 2—Christ and the Earth in Creation ..... Heb. 1.  
Jan. 3—The Foundations of the Earth in Creation ..... Job 38:4-38.  
Jan. 4—The Glory of God in Creation ..... Psa. 19.  
Jan. 5—The Marvellous Works of Creation ..... Psa. 104.  
Jan. 6—The Firstborn of Creation ..... Col. 1:9-20.  
Jan. 7—The Beginning of Creation ..... Rev. 3:14-21.

#### SUGGESTED HYMNS

Thou, whose almighty word. All people that on earth do dwell. Who came down? The love that Jesus had for me. Oh, worship the King. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven.