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About the Man Who Tells His Story First

IT IS scarcely an exaggeration to say that there never lived a keener observer than the author of the book of Proverbs. There is an X-ray quality about his observations which leads one to the very heart of a matter. Here is one of his proverbs: "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."

The man who presents his case first to people of open minds, procures for himself a great advantage, at least temporarily. A very very small proportion of people have judicial minds. They believe, without question, the first story that is told them; and the man who takes pains to tell his story first will almost certainly plead his cause on the ground that it is just. The person hearing it, knowing nothing to the contrary, is disposed to accept the statement at its face value; and too often, having heard the story, closes the book, or, to use another figure, pulls down the blind and locks the door. He has heard all there is to hear on that particular subject, and he thinks he has arrived at finality.

The modern newspaper has learned the psychology of Solomon's observation. When they have a cause to plead they splash the story on the front page, and nine out of ten people, reading it, believe every word of it. It may be wholly untrue, or only partially true. But in our day it is virtually impossible to get a newspaper to correct its error, and to make an apology for a mis-statement. They depend upon the shortness of the public memory. They have told their story; the people have assumed it is just, and the matter is closed. In not a few instances there is no truth in it, and even when it is partially true, it is often so presented as to constitute an untruth.

What of it? The victim must accept the injustice with whatever resignation he can command; and thereafter he will meet with many, many people whom he had regarded as friends; who either pass him by without any recognition; or content themselves with a cold and in-hospitable nod.

Herein lies the deadliness of the habit of evil-speaking. So many people speak without making the slightest effort to ascertain whether what they say is true or not. Perhaps we may risk an old story of a woman who confessed to her priest that she had seriously slandered a neighbour, without having any factual ground for the slander. As penance, the priest prescribed that she should go out and pluck a dozen or more thistle heads,

which were then in downy bloom. She did so carefully, and brought them back to the priest.

It was a windy day, and again he told her to go out into the wind, and wave her bunch of downy thistle heads until there was not a bit of down remaining; and then to return to him. When she returned and reported that she had obeyed the order, he said, "Now go and gather up all those thistle-downs with the seed at the end of them." Of course she declared that that would be an impossibility. The priest agreed, and added, "Neither can you ever recall the evil words you have spoken, nor undo the wrong you have committed."

Our Lord said: "(For) every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment". And again He said: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

So, then, the just are permanently victimized, and without redress? No; they are not. Here is the rest of the proverb: "But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him"

Here and there are people who do not take for granted the truth of everything they hear or read. Here and there we find people who "prove all things; (and) hold fast that which is good."

There are people who weigh such stories in reasonable balances. They analyze them, then they begin to make inquiries. After a while they begin to ask for proof: "(The) neighbour cometh and searcheth him". And so the evil tale-bearer is at last discovered, identified, and exposed for what he really is.

The fact is we really need not worry about what people say of us. Neither they nor we can do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. There is a proverbial saying to the effect that "murder will out", which, in principle, means evil and falsehood have a way of coming to the surface and proclaiming themselves.

In the same chapter the wise man implicitly admonishes us: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him". The man who thus answers without full knowledge of the fact, and allows his partial knowledge to determine his attitude toward a person or a cause, answering the matter before he has heard all that might be heard of it, ultimately discovers the truth: "It is folly and shame unto him."

QUEBEC LOOKS BACK

THE motto of the Province of Quebec is "Je me souviens": "I Remember". The memory of which it boasts is its French and Catholic origin. This explains many things about our neighbouring province, among which are the following.

"Quebec's Civil Law Ought to Conform to Canon Law!"

In the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec, a member for Quebec City has demanded certain improvements in the marriage laws of the province. He called attention to the fact that in two recent judgments in the courts of Quebec, marriages contracted by Roman Catholics before a Protestant minister had been declared legal. These decisions, said the ardent nationalist member of parliament, come into conflict with "our" Code of Canon Law, and this ought not to be so in the "Catholic Province of Quebec". He contended that "the Civil Code of the Province ought to be amended in such a way as to prescribe that a Catholic priest authorized by his bishop is the sole official competent to celebrate a marriage between two Catholics."

The implications of this outrageous demand are that Canadian citizens of the Province of Quebec ought not to be given the liberty to choose who shall perform their marriage ceremony. The logic of this would mean that if Roman Catholics cannot be validly married by a Protestant minister, neither can anyone else. This is the principle that is operative in Spain where it is held according to the same Code of Canon Law, that "once a Catholic, always a Catholic", hence an individual has no power to withdraw his allegiance from the church of his parents to join the church of his choice. It denies to the subject the right to choose his own religion. If this unreasonable law had been in force in ancient days, Saul would not have been free to forsake the religion of his forebears to become the Apostle to the Gentiles, Constantine would not have been permitted to forsake heathenism, nor Augustine to be converted from Manichaeism.

No Freedom for Heretics in Quebec!

The Quebec Minister of Labour provided another example of the way in which Quebec remembers its Roman Catholic origins. Speaking before the alumni of a Roman Catholic school, Hon. Antonio Barrette preached the papal doctrine of no liberty for heretics in its authentic form. He is reported to have said that "True liberty forbids and prevents the doing of evil and the teaching of error." He then explained himself by saying that to allow the doing of evil or the teaching of error would be to encourage "licence" rather than to respect liberty.

All this has a familiar ring as it is nothing but a paraphrase of the papal Bull *Libertas Praestantissimum*. The only interest that attaches to it is that a minister of the King, duly elected by democratic processes, should proclaim a dogma that strikes at the root of free speech and liberty of worship. According to this view, it is the Roman Catholic Church which is the supreme arbiter as to what constitutes error, and that church invariably rules that all who disagree with her are heretics and hence have no rights. To allow them to speak or to preach is, according to the pope and the Quebec Minister of Labour, quite as unreasonable as it would be to allow men to do wrong.

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

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The Duplessis Bridge Collapses

Several lives were lost when the Duplessis bridge on the Montreal-Quebec Highway collapsed and fell into the river. This bridge is in Mr. Duplessis' own riding and bears his name. When he opened it he is credited with boasting that his government was as solid as the great bridge. Now he ascribes its fall, we mean the bridge's fall, to "sabotage". There have been no further explanations forthcoming, although the "sabotage" has been leisurely and deliberate in its action as the bridge has already undergone extensive repairs, though it has been built only a few years ago. In the past there have been many rumours of "graft" and inferior workmanship. It will be a relief to the taxpayers in our neighbouring province to be informed of the real cause of the weakness of the Duplessis bridge and at the same time to learn that the government headed by its namesake is, according to his own prognostication, about to tumble down. We regret that the Hon. Maurice Duplessis neglected to tell his constituents whether the "saboteurs" of his bridge were Communists, "Jehovah's Witnesses", Christian Brethren, or Baptists. So far as we know none of these pestiferous sects was discovered holding open-air meetings on the ice of the river at midnight when the bridge toppled down.—W.S.W.

AN "OLD-TIME SUBSCRIBER" WRITES

THE GOSPEL WITNESS,

Saginaw, Michigan,

Dear Friends:

Jan. 3rd, 1951.

Herewith find enclosed cheque for renewal subscription to THE GOSPEL WITNESS AND PROTESTANT ADVOCATE.

As an old-time subscriber, and now a retired Baptist pastor, I still appreciate very much THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and the very able and most inspiring Protestant messages of Dr. T. T. Shields. I wish more pastors were rendering a like ministry.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS is certainly a most timely ministry for these days.

May God's richest blessing be upon its testimony, as I believe it is.

Yours fraternally, in Christ,

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

AN AWE-INSPIRING TEXT

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 28th, 1951
(Electrically Recorded)

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."—Matt. 23:34-36.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."—Matt. 27:24, 25.

"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."—Acts 5:27, 28.

THIS world is full of wonders, and I have had the privilege of seeing just a very few of them. For example, I have spent days in the British Museum, and have wished that I could live there altogether for a few years. The first time I visited the Louvre, the great Art Gallery in Paris, I spent a whole day, and came away feeling that I had seen nothing; I had had time only to glance at some of the works of the world's great masters. I have seen a few different countries, with their wonders, the Taj Mahal in India, the Pyramids in Egypt. A little over a year ago, a year and a week or so, when I boarded a plane at Darwin in Australia, the pilot said to me, "I will call you when the sun is about to come up, and I want you to come in to the cockpit and see it." We were up twenty-one or twenty-two thousand feet when he called me. When I went in, he vacated his seat, and I sat where he had been sitting. Of course there was another pilot looking after things; the big four-motored plane was not left to the tender mercy of my ignorance. The sun came up, and we were over four miles above the earth. In every direction there was a wide expanse of fleecy clouds — the sun came above them, and looked at them. I am not going to try to describe the gilded glory, I couldn't, and I do not think anyone else could. But I recalled the marvellous lines of the nineteen-year-old Pilot-Officer John Gillespie Magee who was killed in December, 1941:

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings:
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and
swung

High in the sunlit silence. Hovering there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, nor even eagle flew—
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high, untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

Well, I have seen a few things, I have had a few experiences like that, but they are as nothing to me, great as they are, compared with the wonders of this Holy Book. I told those of you who were here this morning that I was going to try to speak a little this evening upon a text upon which I have looked with wonder and with awe all my ministerial life, but upon which I have never presumed even to try to preach. All I can hope to do this evening is to invite you into the cockpit, and perhaps if you can see the sunrise, and gaze upon the wonders of Divine revelation, though we may not understand it all, we may at least reverently bow and worship.

A Revelation of God in Nature

You all know that the Scriptures teach there is a revelation of God in nature, in the material universe. The Bible says, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." There is a revelation of God in nature sufficiently comprehensive to leave every human soul without excuse at the judgment bar. Many things are there superficially revealed; we see His wisdom. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." And we can see His power too. The students told me of Dr. McCaul's telling them about hearing John MacNeil, the famous John, who was briefly at Cooke's Church, read the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, that marvellous chapter, upon which I try to get the students to exercise themselves sometimes. Mr. MacNeil was reading that chapter, when a great thunder storm burst. Just as he came to one verse there was a terrific peal of thunder which shook the whole building, and Mr. MacNeil paused, and said, "Aye, that is the Almighty underlining His own Word." And so it was. He does in nature underline His own Word.

Even the goodness of God is there revealed: "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and

gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." You will remember, too, that our Lord Himself spoke of His providential care, clothing the grass of the field, making the lily to grow, caring for the birds and the sheep. And all this He attributed to a transcendent personal God: "Your heavenly Father feedeth them," not Nature, but "Your heavenly Father feedeth them."

So I say that the revelation of God in Nature is deep enough and high enough and broad enough to reveal "His eternal power and Godhead" in such a way as to leave His human creatures "without excuse". But I wonder if He might not have said of the economy of Nature, as He said of the economy of Grace, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." We read this evening of the "path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." We read of the diligent search for the discovery and identification of that path; for whatever more there might be in nature to teach us about God. But I wonder if there are not deeper things in nature than we have seen? There is a hymn here, it is in a book we used to use, and I want to recite it to you:

"The Voice of God's Creation found me
Perplexed midst hope and fear;
For though His sunshine flashed around me,
His storms at times drew near:
And I said —
O that I knew where He abideth!
For doubts beset our lot,
And lo! His glorious face He hideth,
And men perceive it not.

"The Voice of God's Protection told me
He loveth all He made;
I seemed to feel His arms enfold me,
And yet was half afraid:
And I said —
O that I knew where I might find Him,
His eye would guide me right:
He leaveth countless tracks behind Him,
Yet passeth out of sight.

"The Voice of Conscience sounded nearer,
It stirred my inmost breast:
But though its tones were firmer, clearer,
'Twas not the voice of rest:
And I said —
O that I knew if He forgiveth!
My soul is faint within,
Because in grievous fear it liveth
Of wages due to sin.

"It was the Voice of Revelation
That met my utmost need;
The wondrous message of salvation
Was joy and peace indeed:
And I said —
O how I love the sacred pages
From which such tidings flow,
As monarchs, patriarchs, poets, sages,
Have longed in vain to know!

"For now is life a lucid story,
And death a rest in Him,
And all is bathed in light and glory,
That once was dark or dim:
And I said —
O Thou who dost my soul deliver,
And all its hopes uplift;
Give me a tongue to praise the Giver,
A heart to prize the gift!"

Yes, all that may come to us, but Nature's revelation itself leaves us without excuse. And He Who sees the end from the beginning knew that faint markings of

the "path which no fowl knoweth" might yet be discovered by man himself in a further, deeper study of Nature. Surely Nature's revelation is profounder and deeper than our fathers knew.

Years ago when Marconi first announced his successful transmission of wireless electric signals across the Atlantic, I preached a sermon on "Wireless Telegraphy", January the 12th, 1902, as an illustration of the possibilities of prayer. I was in Hamilton at the time, and the *Hamilton Spectator* asked for the manuscript, and published it *in extenso*. But oh, how alphabetical that was, how simple! We do not talk about wireless telegraphy any more, do we? Since then science has opened many doors of knowledge, which leaves us still less excusable. But mark what I say: Science supplies us with knowledge, but it does not interpret the spiritual significance of those items of knowledge; that is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, whether in Nature or in Grace. Science discloses the facts of physical phenomena, and the devout mind, by the illumination of the Spirit, must make its own deductions.

I preached at the funeral of Chancellor Kok, Chancellor of the Dutch Embassy for forty years in Peiping, January 12th, in Collingswood, N.J. There were many ministers there, and among them the successor of the great Dr. Machen. He came to me afterwards and said, "You gave me the whole philosophy of Christian education in a single sentence." Why, of course. It is simply this—that Christ is the Truth, the Norm, to which all things must be brought for appraisal; and without a knowledge of Whom we can know nothing, finally and absolutely.

The telescope has done wonders, and the microscope has done wonders, and the laboratory has accomplished great things. The telescope has traversed the infinite spaces, the microscope has delved into the infinitesimal, and the laboratory has analyzed everything, and put things in order that are entirely beyond the reach of the unaided understanding of sight or sound. We exhort the angels to help us to adore Him, and speak of the sun and moon rejoicing before Him, as "dwellers all in time and space"—but what do we know of time and space? We mouth great words—we say that God is omnipresent, ubiquitous, that is, He is everywhere present, and you cannot escape His presence. But space separates physical entities notwithstanding; there is a difference between the poles, and our latitude and that of the tropics are not identical. Most people in this country and the United States use the word *alibi* erroneously. *Alibi* does not mean an excuse. The word *alibi* etymologically is akin to *alias*, somebody else, and *alibi* means other, somewhere else, elsewhere. If a man accused of a crime that was committed in Toronto proves that he was not in Toronto at the time, but was somewhere else, he establishes an *alibi*, and cannot be convicted. But science makes *seeming* alibis, and may make it appear that one is in more than one place at once. When you have flown around the world, and here and there on this Continent, and elsewhere, you begin to wonder if there is such a thing as space; the world shrinks to very small dimensions.

The Infinitesimal Becomes Omnipotent

We used to speak almost contemptuously of an atom. If I were to ask a school boy, "What is an atom?" he would say, "It is the smallest particle of matter; it is the thing that is so small it cannot be divided." Now, that

smallest particle of matter has become a thing that makes the whole world tremble. The earth is terrified by its own potentialities: the world has become afraid of itself. We are learning something of the sensitivity of the physical universe. Unbelievers have invoked science as their defense for refusing to believe Divine revelation. But science, let us say the science of physics, may some day be put in the box as a witness for God: a witness not for the defense but for the prosecution.

Radio—these are commonplace—carries a whisper around the world by a medium, please to remember, that is as old as creation. Television outruns the telescope, and brings an image from the remotest bounds of this planet, and exposes it before your eyes. Both of them annihilate time and space. Recording science enables a voice to speak from a hundred places at once, so that one man can become a hundred, and he may be heard everywhere throughout the world, until it becomes difficult to say where the man himself really is. And it makes it possible for any man, being dead, to yet speak. I read in a radio magazine some years ago, before this science of recording had reached its present perfection, of the broadcast of a certain program which went out into the infinite spaces, and was lost somewhere in the stratosphere, and then by some strange means that no scientist could understand, it drifted back within the range of the radio waves, and a year after it was broadcast it was heard in its perfection. May we yet learn that, all of life has been automatically recorded, and all brought within a limitless present?

I spoke to you at the turn of the year from this text—I did not understand it then, and I do not understand it now; neither do you, but listen to it: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him: That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." You remember that great passage in Revelation were an angel swore by Him that liveth forever that "time shall be no longer". What does that mean? These watches will be no good after a while; our lives will not be measured by the rise and set of sun; there will be no time. Can you conceive of that? There is One of Whom it is said, "Who only hath immortality." May the immortal spirit which He has created within us find some kinship to Him? and may we yet learn that time, after all, is a mirage, an illusion; and that really time already is no longer?

The Moral and Spiritual Worlds Not Less Sensitive Than the Physical

Why have I said all this? To suggest that the moral and spiritual worlds are not less sensitive, nor less a unity than the physical; that our larger knowledge of the physical world increases our responsibility, even on purely natural grounds, for it gives us a still clearer view of His eternal power and Godhead. Let me quote it again: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." And so that leaves all mankind utterly without any excuse, and ripe for the righteous judgment of God.

Poets are kinsmen to the prophets; they see further and deeper, and more broadly than some others. Hence, there is often sounder theology in the hymns than there is in the pulpit. In some churches the hymns are about all you get. I wonder sometimes why they still sing

them. I love to read and study these hymns, and sing them over, as well as I can, to myself. Were you ever afraid of a hymn like this:

"We limit not the truth of God
To our poor reach of mind,
By notions of our day and sect,
Crude, partial, and confined;
No, let a new and better hope
Within our hearts be stirred:
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word.

(There can be no objection to such "light and truth" as shall "break forth from His word.")

"Who dares to bind to his dull sense
The oracles of heaven,
For all the nations, tongues, and climes,
And all the ages given?
That universe, how much unknown!
That ocean unexplored!
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word.

"Darkling our great forefathers went
The first steps of the way;
'Twas but the dawning, yet to grow
Into the perfect day.
And grow it shall; our glorious Sun
More fervid rays afford:
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word.

"The valley's passed; ascending still
Our souls would higher climb,
And look down from supernal heights
On all the bygone time.
Upward we press — the air is clear,
And the sphere-music heard:
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word.

"O Father, Son and Spirit send
Us, increase from above;
Enlarge and light our little minds
To comprehend Thy love:
And make us to go on to know,
With nobler powers conferred,
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from His word."

As the spade of the archaeologist, and the diligent investigations of grammarian and the textual critic, have all been used of God to throw more light upon His word, I verily believe that in the days when God shall permit men to wrest from Nature's heart still more of her secrets, every one of them will help us to understand God's word better. All I can do is to name some principles. Have I been long in reaching my text? Time enough to have reached it and left it, perhaps you will say. But what I have said is the background of my exposition. I call your attention to certain principles.

I.

THE TIMELESSNESS AND UNITY OF DIVINE REVELATION: "Behold, I send unto you prophets . . ." From Eden to the judgment, it is all here. Carried forward into the New Testament: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." And the testimony of Divine revelation from Eden to the last syllable of recorded time is, and will continue, unchanged. God speaks the same word. He is not like His alleged vicar, the infallible pope, who is always building up some new doctrine; "always the same", and yet changing all the time. No! Adoringly we

exclaim, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." At last He speaks in completeness and finality in the Person of His Son. Listen: "Last of all he sent unto them his son." Jesus Christ is the Divine ultimatum to a rebellious race. There is His word; the condition of peace is unconditional surrender. God's word does not change.

II.

Then I direct your attention to another principle—**THE TIMELESSNESS AND INESCAPABLE RESPONSIBILITY OF UNBELIEF.** By human and temporal standards each generation has been an accessory before the fact to the rejection of the Divine testimony of that day. The word was there, and before the fact it was rejected; but by the timeless standards of the moral constitution of things, each succeeding generation has been an accessory both before and after the fact. You know the legal significance of those terms, do you not? A man who is an accessory to a crime before the fact, before it was committed, is held to be guilty of the crime itself, and the man who is an accessory after the fact, who approved and condoned, and perhaps aided and gave comfort to the criminal, before the law also, even in our courts of justice, is held to be culpable. The murderers of Christ accepted responsibility. Pilate brought water and washed his hands, and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." Could he wash it? Do you know your Shakespeare? You remember how Lady MacBeth was going to wash her hands, and wash the daggers, and so on, but MacBeth hears the knocking, and asks:

"Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red."

You cannot wash out blood. I do not know the chemical constitution of it. You know how often you have read in a murder case of how every effort has been made to expunge the stain of blood; but it will not come out. "Now," said these who added to the rejection of the Divine testimony all down through the ages their rejection of Christ—when Pilate washed his hands, they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." When the murderers of Christ, the Sanhedrin, heard the preaching of the Gospel they said, "Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?" Now listen—*"And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."* They instinctively recognized that *the rejection of the doctrine involved them in the guilt of the blood of Christ.*

III.

Consider too, **THE TIMELESSNESS AND INESCAPABILITY OF DIVINE JUSTICE!** You cannot get away from it. Abel's blood! Do you remember what God said?—I wonder if it may not yet be proved to be scientifically and physically true—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." It reached the very throne of Heaven.

Last Thursday evening we looked at the story of the stoning of Zacharias, who was slain between the sanctuary and the altar. As the godly prophet was dying he said, "The Lord look upon it, and require it." They said, "We have finished with him," but they hadn't. Jesus said, "All the righteous blood . . . from the blood of

righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias. . . ." All of it shall be required! What sort of blood? You know blood analysts distinguish between different types. You who have offered your blood for a blood transfusion or for plasma know what that means; they have to find the blood of a particular type for a particular person. The greatest of all blood analysts is the One Who "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." What sort of blood is He talking about here? "Righteous blood". Not innocent, but righteous blood. What does that mean? It means the very life-tide which flowed from the hearts of men, who did righteously before God; and the very righteousness which they wrought out in the sight of God flowed in their blood—it was righteousness in solution; and when they shed that blood they murdered, not Abel, not Zacharias—they murdered righteousness. They put it to death. They said, "We will have none of it." Then they added to all their iniquity the murder of Him, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." The Righteous One, the eternal Source of all righteousness, came, and they killed Him, poured out His blood: "First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that King of Salem, which is, King of peace."

-What Is the Meaning of "This Generation"?

What about it? "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." What does that word mean? It does not mean a period of time, an era, or an epoch. It means a human quality: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." "All these things shall come upon this generation." Of course it did temporarily, at the destruction of Jerusalem; and it shall come upon the generation of unbelievers who are of their father the devil, independently of time.

IV.

But look again, and observe, **THE TIMELESSNESS AND ETERNAL CONCORDANCE OF REVELATION IN NATURE AND IN GRACE.** What God has said in Nature stands forever: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." What God has said in Grace stands forever: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." There is a terrible word in Peter's second epistle, and I venture to suggest that perhaps it is scarcely probable that anyone here has ever considered the significance of it. It has new significance in this dreadful day: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that **BY THE WORD OF GOD** the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Now listen—The heavens and the earth. "The heavens declare the glory of God"; "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."—"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, **BY THE SAME WORD** are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Have you pondered that third chapter of Second Peter, about the "elements (melting) with fervent heat"; it is enough to make anybody afraid. In this atomic age we are able the more clearly to understand that this whole earth is combustible, and is reserved by the word of God, under control. You read about "atomic control". **HE IS THE CONTROLLER.** "By the same word . . . reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." When He shall "let the lifted thunder

drop", and the heaven is rolled back as a scroll, and the earth, and all that is in it, is burned up—then we shall understand the meaning of such a dreadful Scripture as that which I have used for a text this evening. Oh, what reserves of power "by the same word are . . . reserved unto fire!" You read of the Korean war, and the discussions as to whether atomic warfare should be indulged in, whether the atom bomb should drop, and Governments talk about it, and argue about it. The Sovereign Lord of all will ask no one's permission when He goes forth to judgment. That is a terrible picture, is it not? All that blood, the blood of Christ, and all other righteous blood, shall be required of a generation of unbelievers.

V.

Think now of THE TIMELESSNESS AND ETERNAL ADEQUACY OF THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

Can you tell me what kind of salvation people need who are exposed to that danger? Can you suggest any means of escape from that judgment? When He had said this, you remember, He added: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till he shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Who can pay this debt? Whose blood can atone for the sins of a wicked race such as ours? Who can change the moral constitution of the universe, which is really a transcript of the Divine nature? You could as soon change the nature of God as you could change the inexorable laws of the moral universe.

God being what He is, from everlasting to everlasting the same, surely it is a matter of inexorable logic that if salvation comes from anywhere, it must come from Him; if there is blood anywhere to purge the stain of all the righteous blood that has been shed, if there is anything to obliterate it, IT MUST BE THE BLOOD OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE HIMSELF. THAT IS THE GOSPEL. "For he hath made him to be sin for us," He took upon Himself at one and the same time the whole of the world's iniquity; He bared His bosom to the storm. The sword of Divine Justice was sheathed in His heart, and the blood that flowed opened the fountain for sin and for uncleanness. Perhaps in the light of these considerations we may better understand what is written: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you, who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." Blessed be God there still is a fountain filled with blood. Where did it come from? Drawn FROM IMMANUEL'S VEINS (God with us). The wealth, as I have so often said to you, of all worlds, of the whole universe, in solution.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;

Can you say it? Can you write it in the past or rather the perfect tense?

And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

If you have, you will go on to sing—

Thou dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing Thy power to save."

Let us pray:

O Lord, we bless Thee for an atonement that, in time and expiatory value, is commensurate with our sin; for the great truth that Thou art the propitiation for our sin, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Help us to trust in the blood; may we have no other trust, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Sunday Morning, January 28th, 1951
(Electrically Recorded)

"Pray without ceasing."—1 Thess. 5:17.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death,
He enters Heaven with prayer."

NO WONDER, that being true, that we are exhorted to pray always, never to cease from praying. "Pray without ceasing." A prayerless life is a godless life; however highly cultured the mind may be, however exemplary the outward character, however exalted the position which a man may occupy among his fellows, if he does not pray he is without God; if he is prayerless, he is godless, whatever he has.

You will remember that in Ezekiel's vision he saw a valley full of bones, and he says, "There were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry." But he prophesied to the bones, as he was commanded, "and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." They became articulated in their several places, "the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above," but the prophet observed, "There was no breath in them." Assembled as they were,

different from what they had been, still the question remained unanswered: "Son of man can these bones live?" Being without breath they were without life.

Thus people may be brought together religiously; they may come into a certain organizational relationship to each other; they may put on some sort of organic form; they may call themselves by a religious name; they may call themselves a church, but if it is a prayerless body it is a godless body. No matter what they may have, what they may attempt to do, if they pray not, then they are not in any sense Christian, and are without God.

Prayer Is Indispensable to Life

Prayer is indispensable to life. As we have said, it is the breath of life. When God had made man out of the dust of the earth He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," and the life within the soul was the very breath of God, communicated to the man so newly created. But sin entered, and in the day that it entered, man died; his correspondence with Deity was ended; he was driven without the gate; "And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," from which man, because of his sin, was banished. And not until God, by His Spirit, again breathes into the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins, can he become in reality a living soul. The cry of a new-born babe is an indisputable evidence of life; and prayer is the evidence of our possession of spiritual life. Saul of Tarsus, a man of vast erudition, learned in all the doctrines of the law, and touching the law, blameless, as far as his external character was concerned, breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. When God came to Ananias and commissioned him to go and find one Saul of Tarsus, Ananias was terrified, because he had heard of this man, but God said to him, "Behold, he prayeth." He had ceased from the saying of prayers, as was customary with the Pharisees to which he belonged, and now he actually prayed, and prayed in such a way that God knew that he prayed, for his prayer had ascended up to Heaven, God's dwelling place. Thus when God breathes into the dead soul of a man or a woman, and the breath of God within exercises that soul in all its functions unto godliness, and in some form or another prayer becomes a cry, perhaps an articulate cry—"God be merciful to me, a sinner"—that is the evidence of inward life, and without such evidence we may not be sure, we have no right to assume that we are really Christian if we do not pray.

Prayer Must Be Continuous

It is not enough that we pray once or occasionally. The continuance of life depends upon the continuance of prayer, the continuance of breathing. It is not enough that the child cries, and then lapses into silence; it must continue to breathe if it is to live, and so must the new-born soul pray, and always pray, continue to pray, or it cannot live. Any physician will tell you that such breathing is indispensable to life. I know that we need food; the babe must have milk, and as it grows it must have stronger food, until by and by it is given strong meat. But the food is valueless unless the body breathes, and has correspondence with the vital energies in the atmosphere without. Food is without profit; there will be no development, no growth, no anything, unless breath is continued. I saw food pressed between the lips of a

breathless stone idol in India, and it remained there until the monkeys came and took it away, and I thought the monkeys showed more sense than the benighted people who put the food into the idol's lips; and it is vain that anyone sets himself to a diligent, and perhaps systematic religious study, even the study of God's word, saying, "I will find myself milk or strong meat." That is well only if that exercise is accompanied by prayer, for unless the soul within breathes its desires God-ward, unless God the Spirit is the life of a man, he will learn nothing. Many people there are who study the Bible to no profit at all; they are not fed; they do not grow up into Christ. They cannot so do unless they pray, and pray without ceasing. Nor can we really exercise ourselves in those good works "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," unless as we work, we pray:

Prayer Is a Necessary, Concomitant of Work

Prayer is indispensable to any worthy walk or effective work. We must pray without ceasing as we work, just as you must breathe as you work, for if you do not continue to breathe you will soon discontinue your work. In whatever form of religious exercise we may engage, it must have in it the vital element of prayer, or it will be without profit to our own souls or to anybody else.

You know that *correct breathing is indispensable to vocal culture*, whether for singing or for speaking. There are people who speak from their throats, and no wonder they have sore throats when they do. That is not the way to speak; we should speak from the diaphragm. If you speak as you ought to speak you may put the telephone transmitter to your breast and you can be heard just as distinctly as though you held it to your lips, because it is from there the voice properly comes. We must breathe properly if we are to sing properly, and if we are to speak properly. You cannot witness for Christ, you cannot teach the Word of God, you cannot preach the Gospel unless, with it all, you pray. Your testimony should not be from the lips only; it should come from within, from the heart of the man. What is the sacrifice of praise? It is "the fruit of lips giving thanks to His name." It is only as "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" our requests are presented to God, we shall find grace to help in time of need, or acceptably offer the sacrifice of praise.

The Harder the Work the Greater the Need of Prayer

Prayer, I say, is indispensable to every form of Christian service, and *the more difficult the service, then the more should we pray.* If you climb the stairs hastily, when you reach the top you find yourself perhaps a little out of breath? You cannot climb without breathing. You cannot ascend the hill of the Lord except as you pray, and pray without ceasing. And you have discovered also, sometimes when you bend your back to some unusually heavy weight, and you strain every muscle to lift it, and then perhaps staggeringly carry it a little way and put it down, you find you are out of breath. Why? You need a deeper and a stronger breath to lift that heavier weight.

So, my dear friends, life is full of emergencies; and when we have difficulties to face, and foes to fight, and hills to climb, and temptations to withstand—life, I say, is full of such exigencies, where still greater demands are made upon our spiritual resources, which can be met only as we pray.

Perseverance in Prayer a Prerequisite to Perseverance in Any Thing

Would you persevere in any undertaking, in the study of God's word, in the performance of good works, in witnessing and teaching and preaching; would you learn to keep on, and then to keep on keeping on, and be not weary in well-doing? If you would learn that Divine art—is it an art? Is it not rather a holy science?—If you would learn to persevere in all these exercises you must first learn to persevere in prayer.

We must always pray; we must recognize that prayer is indispensable to growth and development, to the achievement of any kind of worthy stature in Christ Jesus. We must pray to grow, and we must grow if we would have strength. We must "pray without ceasing," or we cannot fulfill the Divine purpose in our lives. "All things work together for good," we read this morning, "to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Yes, there is a Divine purpose running through every Christian life; God has a plan and a purpose, not only for every day, but for every hour and every moment, and we shall be in harmony with that purpose, and fulfill our Divine function only as, basically and fundamentally, and continuously, we pray.

To the Healthy Soul Prayer Is Instinctive and Automatic

It is well that we should pray formally; it is well that we should bow the knee, and have our set seasons for prayer. It is a good thing to practise breathing. I remember when a young man I began it, and I used to practise it when walking; to see how much of God's vital atmosphere I could take into my lungs, and then hold it as I walked, and timed my walk so as to develop the respiratory system. There are some people who have weak little voices, partly because they speak only from the lips. We should learn to open these organs, and to speak from within, instead of chirping like a canary. Be a veritable Boanerges, able to shake the place with your thunder. You can do it if you learn to use your voice, but you cannot use it properly unless you learn to breathe. So is it in the spiritual life. It is well that we should give ourselves special exercises; set ourselves up for certain seasons, that we may continue in prayer. I say that is well, but after all, *breathing, to the perfectly healthy person, is instinctive and automatic.* You do not deliberately set yourself in a certain posture, and then, as though beginning some new thing, say, "Now I will breathe." You are always breathing, breathing when you do not know it; you are bound to do it. I say it is instinctive and automatic. So is prayer to the Christian. And as that constant breathing brings the whole system into proper relationship to its environment, until we assume, all unconsciously, a receptive attitude to the energies without, and breathe them in instinctively and automatically, so prayer becomes to the Christian less an act than an attitude. We assume an attitude of trust, an attitude of dependence; we lean upon God; we do it instinctively; we do it all the time, we cannot help it, and in every emergency, spontaneously there arises from the spiritual man a special cry to God that He may help us:

"The windows of my soul I throw
Wide open to the sun."

I remember reading a story of a very devout Christian surgeon, a very eminent man, whose name was known

throughout the medical world. He was as eminent as a Christian as he was as a surgeon. On one occasion he had a very critical operation to perform. He had sought through many years to practise the presence of God, to live consciously in the Divine Presence, and facing this very difficult task he committed himself and his patient to the Lord. He came to the operating room, and went to work. He worked with consummate skill, and with great speed—for you know speed is necessary to success in such matters—and then at last when it was done, and the patient was taken away from the operating room, the surgeon was almost in a state of nerves—by the way, I heard one of the most eminent heart specialists in Toronto say, speaking of a certain surgeon, "I should like to take his blood pressure just when he gets through with an operation. I'll venture to say it is pretty high." Why? Because all there was of him was concentrated upon his task. So with the surgeon of my story. When it was over he relaxed, and he said, "So long, and I haven't thought of God." And he rebuked himself for a moment, but soon recovered, and said, "But I committed myself to Him, and though in my concentrated effort, I thought only of my task, I am sure God did not cease to think of me." His prayer was his attitude of trust. So ought we always to do, dear friends; so ought we always to be in an attitude of dependence upon God, and He will always be right at our hand.

I have another surgeon story, of a man who is gone now, but whom I knew very well. He, too, was one of the very eminent men, and he was called to the performance of a certain operation. Other doctors were there to witness it. He bent over his patient, and never looked up once, but his nurse was at his side, and she handed him one instrument, then another, then another, but he did not ask her for anything. She had been with him so long that she knew exactly what he needed; and without a word she put the needed instrument in his hand as he needed it. When the operation was over his fellow surgeons said, "Where did you get that nurse?" "Ah," he said, "that is the kind of nurses we train,"—(naming a certain city.)

My dear friends in the crises of life we need someone like that nurse, who knows exactly what we have need of every minute, and He is there to put in our hands everything we require for the successful accomplishment of our task. The Spirit of God, if we are Christians, is always with us, He is the very life of God in the soul. I am afraid sometimes we do not take time to give Him thanks. We ought "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let (our) requests be made known unto God." That is what it is to pray without ceasing—to live in the atmosphere of Heaven. For that the Holy Ghost has come. So may

"Heaven come down our souls to greet
And glory crown the Mercy Seat."

This Should Be Equally True of a Church

That should be true of a church, as well as of an individual. "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." The atmosphere of Heaven came down to earth, and they breathed it. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." No wonder they were able to speak with

other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." A like liberty should ever be in the assemblies of the saints.

I recall years ago a woman's saying to me—I think she is here this morning—but years ago she said she had been to one place after another, had found much that was excellent, but she couldn't find an "atmosphere." "I came here one day," she said, "and sat down in the back seat, and I said, 'God is in this place.'" He ought to be; He has promised to be. Do you think that is far fetched? I do not. He will always be here. I am sure He always is! He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name"—did you notice the tense there? He does not say, "There will I be;" He says, "There am I." You cannot meet in His name without His being there. Ceaseless prayer, I say, is indispensable to the enjoyment, the continuous enjoyment of the continuous presence of the Lord:

"Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

"Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born;
Alone with Thee in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

"As in the dawning, o'er the waveless ocean,
The image of the morning-star doth rest;
So, in this stillness Thou beholdest only
Thine image in the waters of my breast.

"Still, still with Thee! as to each new-born morning
A fresh and solemn splendour still is given;
So does this blessed consciousness awaking
Breathe each day nearness unto Thee and heaven.

"When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber,
Its closing eye looks up to Thee in prayer;
Sweet the repose beneath Thy wings o'er-shading,
But sweeter still, to wake and find Thee there.

"So shall it be at last, in that bright morning
When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee;
Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with Thee!"

Let us pray:

O Lord, we can understand these things only in the exercise of these great principles involved. We cannot expound that which we can only experience. We pray Thee to bring us ever closer to Thyself. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we each, as individuals, may pray without ceasing. Be pleased to pour upon this whole church the spirit of grace and of supplication in such measure that we too, not only a few of us, but all of us, shall pray without ceasing. The Lord grant it, for His Name's sake, Amen.

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, 194425
"Russellism or Rutherfordism", 71 pages25
"The Papacy in the Light of Scripture", 26 pages25
"The Oxford Group Analyzed"05
"Does Killed in Action Mean Gone to Heaven?"05
"The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements"05
"The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 First Quarter Lesson 6 February 11, 1951

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

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

Lesson Text: Genesis 9:1-17.

Golden Text: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."
—Genesis 9:13.

I. The Commandments: verses 1-7.

At the appointed hour the supernatural flood had descended. The rain from heaven and the waters from the seas had been poured out over the earth for forty days and forty nights. The fact that the flood was universal is attested by fossil remains. The number "forty" is associated in Scripture with the idea of testing (Gen. 8:6; Numb. 14:33; Psa. 95:10; Lk. 4:2). The water remained at flood level and did not commence to abate till approximately five months had elapsed (Gen. 7:11; 8:4). By that time the ark, which had been floating on the top of the water, rested on Mount Ararat.

What a welcome sight the mountains must have been to the eight people in the ark who had seen only the raging waters for such a long period! The sight of the mountains would confirm their faith in the promise of God (Gen. 6:18).

God had instructed Noah and his family to come into the ark (Gen. 7:1). Similarly, God's first command is for people to come to Him for salvation (Matt. 11:28). When the waters had subsided and Noah was safe, the first commandment was followed by a second one: "Go forth out of the ark." Likewise, they who belong to Christ are under obligation to go forth in His name, proclaiming the message of salvation (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 5:19).

In gratitude for salvation, Noah built an altar, that he might worship God and offer sacrifices to Him (Gen. 8:20). The offering, an offering of "sweet savour" (Hebrew 'savour of rest'), was acceptable to the Lord. We, too, should adore the Saviour and bring to Him the offerings of praise, thanksgiving and service, with which He is well pleased (Psa. 50:23; 116:13; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15). When Noah thus prepared his heart to seek the Lord and was in fellowship with Him, God instituted the covenant (Gen. 8:21).

Noah and his family were appointed by God to repeople the earth; all things were made new. They needed the blessing of God upon them for this tremendous task, a blessing which in due time was bestowed upon them. The Lord, Who gave them the commandment to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:22, 28; 8:17), miraculously preserved them that they might carry out His will. Our Saviour entrusted to His disciples, and their descendants the task of raising up spiritual children to Him (John 1:11, 12; Acts 1:8), so that Christianity, which began in such a small way, should one day include many many millions of redeemed souls. We, too, are commanded to be fruitful (John 15:8) and multiply (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 11:24).

The promise of dominion over the animal kingdom, given first to Adam (Gen. 1:26, 28; Psa. 8:6; Heb. 2:7, 8), was renewed to Noah. In like manner as before, abundant provision was made for their sustenance (Gen. 1:29; Deut. 12:15; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4).

The word of God, in these early pages, declares the scientific principle that blood is the life-principle in solution (v. 4; Deut. 12:23); for example, if much blood is lost, a person will die. Since blood represents life, God forbade men from eating it (Lev. 3:17; 17:10-14; 19:26; Acts 15:20). It is a matter of common experience that the taste of blood is nauseating. The blood would remain a sacred thing to these Old Testament saints, a foreshadowing of the precious blood of Christ, to be shed for man's redemption (Heb. 9:12-14, 22; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

The sacredness of human life, on the ground of man's likeness to God (Gen. 1:27), was to be universally acknowledged and recognized (Gen. 4:10, 11; Exod. 21:12, 14; Lev. 24:17; Matt. 26:52). Adherence to this principle distinguishes Christian nations from non-Christian nations, where life is held cheaply.

II. The Covenant: verses 8-17.

God Himself made a solemn covenant with Noah and his seed, to the effect that He would never again send upon the earth a flood which would destroy every living thing (Gen. 6:18; 8:20, 21; Isa. 54:9, 10). Also, there would be no departure from the regular courses of nature: the seasons and the days would come and go, each in its own order (Jer. 31:35, 36; 33:20, 25).

God chose the rainbow as a token of this perpetual agreement between Himself and the earth (Gen. 17:11), the rainbow which is seen when rain falls in the presence of the sun, reminding all who see it of the rain of judgment, which displays brilliant rays when tempered with the sun of God's mercy and love (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3; 10:1). Noah and his family would be reminded of the judgment against the wicked earth and of God's grace in saving them. The promises of God are based upon His love, His faithfulness and His wisdom; they can never fail.

When God covenanted with Himself to save all who would put their trust in the atoning work of Christ on Calvary (Heb. 6:13-20), He chose the wine of the communion as the token of that new covenant (Matt. 26:28), that we might never forget His dying love. Upon His word we may safely rely; for all believers the avenging floods of destruction and judgment are already past (John 3:18; 5:24).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Feb. 5—The Great Blessor
Jer. 29:11; Lk. 24:50-53; Eph. 1:2-12.
- Feb. 6—The God Who Makes Fruitful
Psa. 1:3; John 15:1-16.
- Feb. 7—The Great Provider
Psa. 104:14, 15, 24-28; 145:15, 16; 107:8, 9.
- Feb. 8—Capital Punishment Instituted Rom. 13:1-6.
- Feb. 9—The Covenant God Dan. 9:4; Heb. 8:6-13; 12:24.
- Feb. 10—Rainbows Rev. 4:1-3; 10:1.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Standing on the promises. Amazing grace! how sweet the sound! There is sunshine in my soul to-day. Blessed assurance—Jesus is mine! O happy day! How firm a foundation!

Vol. 16 First Quarter Lesson 7 February 18, 1951

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Lesson Text: Genesis 11:1-9.

Golden Text: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."—Titus' 3:5.

I. Selfish Ambition Exercised: verses 1-4.

From this chapter we learn an important historical fact; the origin of nations and languages. Many reasons for this phenomenon have been suggested by scientists of the world, who have made lengthy and costly investigations in this field, but the Word of God gives the accurate explanation. God's word is true from the beginning (Psa. 119:160).

The chapters of the books of the Bible are not necessarily in chronological order. Chapter 10 gives the genealogy of the family of Noah. The names of his three sons are usually associated with the major divisions of the race—Shem with the Semitic peoples, Ham with the coloured races for the most part, and Japheth with the white races. The various peoples are seen in their separate localities, and the fact of the divisions separating them is emphasized. The chapter before us explains the cause and the method of the division. A similar arrangement of truth occurs in Genesis, where chapter 2 gives details of the creation of man and woman, the fact merely being stated in chapter 1 (vv. 26, 27).

An influential group of the family of Ham settled in the fair valley of Shinar in the well-watered district of the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers (Gen. 10:10, 11; 14:1; Dan. 1:2). They became prosperous and powerful, being the nucleus of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires. There they settled, and there they determined to stay.

At first the whole human family, descendants of Noah, with whom the world had a new beginning after the judgment of the flood, used one language, spoken in one dialect. This was the bond of their union, the chief element of their strength. A similar situation prevails to-day in the Roman Catholic Church, which enjoins upon its followers the necessity of clinging tenaciously to the French language. To them French is synonymous with the Roman Catholic religion.

Unfortunately, the early settlers in the Shinar valley used their common strength and unity to foster their own ambitious plans. First, they invented building, learning the use of bricks, as there is not much stone in that district, as the ruins of the cities in Mesopotamia prove. Some bricks they dried in the sun, others in the kilns. They used bitumen, a variety of mineral pitch, a cement-like material, for mortar (Gen. 14:10; Exod. 2:3).

The invention of building furthered the pride of the people, and they determined to build a great city and a lofty tower. They might have been commended for their industry, had their motives been right. They wanted to make a name for themselves, that they themselves might have fame and glory, when they should have been ambitious to increase the fame and glory of the Lord (Deut. 8:11-18; Isa. 42:8). The sin of selfish pride is a common one (Isa. 14:12-19; Jer. 45:5; Ezek. 28:16-18), and in many quarters it is considered respectable, whereas in reality pride leads to destruction (Psa. 73:6; Prov. 11:2, 3; 16:18; 29:23). The tower built to reach unto heaven suggests the truth that we cannot attain to heaven by our own efforts (John 3:7; Rom. 3:30; Eph. 2:8-10), but must trust in the work of Christ on our behalf (Acts 16:30, 31).

In the second place, the people were building the city in order that they might become established in that locality, whereas God had given the commandment that men were to scatter and replenish the earth (Gen. 8:17; 9:1). Thus, they attempted to substitute their own plans for the declared purpose of God (Prov. 14:12). Too many people go their own way, utterly ignoring or actively opposing the will of God for their lives; like these builders, they are disobedient and rebellious (Isa. 1:2; 63:10, 11). The only path of safety and the only path of happiness is the way of God's commandments (Deut. 6:1, 2; Josh. 1:7, 8).

II. Selfish Ambition Restrained: verses 5-9.

The Lord took knowledge of the haughty designs of these rebellious people (Exod. 32:9; Psa. 10:11-14). It may be that the Lord appeared in human form on the earth at this time (Gen. 18:21). He knew that once they succeeded in carrying out their ambitious plans, these rebels would stop at nothing. Sin is like an avalanche, which, once it has commenced to move, proceeds with increasing and relentless energy (Prov. 14:12).

In order to frustrate the purposes of these proud and disobedient leaders, the Lord determined to break the spirit of unity, which was the driving force of their rebellion (Psa. 2:1-3). This he did by confounding their language, or, as the Hebrew implies, by confounding their lips. Thus, different ones spoke with a different dialect, so that they were unable to understand one another. Communication under these circumstances became difficult, with the result that groups began to break away and separate. Thus the Lord divided the nations and scattered them abroad, in order that the whole earth might be replenished and re-peopled, according to His own purpose.

This district became known as "Babel" or "Babylon," meaning "Confusion." Many times in ancient and modern history the Lord has brought to confusion the plots of men. Evil at times seems temporarily to prosper, but in the end the purposes of God will be fully carried out (Psa. 37:7-13; 73:12-18).

By one miracle of tongues people were separated from one another, but by another miracle of tongues the Holy Spirit united together the members of the body of Christ to form His church (Acts 2:6-11; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Feb. 12—Man Proposes Gen. 11:1-4; Psa. 2:1-3.
- Feb. 13—God Disposes Gen. 11:5-8; Psa. 2:4-12.
- Feb. 14—God Can Cause a Babel or Make a Pentecost
Gen. 11:7-9; Acts 2:1-11.
- Feb. 15—Babel (Babylon)—Its Beginning and Its End
Gen. 11:9; Rev. 18.
- Feb. 16—Scatterings Deut. 28:58-67; Acts 8:1-4.
- Feb. 17—Unholy Unions Rev. 13; 17:11-14.
- Feb. 18—Holy Unity John 17:20-23; Eph. 4:1-6; Rev. 5:6-14.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Firmly stand for God. I hear the Saviour say. The Church's one foundation. Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing I am not skilled to understand. God moves in a mysterious way.

AN INTERESTING LETTER AND OUR REPLY

WE PUBLISH below a letter received from a ministerial subscriber to THE GOSPEL WITNESS. It may be that his point of view may be representative of others, and for that reason we publish his letter and our reply.

We ventured to read the letter to our good friend, Dr. Robert McCaul, and he said, "If we are going to insist upon a literal interpretation, surely we must go all the way. I wonder if our friend knows where the actual throne of David has been preserved?"

Our premillennial friends insist that Zion in the Psalms and prophecies always means a literal Zion yet to be. That being so, we should like to set out here a quotation from Hebrews 12:22-25:

"But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

It is well to observe the tense, "But ye are come unto mount Zion". And again, 1 Peter 2:6-8:

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Surely no one will contend that the "chief corner stone" who is become "the head of the corner" was a literal stone! And if our friends will look at the passages to which we have referred in our letter, Acts 2:30-36, where it is promised that He would raise up Christ, to sit on His throne, the subsequent verses declare that He has already done that very thing:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he said himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Here follow the letters referred to:

.....
New Jersey
Jan. 25, 1951.

Dear Brother Shields:

You made a statement in the Jan. 18th issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, that I feel sure you will correct when it is brought to your attention.

"The Christ Whom I worship, is exalted to the throne of

the universe, and He has assured me that all authority is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. You ask me to believe that the King of glory will step down from the throne of the Universe to sit on a material throne in Jerusalem?"

My answer is YES.

Your answer, "It is utterly contrary to everything revealed in God's Word." "That kind of nonsense!"

The Lord has already left that throne to descend far below any material throne. He did so 1,900 years ago. If He did it once, and says He will do it again, why not believe Him?

Luke 1:32: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David."

David never sat upon the throne of the universe. His throne was a material throne in JERUSALEM and on earth.

Zech. 14:4: "And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east."

He has feet of flesh and bones. The mount of Olives is real. Jerusalem is a real city on earth. Why deny the Word of God? Why try, if you do, to spiritualize away that which is real?

I am somewhat pressed for time, and so will not pursue the subject further. If the above is not sufficient to cause you to correct your false statement, then perhaps further argument might fall upon deaf ears.

I have differed with you on some minor (?) matters; but the above is far more serious. Do not deny that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." 2 John 7.

I have thanked God for you many times, and I have spoken in your favour more than once, but I shall hang my head in shame, if the above is brought to my attention. My own knowledge of the Word of God declares that the above statement is FALSE.

Yours for Christ,

January 30th, 1951

Dear Brother:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th inst.

I am sorry that you disagree with a certain statement made in a sermon contained in THE GOSPEL WITNESS issue of January 18th. Of course it is our mutual privilege to disagree with each other, and I hope we may do so without any breach of personal friendship.

I am quite familiar with the passages you quote: Luke 1:32, and Zech. 14:4, although your letter would suggest that I must have failed to notice them.

I note that you are pressed for time. I suppose that is true of all men who have a job to do.

Since you seem to assume that certain passages in the Word of God have escaped my attention, I hope I may, without offence, call your attention to several passages. I suggest the 16th Psalm, the 110th Psalm, and our Lord's comment upon it in Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42, 43; and the second chapter of Acts, containing Peter's quotation in his sermon at Pentecost.

Having reminded you of these texts, I may perhaps, again I say without offence, quote your own letter with application to yourself: "If the above is not sufficient to cause you to correct your false statement, then perhaps further argument might fall upon deaf ears." I am sorry for your implication that my position would involve a denial that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

I suppose we are all glad to be favourably spoken of, and I am grateful if you have thus spoken of me occasionally, although I am bound to say I have never asked any man's favour, much less have I ever considered whether the positions I take theologically are likely to please, or displease, my hearers: "If I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

I must confess that I feel no blush of shame mantling my cheeks as I contemplate the word you criticize. If, because at times you have spoken favourably of the preacher, from whose position you now dissent, you must fear "I shall hang my head in shame", I would remind you that you will do so because you object to what the outstanding

expositors, including the great leaders of the Protestant Reformation, and the most conspicuous Evangelical biblical scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have taught.

I notice you say, "My own knowledge of the Word of God declares that the above statement is false." Please do not be offended when I say to you that that being so, your knowledge of the Word of God is woefully defective.

I honour you for the frankness of your letter. I hope you will not be offended by my equally frank reply.

Futurism is as abhorrent to me as apparently my Historicism is to you. We must, however, each be fully persuaded in his own mind, and answer to God for being true to our convictions.

I want to assure you, though I strongly disagree with your eschatological interpretation, that that will not, in any way, mar my fellowship with you as a minister of Christ, who, according to your letter, preaches, "Christ Crucified, Risen and Coming again".

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,
T. T. SHIELDS.

BUILDING BEGUN AT SUDBURY

REV. J. R. BOYD, the energetic Pastor of Berean Baptist Church, Sudbury, is a man who, because of his determination to be a missionary of Christ to every person within his power to reach, is always into some new project. It was not many years ago that he left Toronto Baptist Seminary with a Bible, ten dollars and an old car to face the challenging needs of this great mining centre. In a very short time a church building was erected at Minnow Lake, a suburb of Sudbury, then later a fine edifice was built in the French community of Lavigne, sixty miles away.

Duly recognizing the potency of the radio to publish the glad tidings, Mr. Boyd now broadcasts regularly over five radio stations, extending all the way from Fort William to Cornwall and to Kirkland Lake in the North. A paper called "La Voix de l'Evangile" (Voice of the Gospel), designed to help French Canadian converts and bring light to those who still sit in the darkness of Roman Catholicism, has been published every month for several years. In addition, he has begun to publish another periodical in English entitled "The Berean Ambassador". Hence, with this servant of God, one project leads to another and he is now in the midst of the largest undertaking yet. A commodious church building is being erected in the heart of the city of Sudbury at an approximate cost of \$60,000. The foundation has been already completed and the steel work for the superstructure is nearly all in place. Up to the present, the Berean Church has met in a rented hall. While it has served them fairly well during the early stages, because of the rapid growth of the work, the facilities have become utterly inadequate to meet the increasing requirements. The new building will primarily serve, of course, as a church home for the faithful saints at Sudbury; but in view of Mr. Boyd's far-reaching ministry, which has been built up through the years, it is certain to become one of the greatest evangelical centres in Northern Ontario.

The undertaking is a large one, but with God, not impossible. It may be that many of the Lord's stewards who read this article could render substantial financial assistance. We can think of no better investment to be made of the Lord's money. Arrangements have been made to purchase bonds at 5 per cent interest, but we would like to see many outright gifts sent on to Mr. Boyd to be applied to the building fund. Contributions large or small are acceptable and can be sent either directly to

the Rev. J. R. Boyd, Box 232, Sudbury, or to The Emergency Missionary and Educational Committee, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, to be forwarded to the Treasurer of the Sudbury Church.

Mr. Boyd's most recent letter contains so much interesting matter, we print it in full. Mr. Boyd writes as follows:

The Gospel for Every Man in His Own Language

The work in Sudbury and district continues gradually to advance while maintaining its decidedly international characteristics. Welcome response comes from the needy French fields, especially as a result of tracts being sent out from the Sudbury Sunday School week by week. These have been sent to different districts in Quebec province, and from two rather important centres especially there has been a very encouraging number of requests for the Word of God. These are districts in which there is no Evangelical French testimony whatsoever, but to which we have been privileged to send a very pleasing number of New Testaments in recent weeks. In following up this phase of the French ministry we have found renewed help and encouragement through our ties with the French Bible Mission. Though Mr. Appéré is back again in his native France labouring and preparing himself for further work, he is still very much a part of our Sudbury ministry in that he is writing extensively and translating English articles for use in "La Voix de l'Evangile", and in our French broadcasts.

A New Building Project

At present, of course, our biggest special effort in Sudbury is the building project by which we hope to provide a suitable centre for carrying on our regular services and extensive missionary enterprises. At present the basement walls are completed and the steel work for the superstructure is nearly all in place. Others struggling with building problems, unanimously testify that we are specially blessed in having our steel and in the fact that the boiler for our heating plant is also on hand. A slight delay has been occasioned while we awaited the sub-contractor to build the cinder-block walls; but we are sure that more visible progress will soon be evident. Thus we are made to rejoice that the Lord directed us to make this move before the restrictions on building material became too serious; and we are confident that though our need of funds, both in the form of gifts and loans, is still serious, He will provide. Indeed one of the most pleasing features of this building effort has been the large number of outside friends that have been moved by God's Spirit to contribute donations or to lend worthwhile assistance in response to our offer of 5 per cent mortgage bonds.

We have reason too for much thankfulness in that friends of our French work, particularly among the different Mission Societies, have sent useful assistance in the form of clothing, much of which we have been able to apply to homes where need and fear have united as a formidable combination against the Gospel. Thus on behalf of those who knew not how to turn or what to do, we gladly take this opportunity of thanking all who have in this way contributed towards strengthening hearts in the regions of darkness and terror.

So we would once again appeal to all the Lord's people to pray and to endeavour more earnestly to prepare young lives for the field of battle where the need of truly consecrated spiritual warriors becomes ever more acute.

35,000 Extra "Gospel Witnesses" in One Issue Mailed to Ministers Only



Folding and enclosing "Witnesses" in envelopes. By actual count less than one half the workers were within range of the camera.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS of last week neither aimed at being, nor professed to be a special number as to quality. It was just an average issue, if, indeed, it was not a little below the average. But it was a Special Edition in this sense, that it was designed as an advertisement of the premiums offered with THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

The regular issues of THE GOSPEL WITNESS are wrapped and mailed by the publishers. The only WITNESSES that are sent out from the WITNESS office are the special bundles which are supplied to such churches as order them. But last week's issue consisted of 35,000 extra copies over and above the regular issue. These copies had to be sent out from THE GOSPEL WITNESS office.

We wonder how many people have any idea of the labour such a job as that entails? This 35,000 issue was mailed exclusively to ministers of the gospel, and that number was but a small fraction of the ministerial names we could use. But this is what the mailing of that issue involved:

First of all 35,000 envelopes 9½ in. by 6½ in. had to be addressed. The names of regular subscribers, of course, are all printed by machine; and while that is a

big job, it is nothing at all like the addressing of individual envelopes, either by typewriter, or by hand. But putting each of 35,000 envelopes in a typewriter in turn, typing it, and taking it out, would make three separate



Close view of folding and filling.

operations. That would make 105,000 operations. Then as THE GOSPEL WITNESS has not second class matter mailing rates in the United States, every envelope had to have a stamp put on it. That is 35,000 more operations. About 14,000 names were taken from alphabetical lists, and after they were addressed, they had all to be classified geographically, that is by States or Provinces. That made 14,000 more operations. Then every WITNESS had to be taken, laid flat, and a letter laid upon it. That was two operations, and then folded, three operations, and then put into an envelope, four operations and the flap turned in — making five operations in all. Then



Tying the Bundles.

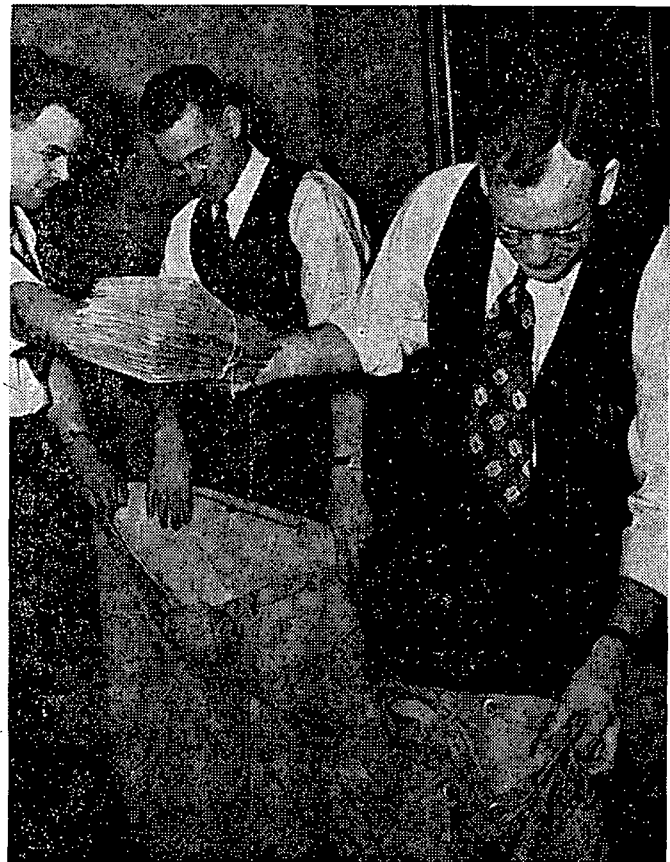
the 35,000 had to be counted, and tied in bundles of 25—1,000 operations more. Each of these bundles had to be put into bags, another 1,000 operations. So that altogether that made about 314,000 separate operations.

To do that a small army of volunteer workers were assembled January 29th. They worked all the afternoon, and all the evening. Refreshments were served about 6 o'clock in the Intermediate Hall.

The big presses had run all the evening and the night of January 26th, and all day January 29th, and that night on into the next morning. The large staff of workers exhausted the supply of WITNESSES by about 9 o'clock Monday night, the 29th. But the other thousands were on hand by noon, next day, and a staff not quite as large as the Monday staff assembled Tuesday afternoon, and finished up the work. On Tuesday night, after the

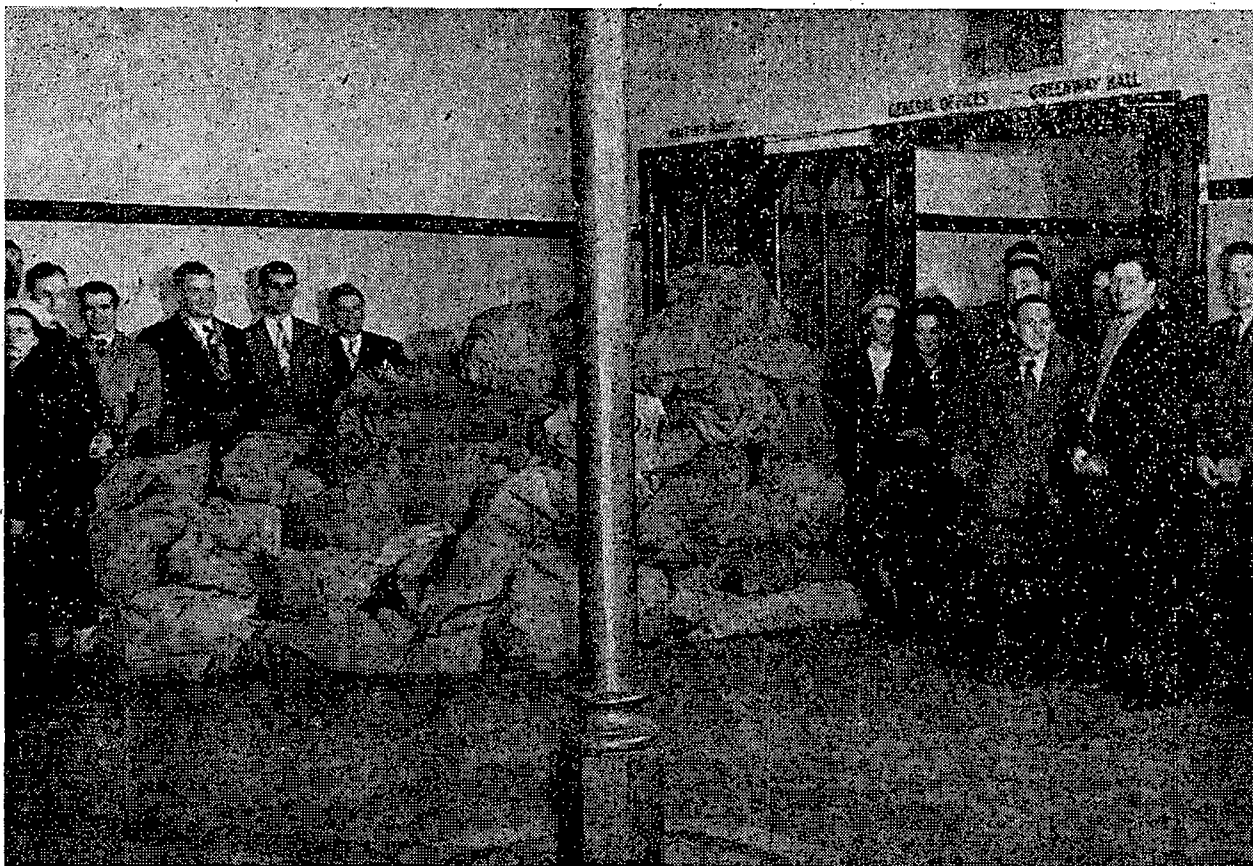
teachers' and workers' conference of the Bible School, a two-ton truck was backed up to the door, and piled high with bags of mail, and they were taken off to the Post Office. During the Tuesday operation several photographs were taken of the procedure by Mr. Don Ford. The photographs are reproduced in these pages. The one showing a considerable company folding WITNESSES, and putting them in envelopes, shows only a part, less than half the number of persons who were at work. It was not possible to so place the camera as to include everybody. The other wider photograph represents the pile of mail bags, and a few of the teachers and workers that gathered around after their conference. Some of them had helped the day before, but they are not photographed as GOSPEL WITNESS workers. This is part of the Sunday School staff. Once again, much less than half of them could be included by the camera. The other photographs, column width, show the tying of the bundles, and putting them in the mail bags.

We publish these things to give our readers an idea of the magnitude of the task THE GOSPEL WITNESS undertakes. We have frankly sent these 35,000 copies out in the hope that from among them we shall receive many new subscribers.



Filling the Mail Bags.

When all was ready to be taken out to the big truck the company were led in prayer by Rev. H. C. Slade and Dr. Robert McCaul. We ask our readers to join in these prayers, and pray that the 35,000 issue may be used largely to increase the regular circulation of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and as a means of spiritual blessing to many.



Ready for the Mailing Truck—a few teachers and workers from the Sunday School Conference. The majority were out of reach of the Camera.

Special Offer to New Subscribers

This paper is a printed missionary, and carries no advertisements. The regular issues contain 16 pages. The subscription price is \$3.00 for 52 issues. With every new subscription we will give one of the three following books as a premium:

1. **Blakeney's Manual of Romish Controversy**, by Dr. R. P. Blakeney, 316 pages.
2. **Popery In Its Social Aspects**, by Dr. R. P. Blakeney, 326 pages.
3. **The Prodigal and His Brother, or The Adventures of a Modern Young Man**, by Dr. T. T. Shields, 132 pages.
4. **The Priest, The Woman and The Confessional**, by Father Chiniqy, 144 pages.

All but "The Prodigal and His Brother" were out of print and unobtainable and were republished by *THE GOSPEL WITNESS*.

You may choose any one of the four as a premium. If you would like any or all of the other books, you may have them at one dollar each.

You may order the paper and one of the books sent you for a month's trial without sending any money. If you are not satisfied return the book or send us \$1.00 and we will charge you nothing for the paper for the month.

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- (c) And also books (or book) numbered _____ for which find \$ _____ enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____