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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

What a Very Little Girl Away From Home Accomplished

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 26th, 1952
(Electrically Recorded)

"And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

"And she said unto her mistress, would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."—II Kings 5:2-3.

WE DO not know very much about this little girl, except that she came from some Israelitish home. And we do know that somehow or another, before she left home, she was instructed in the things of God. She learned about Jehovah, and about His great prophet, Elisha. This little girl had received the truth. And as this simple story unfolds before you, as I remind you of its salient points, you will conclude that whoever it was that taught this little girl about the prophet of Israel did a very fine piece of work. There is a colloquial saying—I do not very much admire it; it is applied to everything now—to the effect that so and so is doing, or has done, "a good job." Everything nowadays is a "job." It does not make any difference what it is, whether it is in the shop, or in the office, in medicine or in parliament—wherever it is, they say that everybody is doing a good "job." Well, I will use that this morning, and say that whoever taught this little girl the things of God did a very good job. I remind you teachers that you are engaged in just such an important work as this.

I.

They taught this little girl in such a way that she remembered after she had gone away from home. You will not always be here. People get scattered you know, and circumstances sometimes effect their removal from one place to another. Some day the teacher will be asking, "Where is So and So?" And she will go and visit, only to find that the house is either vacant, or somebody else is living there, and the little girl has moved away she does not know where. Before you go, while you are

with us, we are trying to teach you something, and we want to teach you in such a way that when you go away from us you will not forget; you will always remember what you learned in Jarvis St. Sunday School. I told you a few weeks ago of a lady who telephoned me, and said she had come from a certain city in Michigan, and she was a messenger to me from a lady there who was eighty-three years old. She said that this lady, seventy-five years ago, when she was just a little girl, attended Jarvis Street Sunday School. They were very kind to her, and the minister was very kind to her, and she asked this lady to call up the Pastor—she had heard somewhere that his name was Shields—but anyway she was to find out who the Pastor was, and communicate with him, and tell him of how she remembered the great kindness that had been shown to her by the Jarvis Street Pastor seventy-five years ago. And do you know what she said? She said, "I want to remember that church in my will." She said, "I have made my will, but I left a place just to remember that church, because when I was only a little girl it was such a great blessing to me." Now I am not going to ask you to remember this church in your will when you grow up. I shall not be here then, but there will be no objection to it; you can do as that elderly lady is doing. I have got into communication with her, I have her letter, and she asked me to write her frequently. Now she gets the GOSPEL WITNESS every week, so that she hears about Jarvis Street Church, and the Sunday School that she attended seventy-five years ago.

Now when you have left us—gone away to the States, or somewhere else—I hope you will be like this little

Israelitish girl, and you will remember all that you were taught here.

Then it is worthy of note that *this little girl was not ashamed of her religion*. She was a captive in the house of a man who did not know anything at all about the God of Israel. None of them did as we do, but he did not know about the prophet of the Lord, or about Jehovah. They did not know anything about him, but she did, and she had the courage to talk to her mistress about Elisha. I hope you little girls will have the courage to talk to your teachers in day school about the Lord Jesus. I remember a girl's coming to me one day—she was a high school girl, a little older than some of you younger ones are—and she said, "Pastor I want to ask you a question." She said, "They are having dances at our high school, and I don't want to have anything to do with it, because I am a Christian." She said, "Shall I just stand aside, and not have any part in it, without giving any reason?" I said, "No, I would not do that. I would speak to the teacher, and say, 'Now I hope you will excuse me, but the reason I do not participate in this is that I am a Christian, and I think it would not be consistent for me to do so.'" And I said, "It will give you an opportunity to bear testimony for Christ among those who do not know Him." That is just exactly what this little girl did. I hope you will have the courage to do that. And by the way, some of you could do that at home you know. It may be that father and mother do not know Jesus, maybe they do not know anything about His salvation. Perhaps some of them do not go to church at all—I know that is so with some. But you can tell them what you have learned here.

I remember when I was in Hamilton there was a woman there who was brought to the Lord through her little girl in the Primary class. The little girl went home and said to her mother: "Mother I wish you would come to my church." Her mother did not go to any church, but in response to the little girl's solicitation she came to church, and she found the Lord. She was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she began to be used in a marvellous way by the Lord. She went out visiting, and people were being converted on every hand, through the ministry of that woman who had been led to Christ by her little girl. Now it may be that you have a father or a mother whom the Lord wants to save. I am sure He does if they are not yet Christians, and if you would do like this little girl, and go home and tell them all that you know about Christ, and ask them to come to your church—tell them that you want to see them saved, just like this little girl did about her master, perhaps God will use you to bring your parents to Christ.

I remember a case—Mr. Hutchinson will remember it—years ago of a little girl here—she was quite young, and she was brought to the Lord in the Sunday School. Her mother was not a Christian, but was very much interested in this little child, although she never came to church. She came to us one day, and she said, "Mother is going to move to New York, and I have to go with her. I want to go to some church where I can learn more about the Lord Jesus and you can tell me where I should go to church in New York." And we told her. So she went to New York, and she went to a church where she could hear more about the Lord Jesus. You see she had had a taste of the gospel, and she wanted more of it. But before she went away she came to me and she said, "I do not quite know what to do. I do not want to go to the movies; I do not like them. I am a Christian, and

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

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I do not want to go. But," she said, "my mother goes, and she insists that I should go with her. What shall I do?" I said, "You tell your mother that you are a Christian, and that you prefer not to go. If she commands you to go, if she makes you go, you cannot absolutely disobey her perhaps, but if you ask her to excuse you on the ground that your conscience will not let you go, I believe she will be likely to excuse you." Now that little girl had a real testimony for the Lord, just as this little maid had.

This little maid knew so much about the Lord that *she thought nothing was impossible*. I will tell you more about that in a minute or two. But when the king of Syria heard what this little maid had said about the prophet, he thought, "Well if the prophet could do some good, the king would do a great deal more good." So instead of sending his servant Naaman to the prophet, he sent him to the king with a letter. And the king rent his garments, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?" because through the ministry of this little girl the king had been asked to do something which he knew only God could do. You see she believed that God could do anything. Don't you believe that? I wonder if there is some little girl here—we have some I know—and father comes home drunk sometimes, and mother does not know what to do. And in some cases mother is just about as bad as father, and that little girl does not know what to do. Perhaps she has said often, "I wish father would stop getting drunk." Perhaps she has to say the same thing about her mother. And that little girl says, "I don't know what to do." Well I will tell you what to do. You go and tell them of a great Saviour Who is able to help even them in that. That is part of the story of this little girl's ministry.

One thing more though I must add. *We do not know who taught this little girl*. Back of it somewhere there was an anonymous teacher, somebody who was content to be unknown, to do good by stealth. You know some

people want to advertise everything they do. But somebody, maybe this little girl's mother, taught her, but nobody knows who it was. Well, you teachers—just that little word for you. It may be that in years to come some of these scholars will not even remember your name, I do not know. But you do all the good you can, and teach them about the Lord Jesus, and it will not make any difference whether you are remembered or not, as long as they remember what you taught them.

I have told you the story of the conversion of the great Spurgeon—how on a wet Sunday morning he was converted in a little Methodist Chapel. The regular minister was not there, and there was a lay preacher who did not know anything but his text. Spurgeon used to say he was glad he did not, because he just shouted his text at him all the morning. The Lord blessed it, and led that young lad, who became the greatest preacher of all time, to know Christ. Well, you know they tried to find out who that lay preacher was. I have read all sorts of guesses as to who preached that Sunday morning, and shouted the text. But they have never been able to identify the man who preached that wet Sunday morning in such a way that that lad who became the world's greatest preacher was converted. But I will tell you it is known all right. I will tell you where that is known—it is written in God's books. And some day when God opens His books, Spurgeon will be there, and the countless thousands who were led to Christ through his ministry, his oral testimony, and his printed sermons, and there will be a man whom the world never honoured, and he will be picked out. The Lord Jesus will say, "There is the man who gave a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. I am going to see to it that he does not lose his reward." Oh, it will be a great day when all the Sunday School teachers come home before the Lord, and all the other people who have just forgotten themselves and tried to serve the Lord. The Lord has taken account of it, and it is written down in His book, and when He comes to reward His servants, if you have done anything in His Name He will not forget you.

II.

Now WHAT WAS IT THIS LITTLE GIRL SAID? Just listen. Her master was commander in chief of the armies of the king of Syria, and he was a great man with his master. He was highly honoured by the king and all the people because he had led the armies successfully in many a battle, and had won many victories. He was a great man, whose name was praised by everybody, but—**you know the story—the poor man was a leper.** He had conquered others, but he could not conquer the leprosy that was eating out his life. You know there are good people like that, good people in many ways outwardly, people who have done a lot of noteworthy things, and yet they are sinners, and they need the ministry of Jesus. For Elisha was just a type, a prophecy really, of the Lord Jesus Himself. And so when this little girl heard that her master had the leprosy she was not angry. She might have been bitter, and she might have said, "Why did he carry me away from home, away from my father and mother?" But no, she knew the Lord, and so she loved anybody that needed the Lord's help. So one day she said to her mistress, as she was waiting on Naaman's wife, "I wish my lord the great general could go to Samaria?" "Why what for?" perhaps her mistress said. She said, "Why there is a great prophet there. He is a prophet of Jehovah, and if he would go there I am sure

that he would recover him of his leprosy." Do you think you have to go to college, and learn a great deal, before you can testify for the Lord? Not a bit of it. The more you learn the better, of course, but you can tell what Jesus has done for you, can't you?

I remember reading of a man in an English village whom the Lord saved in a wonderful way. And he began to preach to the villagers. He gathered little companies first of all in the houses, and then in a larger place, and then after a while the Vicar of the village called him to task. He said, "Now you are not in Holy Orders, and you are not qualified to preach; you ought not to be doing that." "Well," said the man, "maybe not, but you know the Lord Jesus saved me." "I'm glad to know that," said the Vicar. "Then there would not be any harm in my telling a neighbour that I am saved, would there?" "O no," he said, "there would not be any harm in that." "Well," he said, "if I had two or three neighbours together would it be wrong for me to tell them that?" He said, "No, no." Then he said, "If I could get all the neighbours together and tell them that, would there be any wrong in that?" "No," said the Vicar. He said, "Well supposing I could get the whole village together, and tell them how the Lord Jesus saved me. Would there be any harm in that?" And the Vicar had to say, "No." I do not think there would. That is just what the Lord Jesus wants us to do.

I heard General Booth once—I heard him only once I think in my life. But there was one thing I did not agree with him on, or with the Salvation Army, and that was that they would have anybody to take the chair when the General came. And on this occasion they had a man in the chair, because the General was there, who was anything but a Christian, and everybody in the city knew he was not a Christian, and very far removed from it. I remember the General's saying, "Why shouldn't you preach? And why shouldn't you preach? And why shouldn't you preach? Why shouldn't we all preach?" Then he turned around to the chairman, and he said, "And why shouldn't you preach sir?" It was a little embarrassing for him, because everybody knew that he hadn't anything to preach about. But that is what we all ought to be doing, who know the Lord Jesus.

I do not know that this little girl ever went to any Bible College, she never had any special training. But she knew there was a prophet in Samaria, and she knew that he had power from God, and she knew that he could heal the leper. So she told the story. You have read the rest of the story this morning of how Naaman went, and how at last he did as he was told, and dipped seven times in Jordan, and his flesh became clean as that of a little child.

I have sometimes wondered what happened when Naaman came home. When he greeted his wife she looked at him, and she said, "Why you are clean, you are whole; you are not a leper any more." "No dear, I am not a leper any more." I wonder whether Naaman went into the kitchen, or wherever she was, to look up that little maid, and say to her, "Oh, I am so thankful you told me about the prophet in Samaria." But whether he did or not, let us do the best we can to tell to all around what a dear Saviour we have found. Then we shall be used of God to bring the Naamans to Christ. I am sure that little girl must have been very happy when her master came home cleansed of his leprosy.

Do you know what I have tried to do this morning? I

have tried to tell a simple story as simply as I could to make everybody in this house think: "Well I am not a preacher, but I can do just as well as the preacher did this morning." Don't you feel that way? Couldn't any one of you come up here to this pulpit, and if you could overcome your timidity, couldn't you have told the story just as well as I did? Of course you could. That is what I want you to do. And that is why I have told it in this simple fashion. I want you to go everywhere telling about

the Lord Jesus, and leading others to Christ. Let us ask Him to help us so to do. Let us pray.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast been pleased to save so many of us; that Thou hast put us in trust with the gospel, and that Thou hast made us to know what a great Saviour Jesus is. We thank Thee that so many of the boys and girls here know this, and know it just as well as some of the older ones, because they have experienced His grace. Oh, may the Spirit of God possess every one of them, so that they will go and tell others what a dear Saviour they have found. We ask it in His Name, Amen.

THE GREAT CONTENTION

Chapter Seventeen in the History of the Battle for the Bible Among
Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

By Dr. T. T. Shields

ABOUT DEACONS AND THEIR FAMILIES

ANYONE having an experience of the difficulty of keeping a church choir in its place will know that, though by the unanimous vote of the church, control of the whole situation had been put in the Pastor's hands, the choir were not thereby converted to a happy acceptance of the new order of things.

For the information of our readers who have never been in Jarvis Street Church we had better explain that the choir arrangement in Jarvis Street was somewhat different from that obtaining in most churches. The choir faced the congregation, seated in circular seats, between the pulpit and the congregation; so that, however simply he might preach, the Pastor had of necessity, physically at least, to preach over the heads of the choir!

Our readers may readily understand that a company of musicians thus compelled to submit to another authority than their own will, would neither feel, nor appear to others to be, particularly agreeable to the new arrangement.

Absurd Methods in Church Work

Wading through the minutes, both of the Deacons' Board and of the church, recording the transactions of this period, has not been a pleasant task. More and more deeply I have been impressed with the absurdity of the methods by which it was endeavoured to carry on the Lord's work. It was very much like appointing a committee of three to get gas for the car, and another committee of three to put oil in the car, with separate committees to inflate each of the four wheels, and an extraordinary committee for the spare tire—and last of all, a very special committee of about five people to sit in the driver's seat, and drive the car! No insurance company in the world would accept the risk that such an arrangement would involve.

But that is scarcely an exaggeration of the way in which it is attempted in many churches to do the Lord's work. The difficulties are only accentuated when, as is frequently the case, the various tire committees, and the gas committee, and the oil committee, have all failed to do their duty—and the only committee ready to fulfil its responsibilities when the scheduled hour for the starting of the car arrives, is the committee of five drivers! But alas! alas! the tires are flat, the gas-tank is empty, and there is no oil for lubrication. Notwithstanding, at its annual meeting the church "reported progress".

The minutes, though an account of serious transactions, and a record of the consumption of weeks of time, and the story of the action of full grown men who were far from being stupid in the conduct of their own business, if read through common-sense glasses, are about as full of real comedy as the pages of Punch! One rises from the reading of such minutes with a deepened conviction of the divine character of a Christian church, for the reason that no other institution in the world could survive such ridiculous treatment.

What is the explanation? Is it not that the Lord's business differs from all other sorts of business? And that men, who are leaders in the marketplace, if they be but babes in spiritual stature, when they turn their attention to the Lord's business, act like little children instead of like fullgrown men? A man with no more ability to make money than is possessed by one in middle life who has never been able to get beyond some menial task, but who spiritually has walked with God and grown to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus, is worth immeasurably more as a church administrator than the keenest business man who, spiritually, is but a babe.

There will be no difficulty with anyone of experience in church affairs in understanding that if the adjustment of the choir's relation to the public services did not involve an ecclesiastical surgical operation, it at least necessitated very drastic medical treatment; and the period of convalescence may be almost as extended in the latter case as in the former.

One of the issues of the choir matter was the resignation of my first associate. He was a splendid man in many respects, as I have already said; and had been far more critical of the choir than I had ever been. Notwithstanding, in the crisis he failed to stand with me, with the result that I found it necessary to inform him that a dissolution of our partnership was inevitable. The mere mention of some of these matters recalls very vividly the grief I felt at the time. Notwithstanding, I am persuaded that many a promising work has been wrecked, and many a minister's usefulness permanently crippled by the want of resolution in times of emergency.

During this year—the year 1920—my dear friends, Rev. C. M. Carew and his wife, also left us. Mr. Carew accepted a call to the Fenelon Falls Baptist Church, in the pastorate of which church he continued until he was called to higher service in 1934. But never in all the

years of our acquaintance, when he was my neighbour in London, my associate in Jarvis Street, or through the years in which he served in Fenelon Falls, during which time he was invariably my guest when in Toronto, was there one moment's ripple on the surface of our fellowship.

Undercurrents of Opposition

All through the year 1920 one could feel an undercurrent of opposition set in operation largely by the winds that had been generated by the heat of the Ottawa Convention.

I would not have it understood, however, that the upheaval of 1921, toward which now in this narrative I am progressing, was wholly due to influences from without the church. The upheaval was largely due to denominational influence, but not exclusively. So far as I am aware, the testimony of the Jarvis Street pulpit to-day is exactly what it has been throughout the years of my pastorate. From the beginning, I determined to know nothing here "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"; and so far as I am aware, I have never at any time departed from that resolution.

There were in the Jarvis Street of that day many Christians who had had a very rich experience of the grace of God, and who were absolutely loyal to the gospel. That was true of many who had already been long in the membership of Jarvis Street Church when I became its Pastor in May, 1910. But Jarvis Street was looked upon as an eminently respectable congregation. There were many in its membership whose positions in business and professional life, in the view of worldly people at least, gave the church a certain standing. That being so, no sacrifice was involved in joining the church. On the contrary, it was rather a mark of respectability.

Thus many young people had come into the membership of Jarvis Street Church very much as others become members of the Anglican Church at Confirmation. I am happy to say that Jarvis Street Church was always strict enough in its discipline of members who walked in an outwardly disorderly way. Hence we had no members who were not quite respectable. But we had many members who were worldly-minded, and were not spiritual.

A biblical ministry gradually attracted another quality of life. Many people who have come into the membership of the church have said in effect: "We want you to understand that we are not attracted here by the church's standing, nor by the choir's performance. Indeed, there are some things in Jarvis Street which we merely endure; but we have come because we want to sit under a biblical ministry."

I would have my ministerial brethren carefully to observe what I now write. It is seldom possible to reform, overnight, an old established church. The minister who would lead his church in an endeavour to realize the New Testament pattern of a church, must be prepared to "let patience have her perfect work". Sometimes my brethren are disposed to think of me as one who went into an ecclesiastical forest with a broadax, and began immediately chopping down the tall trees. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I had to wait eleven years for my full liberty as a preacher of the gospel.

"Bringing Up Father"

A number of those years were not unhappy years by any means. The older members of the church were not inhospitable towards the doctrines of the gospel. But in ten years, boys and girls became men and women, and

in some families it became a case of "bringing up father". I may give a single example.

There was a gentleman who was a particular friend of mine. He had begun life in a humble way, having been a journeyman mechanic. But his native ability had made him the head of a large contracting firm, and a man of considerable substance. When I knew him first he expatiated often on the admirable qualities of Dr. Thomas, declaring that, in the membership of Jarvis Street, Dr. Thomas was perfectly oblivious to a person's social standing; that the poorest person in the congregation was just as much to him as the wealthiest. And he insisted that that should be the attitude, not only of the Pastor, but of all members of a Christian church, toward all other members. With which sentiment, I hope I scarcely need say, I was in cordial agreement.

This man told me of an occasion when someone telephoned him, and expressed deep interest in his family affairs, enquiring about the health of his wife; and when he informed him that all were well, his wife in particular, it dawned upon the man at the other end of the telephone that he was speaking to the wrong man. There was another man in the membership of the same name, but having different initials; and the enquirer supposed he was speaking with the other man, who at that time occupied a much more prominent position in life than my friend. As soon as the mistake was discovered, the receiver was hung-up.

But in a very few years I saw that man's attitude so completely changed that once in a Deacon's meeting, when the question of the election of Deacons at the approaching Annual Meeting was being considered, this brother, who had been proud of his plebian rank, expressed the view that no man should be considered as eligible for the Diaconate of Jarvis Street Church until he had attained a certain social standing. I could scarcely believe my ears—but there was no mistake about what he said. Nor was that changed attitude a reflection of the attitude of his wife, a splendid Christian woman who never lost her head. But I readily discerned that the voice was an echo of his socially ambitious daughter.

The Reason for Scriptural Standards

I learned, particularly in the years 1920 and 1921, why the Scripture sets up such a standard by which to measure the Deacons of the church. Here it is:

"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

It is to be observed that the Deacons must "rule their children and their own houses well". Since our revolution in 1921, we have been very careful about this matter, and when Deacons are being elected I always read the verses quoted above, for the church's direction; and never fail to point out that, however godly a man may be, however spiritually-minded, if he is not master in his

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

own house, he is not fit to be a Deacon. Otherwise, a church may discover that, having elected a man for what he is in himself, to the office of Deacon, his course is being directed by his wife and family at home. Therefore, without apology or adornment or euphemistic disguise, I boldly and frankly announce, "If you know that anyone among the nominees is ruined by his wife or family, don't vote for him as a deacon."

That became very evident in Jarvis Street in the years 1920 and 1921. Not in respect to the Deacon to whom I have referred, for he had already passed to his reward; but his children remained, and showed nothing of their father's spiritual quality.

The Influence of McMaster's Modernism

There were some young men in the membership of Jarvis Street Church who were graduates of McMaster University. I remember what a great disappointment they were. I had often heard the representatives of McMaster speak of the advantages of what they were pleased to call a "Christian education", particularly emphasizing the value of having in small communities, as well as in larger ones—but particularly in small ones—teachers, and lawyers, and doctors, who had received their Arts training in a Baptist university. Before I had had experience in the matter, I heartily agreed with their arguments.

But I came to know many churches which had graduates of McMaster University in their membership, and I discovered that the modernistic influence of McMaster was expressed not only through its theological graduates, and as I think of the churches now whose record I have passed under review, I can recall but a very few non-ministerial Arts graduates of McMaster—and they were graduated during the early years of that institution—who were not a distinct handicap to the spiritual progress of the church they elected to join. I think of one church that had in its membership twelve or thirteen of them, and from my observation of the quality of their religious life—I will not call it spiritual—I should think they were enough to sink any ecclesiastical ship that could be launched.

A Fifth Columnist at Work

Only one McMaster graduate was in the habit of attending prayer-meeting. I have referred to him in an earlier chapter. He was not marked by special ability in any direction. He was once nominated for a Deacon by some irresponsible person, and I recall the late Deacon Ryrie's coming to me in the Chair and saying, "Something must be done to prevent his election, for by his shirking of every duty during the war, he has forfeited the respect of every man in the church."

But this man became very active in parts of the church's activities. When the Nazis wanted to burn the Reichstag, they used a halfwit whom they could charge with incendiarism. The man I refer to was never charged by anybody with incendiarism, but in other respects the analogy is not wholly inappropriate. He, with others of his kind, were put on the Finance Committee. It was a practice in those days, that if there was anyone in the church who was as dead as the mummy of Rameses, and hence good for nothing, they put him on the Finance Committee to "conserve his business ability" for the church!

This man to whom I refer was not clever, but was unscrupulous; and was just dull enough to feel complimented when people of position paid him attention. It

is easy to win at any game if one violates all the rules. A man of only mediocre mentality may easily force himself into prominence if he be devoid of conscience. Such a man was the one of whom I speak.

The Pastor was ex-officio a member of all committees, and was therefore entitled to know when a meeting was to be held. This man forced his way into the Chairmanship of the Finance Committee—not even by clever manipulation, but by violating all the rules of decency. I discovered he had managed to get a meeting called on an evening when many of the Committee would be engaged, but when his henchmen would be free. He had an official notice sent to all his particular friends a week in advance, while the others received their notice by mail only on the evening of the meeting, when, returning from business, they would receive the notice not more than about two hours before the meeting was to be convened.

I set this out here to show my brother-ministers how necessary it is for the Pastor to keep all the activities of his church, and all its committees, constantly in view. The betrayer of the Lord Jesus was the treasurer of the band of disciples. And it has often happened that when the devil has failed to plant a stick of dynamite in the choir-room, he has succeeded in placing it in the treasurer's office. From this experience also I have learned a lesson: since that time we have sought for a treasurer, not merely a man who was accustomed to the handling of financial matters, but we have sought for him among those whose godliness was beyond question. On the basis of my own experience therefore, I would suggest to my ministerial brethren that if they have a Judas, or a near-Judas, or anyone related to him, in the church, to see to it that such an one is never admitted to the choir, elected a member of the Finance Committee—if you still have such an encumbrance—or appointed treasurer of the church.

Clusters of Eshcol

At the inauguration of the church, recorded in the second chapter of Acts, it is said, "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 Spirit of God provided the very atmosphere of that upper room, filling not only the people, but the house as well. Nothing less than the condition there described is the privilege alike of the individual believer and of the collection of believers known as a church. It is said that He has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus".

The atmosphere of the "heavenly places" should ever pervade the house wherein the people of God worship. Indeed, just as a diver, far below the surface, of the water, breathes the atmosphere sent down to him from above, so believers are even here and now citizens of the heavenly country, whose privilege it is to receive their spiritual supplies from above.

We have carefully perused the pages of the minute-book of the Finance Committee, which records the operations of a body dominated by that carnal element which was being led by the tool of McMaster University. I have been most interested in observing the positively satanic ingenuity displayed by men who obviously were devoid of an experience of divine grace, but were the willing instruments of "that spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience".

How imperative it is that the church should recognize the absolute necessity of committing its business affairs to men of definitely spiritual qualities! It does not fol-

low that because a man is fairly successful in business or professional life, he is therefore possessed of such qualities as will make him a useful administrator in the affairs of a Christian church.

Perusing these minutes, I have noted both with gratitude and with grief the name of one man possessed of qualities that were truly princely, and who might have been a leader and commander of the people but for his evident lack of resolution. He was a great-hearted man, of noble impulses, who had never deliberately led anyone astray, but who failed to lead people aright, for want of the quality of determination that would enable him uncompromisingly, frankly, and finally to say Yes or No, as considerations of righteousness and truth might require.

Throughout the year 1920 I lived as a man in normal health suffering from a toothache which made existence little less than a prolonged torture. The bad tooth was the McMaster representative who had wormed his way into the Finance Committee, and whose operations were designed to keep the financial nerve of the church open and under constant irritation, with the evident intention of giving as much pain as possible.

No Financial Problems

Jarvis Street had no financial problem. Its financial resources were adequate to meet every need of the church. The B. D. Thomas Hall, a name which, without suggestion, I had given it, had remained unfinished for nearly seven years. Nearly thirty thousand dollars of unpaid subscriptions were on the books of the Building Fund Secretary. These young men who, judged by any standard of Christian usefulness, could be likened to nothing better than ecclesiastical mosquitoes, suddenly developed a concern for the completion of this building, for the sake of the memory of the man whose name it bore.

We find minutes too, proposing the increase of the Office Secretary's salary, a woman who later proved herself to be a not very distant relative of Iscariot. These young men became suddenly concerned over the salary of the caretaker of that time, and proposed an increase; and an increase for the caretaker of the Parliament Street Branch. While publicly complaining of financial straitness, in committee they were constantly maneuvering to create a deficit, and precipitate a financial crisis. The atmosphere of the minute-book of the Finance Committee of that day has nothing in common with the atmosphere of the upper room, but breathes the enmity of the serpent for the Seed of the woman.

Ministers who still have to endure such "assistance" and "service" and "help" as may be represented by a carnally-minded Finance Committee have my profoundest sympathy. There could not be found wealth enough in the world to compensate me for even a year's endurance of such humiliating stings as marked my experience of 1920. I would not liken those responsible to jungle beasts—that would necessitate an apology to the whole animal world. They were rather like the mosquitoes of a swamp, generating yellow or typhus fever: Individually insignificant, collectively they possessed the power to infect a multitude with their deadly poison.

Conferences for Deepening Spiritual Life

In the early part of 1921, the Executive of the Forward Movement Committee of the Convention proposed to follow up the financial campaign by holding conferences

throughout the Convention territory, for the purpose of deepening the spiritual life of the churches. A conference on evangelism was held in Jarvis Street Church, and there seemed to be a promise of definite spiritual blessing. Arrangements for these conferences included, of course, the selection of certain speakers. I was assigned to the conduct of three conferences.

Although I had said nothing about it, in my own mind I had set my heart upon having one of my own Deacons accompany me. Seldom have I met a man to whom my affections were drawn out, as to him. We became quite close companions, and for a good while, if we did not walk to the house of God in company, we frequently walked from it; and spent many a Sunday evening after service together.

I have already, in this story, referred to our intimate association. He was a man of decided spiritual capacity, and I recall one Sunday evening when he prayed most earnestly in the prayer-meeting held before the service, and then, with three or four others, as I went to my pulpit, repaired to the vestry and spent the whole time of the preaching service with these men before God upon his knees, pleading for God's blessing upon the Word as it was preached. That evening there were several confessions of faith. In the after-meeting following, he prayed again; and I recall with what thankfulness I praised God for his fellowship.

When the conferences for the deepening of spiritual life were planned, it was my desire that this brother should accompany me, and I was delighted when I discovered that the desire was mutual. It was arranged therefore that we should go together, and the plan required us to speak in two Ontario cities and in a large industrial town. There were to be two meetings in each place, afternoon and evening.

It was in the midst of winter, when the temperature was near to zero. We had a good warm meeting in the afternoon, at which both my friend and I gave addresses. But there was no outward manifestation of anything out of the ordinary having been accomplished.

A Deacon with a Burden for His Church

Here let me introduce a parenthesis in my story, and for that purpose, I must retrace my steps by several months. At the close of a Sunday evening service, a gentleman introduced himself to me, and said he had come from a city about two hundred miles away, for the purpose of seeing me. He had been present at both services, but thought it wise not to intrude until the day's work was done. He came to the vestry, and we remained in conference and prayer until one or two o'clock in the morning.

This man told me he was a Deacon of the Baptist church in the city where he lived, and that his fellow-Deacons were all fine men, but they were about equally divided on spiritual matters. He said half of the Deacons desired to see the church spiritually aggressive, and athrob with the power of the Holy Ghost, but that the others were content with a respectable worldliness. Many of their members, he said, were fond of card-playing, and had their little dancing parties, and saw no inconsistency in being found frequently at the theatre.

I had, years before, preached in that church, and had been the guest of a member who was a civic official, whom I felt was a very excellent man; and it seemed to me that he and his wife would be decided assets to any church. Enquiring as to this man, the Deacon told me

that he was all I supposed him to be as a fine gentleman, but that he was one of the worldly-minded Deacons who seemed to have but little interest in spiritual things. I was surprised to learn this, and felt certain there must have been a deterioration in his spiritual state from the state in which I had found him when his guest years before.

The visiting Deacon told me that some of the Deacons felt something ought to be done to bring about a better condition of affairs, but that some of them feared that a better condition could never be effected under the leadership of their then Pastor. Immediately I was on the alert, for I knew too well the tendency always to lay the responsibility for any want of progress upon the minister; and the further tendency of thinking everything could be bettered by a change of pastors, instead of recognizing that what the church needed was a change of attitude toward God, and a genuine spiritual revival.

Asked as to my advice, I only entreated my new acquaintance not to allow anyone to force him to any underhanded action, but that if things were really as they appeared to him, to return to his city, and at the next full meeting of Pastor and Deacons, to raise the question, and assume his own share of responsibility, and in a kind and brotherly way exhort his brother-Deacons, and his minister too if need be, definitely to seek a spiritual revival.

We prayed together, and at an early hour in the morning, parted company. I received no report from him, and do not know to this day what further course he took. But when the arrangements were made for these conferences to which I have referred, I was delighted to discover that the first church we were to visit was the church of which this friend had spoken. And now I must resume the account of the evening meeting.

When the Heavenly Dew Falls

The first address was delivered by my friend and Deacon, and I recall distinctly the trend of his speech. Particularly he referred to the spiritual requirements set out in the scriptural standard of what a Deacon ought to be. He said, among other things, "When I read that, I have only sympathy and profound respect for the man who, facing that requirement, should say, 'The standard is a very high one; I am compelled to acknowledge I have not attained to it, and therefore I ought not to be elected a Deacon of a church.' But there is one man whom I respect even more highly, and he is the man who will say, 'It is a biblical standard to which I acknowledge I have not attained; but, inasmuch as it is written in the Word of God, I can only conclude it is not impossible of attainment. Therefore, though I am not that man, I am resolved that, by the grace of God, I will be that man if I am elected as a Deacon.'"

The address manifestly produced a profound effect. I followed with an address in keeping with his, and I felt that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit were there. While this particular church had been selected as the conference centre, I ought to say, it was attended by the ministers and lay-representatives of all the Baptist churches in that neighbourhood. When my address was over, the Pastor rose, and in a very mechanical way, announced a closing hymn. It was quite evident that

he had been on the outside of the influence of that service. The dew-fall seemed to have been quite general, but it appeared to me, by the tone and attitude in which the closing hymn was announced—and announced as "the closing hymn"—that the minister had remained as dry as Gideon's fleece amidst the prevailing moisture.

During the singing of the first verse, I turned to the minister and said, "I do not think we should close at this point. Have I your permission to make an appeal?" Permission was readily granted. I made an appeal, and said to the brethren that I believed there was a decided advantage, when the Lord came thus in power and gave us a desire for better things, in our openly declaring ourselves. I then appealed to Ministers and Deacons, and all present, if they felt God's call to a deeper consecration, to leave their seats and come forward and say so.

In the congregation I saw the friend whose guest I had been, and who had been described to me as one of the worldly Deacons. He whispered to his wife, and they immediately left their seats and walked up to the front, and without invitation, knelt before the platform, the Deacon putting his arm about his wife's shoulders as they knelt to pray. My Deacon-friend, deeply moved, and with tears upon his cheeks, stepped down from the platform—it was only about eighteen inches high—and knelt beside the Deacon, putting his arm upon his shoulder. Then the procession started—Ministers and Deacons came forward until there was a great company—I would not dare to say how many—on their knees before God. I can only add that we continued with confessions, and petitions, and praises, until long past the midnight hour. We sang the Doxology together, and bowed as a closing prayer was offered, leaving the place feeling that God had visited His people.

A Further Visitation From God

The next morning we journeyed to our next appointment. The afternoon meeting was largely attended; and we had another time of blessing. The same order was followed, and in the evening my friend and Deacon gave the same address, with some additions.

Among other things, he said this in effect: "Last evening my Pastor spoke very strongly in our meeting in such a city, and among other things emphasized the importance of bringing everything under the direction of the Holy Spirit. He said that, though Pastor of a church with large financial obligations, he would rather have the finances of his church in the hands of crossing-sweepers and scavengers, who had not a dollar to their name, and who knew nothing about business, but who were spiritual men, living in daily fellowship with God, than he would have them in the hands of millionaires who were only nominal Christians." Then he added, "I hope he will repeat that part of his address this evening, with the same emphasis."

Here I may interject that that message fell like a sledge-hammer upon that company of men, because they all knew that the speaker was generally included in the millionaire class.

I followed—and I did repeat in principle what I had said the evening before, and with no diminution of emphasis. Again an invitation was given, and it seemed as though the whole conference came forward, that everybody spontaneously knelt; and we were still in prayer on that occasion when the clocks struck one in the morning. We felt that we had had a further visitation from God.

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

The third day we journeyed back in an easterly direction, to our large industrial town, a journey of nearly two hundred miles. The church building in that place was smaller, the space about the platform more restricted; but the same spirit prevailed. The attendance was large, practically taxing the accommodation of the church. And again it was but a conference-centre, attended by many Ministers and Deacons from other Baptist churches.

Two addresses, afternoon and evening, were given, as at the other conferences; and an appeal was made at the close of the evening service. Immediately every inch of space about the platform, and on the platform, and in the aisles, was occupied by kneeling people, and the remainder knelt in their pews. There was another prolonged period of waiting upon God, with confessions, and petitions for help, and praises for the assurance of grace received.

(To Be Continued)

THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER

(See pages 15 and 16)

OUR subscribers of long standing — and we are happy to number many of them in our GOSPEL WITNESS family — are accustomed to receive each year the "Editor's Annual Letter". They are not only accustomed to receiving this letter, but to responding to it in a generous manner. It is the gifts of such faithful friends that make the continuance of THE GOSPEL WITNESS possible, and we are sincerely grateful for their fellowship in the gospel.

There are many regular readers of this paper, however, whose names and addresses we do not have on our files as they receive this weekly messenger from some subscriber or, in some cases, at second or third hand. They, too, belong to our family and many of them have had a share in the cost of printing and publishing. For their sakes, and also as a reminder to those who have already received the Editor's Annual Letter, we reprint it on the last two pages of this issue.

Once again we appeal to all our friends, far and near. Your help is urgently needed! Let us hear from you, and that right early!—W.S.W.

SEMINARY CONVOCATION

The Spring Convocation of Toronto Baptist Seminary for the conferring of degrees will be held in Jarvis Street Church Auditorium on Thursday, April 30. Those concerned are requested to note the change of date, from that previously announced in the Seminary calendar. We invite all our friends to take advantage of the advance notice, so as to make their plans to be present.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"Other Little Ships"	\$2.00
"The Plot That Failed"	2.00
"The Papacy in the Light of Scripture", 26 pages25
"The Oxford Group Analyzed"05
"The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements"05
"The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada

A DIRGE FOR A DICTATOR'S DEATH

A Sermon by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, M.A.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto
Sunday Evening, March 8, 1953

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms:

That made the world as a wilderness; and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

—Isaiah 14:9-17.

"THERE is no new thing under the sun." This ancient Book from which our text is taken has already recorded, some thousands of years in advance, the startling news that captured a place on the headlines of every newspaper of yesterday. It is important that we should view current events in the light of history; especially of history written from the divine point of view as it is in this inspired Book. Here we find not merely the record of the past but an analysis of the words and works of men under the searching light of God's holy Word, which at the same time reveals His sovereign purpose of redemption.

A Divine Object Lesson

I shall not presume to stand in judgment on Stalin for he now appears before His Maker and Creator to give answer for the deeds done in the flesh. "For it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment." Nor do I profess to be wise enough to prognosticate the course that will be followed in the tangled field of international politics by the successors of this ruthless man, though I do find a warning in this same chapter that the death of one tyrant does not necessarily mean the end of tyranny but may be a prelude to even more bitter sorrows for his unhappy victims: "Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." The prophet saw the hand of God in the career and in the death of an ancient dictator, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he applied the lessons to himself and his contemporaries. Surely we should be remiss in our duty if we in our day failed to see and apply the object-lessons that Divine Providence is enacting under our very eyes.

In the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah there is a dirge for a dictator's death that expresses startlingly similar sentiments to those that are at this moment surging through the hearts of millions upon millions of the hapless and helpless masses who were ground under the iron heel of the tyrant. The ancient dirge was sung by the erstwhile victims of a tyrant and on their lips the lament is trans-

formed into a shout of triumph and joy. These poor sufferers see their happiness reflected by all nature around them: "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." This mighty potentate who in his life boasted of the great cities he had built, is remembered in death only for his wanton destructiveness: "That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof." He who bathed in the supposed glory of liberating peoples and building a mighty nation is now celebrated for his cruelty to the masses for whom "he opened not the house of his prisoners." No tyrant can write his history as it will be read after he passes from this scene of action by those who bowed in hopeless silence under his continual stroke. Those who once gazed in wonder on the magnificent pomp with which the mighty man had surrounded himself in this world give expression in this ironical lament to the contrast between that and the narrow grave in which he now lies: "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." This mortal man who dared to exalt himself as a god is brought down to the pit of corruption where death feeds on him.

A Tyrant's Reception in the Next World

There is a daring flight of imagination here, or what would be such if it were merely great literature and not inspired prophecy. What is depicted is not the funeral of this mighty monarch, but his arrival in the Great Beyond. I cannot think of anything that surpasses it in the vast sweep of its majesty. Milton's famous description of the fall of Satan comes closest to it, I suppose:

Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded though immortal."

But our great English poet was doubtless indebted to this passage for his conception, and he did not speak, as did Isaiah, of men of his own age and generation. What a startling picture is presented here: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?"

We have in this church a number of Christian brethren who belong to some of those smaller nations which were crushed by the advancing juggernaut of Soviet Imperialism, crushed and broken by this new shape of Russian Imperialism as they never were by the older imperialism of the Czars. One of them who suffered much in those dreadful years during and after the war was asked what he thought would be the outcome of the death of Stalin. He replied, "The important thing is what will Stalin have to answer his Judge now that he has received his last summons?" That is a matter that is little thought about, not only inside the Iron Curtain but also outside of it. And the question is not only what will Stalin have to answer, but what shall we have to say when we stand to give an account for ourselves.

The King of Terrors

A few months ago I was called to visit an undertaker's establishment, and there, to my amazement I saw a friend of many years' standing. Thinking that he too was called there by the loss of some friend or relative, I asked, hesi-

tatingly, in my surprise, "Is there someone dead?" "Why, of course there is," was his reply, "there is always someone dead. There are four or five in here now. I work here." Like some others in his profession he had become hardened by familiarity. You may remember Horatio's comment on the grave-digger who had so little feeling for his business that he sang at his work: "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness." But when death strikes closer home, there is no familiarity that will soften the blow for us. And when at last our turn comes, apart from Christ and the comfort of His Gospel, it never comes as anything else than the King of Terrors, whether we be kings or commoners, rich or poor, small or great.

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

It is a trite and hackneyed thing for me to remind you that this is the common end of all men. We are all well aware of it, and spend much time and expense in putting the evil day as far away as we can. Yet in our heart of hearts we find it hard to believe that we too must obey this summons. We persuade ourselves that we still have much time, and often we live, and act, even those of us, alas, who have been hid with Christ in God, as though the things that are seen, which are temporal, would outlast and outshine the unseen and eternal realities of the Kingdom of God.

An Enemy That Cannot Be Shut Out

The walls of ancient Babylon were higher and stronger than those of the Kremlin. The power wielded by its king was probably absolute in a sense that Stalin's never was. The monarch of that long-distant age proclaimed that he was to be ranked with the immortals and he required all peoples and nations to worship him as such. Soviet Communism has banished God from its mighty empire: But neither the old autocrats nor the newer ones could bar the gate against death. Like the poorest captive loaded down with their chains, like the wretchedest victim whom they ordered to die for their advantage, these men who shook the world are brought down to the grave. Even at the risk of repeating a commonplace, I would lay upon the hearts and consciences of you my hearers, as I seek to do for myself, the solemn truth that we all must die like men. Are we ready when to us the fearful summons comes: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."

A Shocking Example of Blasphemy

We see here the spectacle of A SHOCKING EXAMPLE OF BLASPHEMY: "For thou hast said in thine heart I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." See this puny little man as he shakes his fist at the open heavens and in his rage screams at God to vacate the throne of the universe and give way to his little human wisdom and to his little self-willed purpose. Is it conceivable that a mortal being clothed in flesh and blood should become so inflated with a sense of his own importance that he should dare to rival Almighty God? Surely

not, the idea is utterly preposterous. Yet history records the supreme folly of men, not once or twice but many times over in the course of this world, who demanded and received divine honours from their fellow creatures.

When the Creative Word was made flesh and dwelt among men they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, they gave thanks to God for the relief that He brought to the sick and the sorrowing, they rejoiced at the sublime truth He taught them of the heavenly Father and His love. Yet wicked men took counsel together that they might put Him to death and they crucified Him as a malefactor, between two thieves, on the charge that being a man He made Himself God. That is what atheism does. That is the height of blasphemy. Yet when cruel, blood-thirsty tyrants wade through slaughter to a throne and proclaim themselves to be gods, there have always been dupes who through fear or ignorant superstition will bow down and worship them as special revelations of deity.

Arrogant Pride

You will recall that this Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee." The other day a pastor told me that before he began to build his church he had never made anything bigger than a chicken-coop. And there are some of us who have not even had the sense of satisfaction that comes from building a construction as big as that! I must confess that I almost envy the joy of achievement that I half discern in the bearing and in the words of men who have done great things. Yet I think I can also divine sometimes the presence of a subtle temptation to overrate one's own work. Most of us have little cause for concern on this score for it is not in the least likely that we shall fall heir to the temptations of a world conqueror like Alexander, or a multimillionaire such as Rockefeller or Ford. Alas, it does not take much to lift us up in our pride. I am reminded of the story of a houseboy in the Far East who sought employment in the home of a Westerner. "But," said his prospective mistress, "I do not think I have enough work to employ a houseboy." The job-seeker was not to be put off, and with Oriental suavity he replied, "But, madame, you do not know how little work it takes to keep me occupied!" Even a very little success goes to some people's heads, and they acquire such an inflated opinion of themselves and of their own prowess that they are led to imagine that all earth and even heaven itself attends upon their sweet will.

There is an official atheism in Red Russia that is blatantly blasphemous and actively intent upon fulfilling its boast that it will cast Almighty God down from His throne. There is another sort of atheism that is not less blasphemous because it is informal and sometimes, perhaps, unconscious: It flourishes in so-called Christian lands, among those who regard themselves as exemplary citizens and good church members. Their religion is essentially the same as that of the King of Babylon. They employ the same language as he when he said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . ." I—I—I—that is the false god of egoism, the worship of self. Beware of the man who boasts that he is self-made, for such an one invariably worships his maker!

What Is Sin?

What is sin? The Westminster Catechism well answers:

Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

That is a Scriptural definition, but remember that transgression of the law of God implies and involves a deliberate offence against the Lawgiver. God says, "Thou shalt not," and like naughty children who defy their parents, we dare with all the little strength God has given us to smash His holy law and to bid our Maker and Creator move out of the way of our imperial will. That is what Adam did in the garden, and that is what men are still doing. Sin pressed the crown of thorns on the head of the Son of God and nailed Him to the Cross. The philosophy of Stalin and of atheistic Communism is nothing more nor less than the deliberate systematization of the old sinful nature of man.

If you look into the biography of this proud, arrogant ruler of old, you will discover that he embarked upon his blasphemous career in the full knowledge of God's existence. He could not plead ignorance in extenuation of his dreadful sin. On two separate occasions he was compelled to acknowledge the being, the wisdom and the power of the God of Israel. Once when Daniel by divine guidance read the king's innermost thoughts and interpreted them in a way that spoke to his heart as the very truth of God, the proud ruler was brought low and confessed "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." But the great man, like some smaller ones, had an unhappy penchant for forgetting truth that he found unpleasant, and we find him setting up a great golden image and commanding all peoples, nations, and languages to bow down and worship it. When the three Hebrew children refused to bend to his royal decree, Nebuchadnezzar was "full of fury" and had them cast into the fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated. You know the story of how their bonds were loosed by the flames and how they were joined in the midst of the burning, fiery furnace by a fourth who was like unto the Son of God. Thereupon our impetuous, heady tyrant had another sudden change of mind and once again employed pious language about the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But he had not yet learned his lesson, and did not learn it until God brought him down to the level of the beasts of the field.

What Did Stalin Know About God?

I wonder how much Joseph Stalin knew of God and His truth? I do not profess to know, nor have I ever heard or read anything authentic concerning this matter. I do know that as a youth he spent several years in a Seminary as a student for the priesthood. He would doubtless be taught something of the language of the New Testament for Greek is the liturgical language of the Eastern Church as Latin is of the Western Church. Did he have a Greek New Testament in the Kremlin? Had its treasures ever been unlocked to him? All possibility of answering such questions has been studiously buried in oblivion long since. Yet the possibility remains that he knew much truth.

On the other hand we are reasonably sure that in such a place he would be taught much about ikons and their reputedly miraculous powers. He would learn about the sacraments and their supposed efficacy to save the souls of men by material means. He would also be initiated into the rights and privileges of the state church and its priests and learn how they were required in return therefor to

act as the agents of the Czar in keeping the masses in subjection through ignorance and poverty. In the face of this disgusting system is it surprising that a reasonable man should conclude other than that it was a deliberately concocted scheme designed to give stones instead of bread and scorpions instead of fish?

I do not seek to excuse atheistic communism, I am merely recalling the obvious fact that it is a reaction against a corrupt and retrograde religion that dared to claim the name of Christ though it had forsaken His Word and deformed the simplicity of His Gospel. Catholicism, whether Greek or Roman, is the breeder of atheism, and not, as it vainly boasts, the bulwark against it. For proof of my charge, consider that Communism is rampant in Italy, the cradle of the papacy, and that it menaces almost every other Roman Catholic country in the world.

I say again that I do not sit in judgment on Stalin, for he is before a tribunal that is wiser, juster and withal more merciful than any on earth. I say these things to bring home to us our own heavy responsibility before God: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." We cannot decide the degree of guilt of these leaders, and it is not our place to do so. We remember that our Lord prayed for those who drove the nails through His hands, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Perhaps His executioners were recruits from some distant outpost of Empire who were performing a duty that to them was merely a routine order, so hardened had they become by their own bitter experiences. To have demurred in the performance of a command would have merited a still more ignominious death for them. Probably they did not understand the language of the country in which they served and hence regarded their prisoner as a fanatical insurgent intent on making further trouble for them in an already troublesome land. For such who sin in ignorance there is forgiveness through the mercy of God and His impartial justice.

But what of those who with full knowledge of Christ and His Gospel turn their backs upon Him? Our gracious Lord and Saviour spoke of religious men who, because He had come and spoken unto them, would have to die in their sin. It was to men of high religious profession who had set themselves against Him that our Lord spoke His strongest condemnation. He taught that there is a blasphemy that has no forgiveness, a sin which brings eternal condemnation. Whether or not the high-priests of Communism are guilty of such dreadful blasphemies as are thus described is not for us to judge, but in this land where the Gospel is proclaimed and the Word of God is not chained, there are certainly many who deliberately and of set purpose sin against light and stand in danger of eternal judgment.

Fabricating a False Religion

Our text describes a man who fabricated and established a false religion. Will you say that at this point the parallel between ancient and modern blasphemy ceases? Will you remind me that Russia is atheistic? That is true, but it is instructive to trace its similarity to another great totalitarian system that is based on religion, I mean the papacy. There was a pope in the Kremlin, just as there is one in the Vatican. He was elected in secret by a small band of key-men, or cardinals. They too have their Bible, Marx's *Das Kapital*, as the priests in Rome have theirs in the traditions of the church and Canon Law. Both these systems of absolutism are able to command the blind faith of fanatics who will sacrifice their own personal interest to

work the will of the dictator, and who are fully convinced that the end justifies the means.

Communism has more than the outward trappings and organization of a totalitarian religion, it also has its inward spirit and faith. It has sedulously cultivated the favour of the masses throughout the world as the champion of oppressed and downtrodden peoples. In China it has ridden to power as the protector of the poor and landless classes. In Italy it dares to answer the Roman colossus to its face and has attracted to itself all the distressed and troubled multitudes like a veritable Cave of Adullam. In Toronto I listened to a former Communist Controller make a thumping good election speech by pleading for reduced street car fares, accompanied by higher pay for the operators! I think he threw in a plea for free milk for the children as an added attraction. But what does he care about cheaper car fares and milk for children? Precious little! If it suited the turn of his Master in the Kremlin, he would blithely obey an order for the liquidation of any one of us, or all of us put together, just as whole races have been wiped out for the advantage of the communistic machine.

All this is but the outward show of Communism. At heart it is a philosophy, or rather a theology and even a religion. It is atheistic in the sense that it denies the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but actually it sets up another god on the throne it has declared vacant, even more hideous than the great golden idol that Nebuchadnezzar set up long ago in the plains of Dura in the province of Babylon. In their folly and wickedness these madmen have refused to believe in the God of love and holiness who has spoken words of salvation and grace in Jesus Christ, and in His place they have embraced the horrible conception of a blind, impersonal force. For love they have substituted hatred, for justice, might, and woe betide the individual who dares to withstand this fearful machine of blind, blank fate.

A Christian Land?

We live in a Christian land, someone will say. Did not the President make a prayer of dedication for himself when he assumed office? Did not his predecessor in office invoke the Golden Rule? Shall we not all be reminded by the Coronation ceremony of our great evangelical heritage? Yet this is all true, yet any one of us could think of a thousand ways in which our nations seem bent on proving that we have a form of godliness while denying the power thereof. It is not my purpose to go into that now, but I would remind you that there is practical atheism that is quite as deadly and even more dangerous than theoretical atheism. Think of the man in the parable who pulled down his barns and built greater, and who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Was he an atheistic communist? Certainly not a communist, and probably not an atheist, yet he dismissed God from all his reckoning. God was not in all his thoughts. It was not his theory that was at fault, it was his practice: "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Are we really a Christian nation? What place does God occupy in our highest councils? What place do we give Him in our national life? Not very much I fear. But let me press the question still closer home: How much does God mean to you? Is your life centred in His holy

will, is it your delight to meditate in His law day and night? Do you make it the great end and aim of your life to please Him? Is He the daily companion in whom you rejoice as the strength of your life? Do you love Him with all your heart, and mind and strength? Alas, alas, God is but a name to many, and religion is too often merely a form or even a convenience. This is practical atheism.

In the same chapter where is found our Lord's parable of the rich fool (Luke 12), there is recorded Peter's ingenuous question: "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" It would appear that Peter felt our Lord's teaching was somewhat too searching and he sought to find some excuse for evading its high requirements, while conveniently passing them on to others. The Saviour did not reply to his question categorically, but he answered it very pointedly by telling still another parable. Unlike His first parable, here it was not about common servants but about a head servant, a steward, whom the master in the story had made ruler over his household. Such an one, the Saviour taught, would be rewarded for faithfulness, but if he should prove unfaithful to his high trust, then, "the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." To enforce His answer to Peter's question, the Lord Jesus added this saying: "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more." If we dare boast of our Christian privileges in a Christian land, we condemn ourselves out of our own mouths. When we think of the dreadful atrocities which have been perpetuated behind the Iron Curtain and cry to the God of Justice, "How long, O Lord?" we ought also to remind ourselves of the "few stripes" for those who "knew not"; and of the "many stripes" for "that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will."

Communism Is Not the Real Enemy

I venture, therefore, to say in closing that the real enemy is not atheistic communism. I am convinced that the influence of the Vatican presents a greater ultimate threat to the peace and security of the world than the power of the Kremlin. But the real enemy is neither in Rome nor in Moscow: it is in our own unbelief and disobedience to the Word of God. Here is the remedy for our present situation: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." In his day Isaiah warned his contemporaries against going down into Egypt to make alliances, in trusting in horses and chariots instead of trusting in the living God. Of course they laughed him to scorn as an impractical idealist: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord."

Our statesmen and our generals have made world-wide alliances to co-ordinate production and to weld international fighting forces into a bastion against the threat of red aggression. Our technicians and our factories are busy spending incalculable fortunes on radar screens, jet planes,

air bases and atom bombs to ward off possible attacks from our great centres of population and potential war production. They say that politics makes strange bedfellows, and those we have with us too! A deal is being made with Franco for bases in Spain; Tito is coming to England soon for talks; Chiang Kai-shek has recovered some the face he previously lost, while our statesmen are careful to pay polite compliments to the pope as the world head of a great anti-communist combination. For my part I do not feel happy in such company, and I cannot believe that in the end they will help our cause one whit.

We are now told that psychological warfare is to be intensified so as to capitalize on the present unrest in Russia attendant upon changing the head of the government. I do not know what that means, but I hope it does not mean the telling of bigger, smoother lies than those of the propaganda services of our enemies. Why don't we do the right and tell the plain, unvarnished truth, like free men who are confident of the justice of their cause? Let us cease acting and speaking subtly and slyly with our eye on Rome or Moscow, or Madrid or Belgrade or some other place. Let us fear God and then we shall need to fear none other. Let us look to Him for help, and sanctify Him so that He shall be for us a sanctuary.

Is this impractical? This company here assembled cannot compel our government to follow such a policy, but we can dedicate ourselves to God and His Word. Let us make sure that our religious profession is not one in name only, but a personal trust in the living God Our Saviour. In His own good time, our God will answer those that deny Him and blaspheme His name. Only let us remember that our responsibility is proportioned to our privileges, that to our own Master we stand or fall.

Trajan, it is said, rent his clothes to bind up his soldiers' wounds. Christ poured out his blood to heal his saints' wounds, and tears his flesh to bind them up.

—GURNALL

A SIX-MONTHS' STORY CONTINUED IN THIS ISSUE

The story of **THE GREAT CONTENTION FOR THE FAITH** by Bible-believing Baptists of Canada, which began in the front-page article of Nov. 20, will continue in instalments week by week for probably four to six months.

We earnestly solicit the co-operation of all our readers in making this story as widely known as possible. In order to give currency to it we will send **THE GOSPEL WITNESS** containing this story week by week for the full time of its continuance — not less than six months — for \$1.00. Send in your subscription immediately, and all subscriptions will begin with the first instalment in the issue of Thursday, November 20th.

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Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 First Quarter Lesson 13 March 29, 1953

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

Lesson Text: John 10:1-18.

Golden Text: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."—verses 1-10.

I. Christ the Door of the Fold: verses 1-10.

Our Lord frequently taught sublime truths by means of parables (Matt. 13:18, 34; John 15:1). Before setting forth the teaching of this lesson, teachers might discuss the ways of sheep and shepherds. Sheep are defenceless, dependent, and if lost, are unable to find the way back. The shepherd must guide, guard, feed and heal the sheep. In Palestine the shepherds always go before the flock.

Christ is the only true Shepherd of the sheep of God. The Pharisees, who claimed to be God's representatives, and all other self-styled leaders, are not true shepherds. The rightful owner of the fold may enter by the front door, his authority acknowledged by the porter and by the sheep. Those who attempt to enter by breaking down barriers are false shepherds. Rival leaders had claimed the power to bring the national hopes of Israel to fulfilment, but Christ alone had received the commission from God to save men.

Christ is the only way of access into the Father's fold (Eph. 2:18). He is the door for the sheep and all who desire to come to the Father must come through Him; He alone is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb. 10:19, 20).

Those who come to God through Christ will find safety, freedom and nourishment. False shepherds would bring harm and destruction to the sheep; they are inclined to "fleece" the sheep, rather than feed them (Acts 20:28-30; 1 Pet. 5:2-4; 2 Pet. 2:3). Christ came that His sheep might have life; not merely deliverance from death, but life which is abiding, abounding and full, life that completely satisfies the longing of the heart (Psa. 36:9).

II. Christ the Shepherd of the Sheep: verses 11-18.

The good shepherd loves his sheep so much that he would be willing to lay down his life, if necessary, that the sheep may be saved from their enemies. He would scorn to run from danger, but faces and overpowers the foe, even although he himself must die. Christ is our Good Shepherd, Who lay down His life for His own (Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4).

How helpless men are who are attacked by the forces of sin! Like sheep, we have all gone astray (Isa. 53:6), exposing ourselves to the power of Satan, who would fain destroy us (1 Pet. 5:8). Christ came to frustrate the works of the Evil One (1 John 3:8), but in so doing, died the death which was due to men (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6), for only by death could He destroy the one who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14).

Many priests of Israel had been as faithless shepherds, caring for themselves, but not for the sheep (Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:2-6). They served for a reward, not for love (1 Pet. 5:2). They fed themselves at the expense of the sheep (Jude 12), not in the least concerned that the sheep wandered from the fold, hungry and helpless, a prey to every foe (Zech. 11:17; Matt. 9:36).

Christ the Good Shepherd has not only perfect love, but He also has perfect knowledge. To a stranger the sheep may all look alike, but the owner of the sheep can distinguish each one from its fellows. The Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Tim. 2:19). The sheep, on their part, will recognize their shepherd; His voice they will hear and obey (1 John 4:6; 5:20).

The fellowship between Christ and His own is like that which exists between Christ and the Father. It is God's will that perfect unity, such as characterizes the Godhead, shall ultimately be made manifest in the body of Christ (John 17:21); not an external, material, formal union, but an internal, spiritual, living union. There will be but one fold and one Shepherd. The first step toward this union was the

gathering together of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Isa. 56:8; Gal. 2:26-28; Eph. 2:14-18). In Christ all believers become one, for all have been baptized by the Spirit into one body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:5).

The Good Shepherd was sovereign in death, as in life. He gave His life for the helpless sheep (Rom. 5:6; 8:3) in voluntary self-sacrifice (John 2:19; 19:30; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25) at the time and in the manner which He chose. The offering of the Son of God was well-pleasing to the Father (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 10:7); it was the Father's commandment that He should thus die (John 14:31; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). The Son joyfully concurred in the Father's will.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

March 23—The Good Shepherd Gives His Life Psa. 22:1-21.
 March 24—The Great Shepherd Cares for the Sheep Psa. 23.
 March 25—The Chief Shepherd is the King of Glory Psa. 24.
 March 26—Have You Increased the Joy of Heaven? Luke 15:1-10.
 March 27—Brought Again from the Dead Heb. 13:10-25.
 March 28—Shepherd and Bishop 1 Pet. 2:11-25.
 March 29—When the Chief Shepherd Appears 1 Pet. 5.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

I was a wandering sheep. The Lord's my Shepherd. Hark! 'tis the Shepherd's voice I hear. The King of love my Shepherd is. Jesus is our Shepherd. Saviour, like a shepherd lead us.

HOW THE HEAVENLY FATHER BRINGS UP HIS CHILDREN

Ye contracted with Christ, I hope, when first ye began to follow Him, that ye would bear His cross. Fulfil your part of the contract with patience, and break not to Jesus Christ. Be honest, brother, in your bargaining with Him; for who knoweth better how to bring up children than our God? For (to lay aside His knowledge, of the which there is no finding out) He hath been practised in bringing up His heirs these five thousand years; and His bairns are all well brought up, and many of them are honest men now at home, up in their own house in heaven, and are entered heirs to their Father's inheritance. Now, the form of His bringing up was by chastisements, scourging, correcting, nurturing; and see if He maketh exception of any of His bairns: no, His eldest Son and His Heir, Jesus, is not excepted (Rev. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 7, 8, and ii. 10). Suffer we must; ere we were born, God decreed it; and it is easier to complain of His decree than to change it. It is true, terrors of conscience cast us down; and yet without terrors of conscience we cannot be raised up again: fears and doubtings shake us; and yet without fears and doubtings we would soon sleep, and lose our grips of Christ. Tribulations and temptations will almost loosen us to the roots; and yet, without tribulations and temptations, Sin, and Satan, and the world will say, and cry in our ear, that of these three, except they lie, dare say in our face that our sin can change the tenor of the new covenant. Forward, then, dear brother, and lose not your grips. Hold fast the truth: for the world, sell not one dram-weight of God's truth, especially now, when most men measure truth by time, like young seamen setting their compass by a cloud; for now time is father and mother to truth, in the thoughts and practices of our evil time. The God of truth establish us!

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

The GOSPEL WITNESS

and

Protestant Advocate

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Associate Editors

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130 GERRARD STREET EAST, TORONTO 2, CANADA

February 9th, 1953

Dear GOSPEL WITNESS Subscriber:

Last year I began my annual letter with these words:

"This is my twenty-ninth annual letter, and every year I have, briefly, to explain to new subscribers why I thus write. This is the more necessary this year because we have received such a large number of new subscriptions."

I could use the same paragraph to begin this year, changing the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth.

That we have been able to continue publication so long is a journalistic miracle. The Publisher of "The Toronto Globe and Mail", in a recent address to a Press Club, said that publishing costs had increased in the last five years one hundred and ninety-four percent; and in the same period revenue had increased one hundred and seventy percent; which meant that they had got one hundred and seventy out of the one hundred and ninety-four percent from their advertisers. By increasing their advertising rates they had reduced their one hundred and ninety-four percent increased cost, so that their extra cost of publishing had amounted to only twenty-four percent.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS has no advertisers upon whose shoulders it can impose the extra cost of publication. But the increase is the same with us as with other publishers. It costs about three times as much to produce THE GOSPEL WITNESS to-day as it did five years ago. It is only by the generosity of THE GOSPEL WITNESS Family, who recognize in THE GOSPEL WITNESS a missionary agency, that we have been able to keep going. So that really an offering to THE GOSPEL WITNESS is an offering to Missions.

The year past has been full of encouragement. We have heard of blessing communicated through THE GOSPEL WITNESS pages, from all parts of the world to which THE GOSPEL WITNESS goes.

But here I must write a word to some thousands of our readers to whom we have sent THE GOSPEL WITNESS without their requesting it, because we wanted, particularly, the Baptists of Canada to read the story we had to tell about "The Great Contention." We ask these friends, who have been reading the paper, to please not be disturbed by the receipt of this letter. It is easier for us to include everybody than to go through the thousands of names we should have to go through, and delete those to whom we were sending the paper without charge. Of course, if among these readers there are those who appreciate the paper's ministry, and who would like to have fellowship with us in continuing it, we shall not object, but we are not directly appealing to them.

We have been especially encouraged by the large number of prominent Christian leaders who are taking the paper, and who express their appreciation of its

ministry. Some people, anxious for the conversion of their friends, subscribe for THE GOSPEL WITNESS to be sent to them. We have heard of conversions and restorations, and stimulations from many directions.

AS A GUIDE TO THE SIZE OF YOUR OFFERING, WE SUGGEST THAT, INASMUCH AS COSTS HAVE INCREASED THREE TIMES, IF YOU COULD MAKE YOUR ANNUAL GIFT THIS YEAR THREE TIMES WHAT YOU MADE IT FIVE YEARS AGO, IT WOULD GREATLY HELP US. It takes a great many one dollar bills to count up; notwithstanding we appreciate every contribution that is sent to us.

Some years ago a lady in the United States sent me four thousand dollars for the Seminary, which we greatly appreciated. I met her personally. Some time later I read of her death, and that she had left to a certain religious paper fifty thousand dollars in her will. I rebuked myself that I had not asked her to remember THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

Send us as much as you possibly can now; but if you can remember THE GOSPEL WITNESS in your will, for a substantial amount, we shall be most grateful. But please do help us with as large a gift as you can possibly afford this year.

Our financial year ends the 31st of March, and we shall be glad if you can send us a contribution within that date. I may add that the Editor receives the same salary he received the first year - thirty years ago, - which is absolutely nothing at all; and it is because I, myself, have given thirty years of labour, day and night, to this enterprise without one cent of remuneration, that I am emboldened to ask my GOSPEL WITNESS Family to help me in bearing the financial burden.

You will find a business reply envelope enclosed. It requires no stamp if mailed in Canada. You merely fill out the slip at the bottom of this letter, to identify your offering, tear it off, put it in the envelope, and send it to us.

Hoping to hear from you at an early date, and with thanks for your anticipated help in this matter, I am,

Very gratefully yours



(Please return this portion)

THE GOSPEL WITNESS
130 Gerrard St. E.
Toronto 2, Canada

Dear Dr. Shields:

Enclosed find my gift of \$ _____
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