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A Special Message From the Editor

The following telegram has been received from Dr. Shields, who is preaching for two weeks in First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

Fort Worth, Texas,
March 16, 1953.

TO MY WHOLE "GOSPEL WITNESS" FAMILY:

BEING AWAY FROM HOME FOR A MUCH NEEDED REST, I AM NATURALLY VERY ANXIOUS ABOUT THE RESPONSE TO MY ANNUAL LETTER, AND I MAKE THIS APPEAL TO ALL MY READERS FOR A GENEROUS RESPONSE TO MY LETTER SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO CLOSE OUR "GOSPEL WITNESS" ACCOUNTS ON MARCH THIRTY-FIRST WITH A SUBSTANTIAL BALANCE IN THAT ACCOUNT. THE ENORMOUSLY INCREASED COST OF PUBLISHING MAKES LIBERAL COOPERATION OF WHOLE "WITNESS" FAMILY IMPERATIVE, FOR WHICH EFFORT I SHALL BE MOST GRATEFUL. I SHALL BE EAGERLY AWAITING WORD.

T. T. SHIELDS

(See Page 16 for Reply Form)

ORANGEMEN CHARGED WITH R.C. RACKET

WE NOTE with deepest sorrow in the daily press that a number of Orangemen in Ottawa were charged with selling and disposing of lottery tickets.

Our regret is not that the Orangemen were charged by the police, on that score we offer the Ottawa force our sincere felicitations, just as we did in the case of the Hamilton police who recently proceeded against the officials of a Roman or a Greek Catholic Church on a similar charge. Our sole regret in this case is that men who make a profession of Protestantism should sink so low in the scale of moral values as to steal the sordid methods and schemes of Romish racketeers. The Ottawa police must be complimented for discerning that the monopoly in this particular field of gambling belonged *de facto* if not *de jure* to the priests of Rome.

Another news item from Ottawa informs us that "thousands have been duped in 'fixed' bingo racket". The dispatch adds that "Police said they didn't know yet but they think other bingos—which for the most part are weekly affairs here—were rigged." Without the slightest supporting evidence we would venture a guess that the "weekly bingos" referred to in the captital city of Canada are not conducted either by the Orange Order or by Baptist Churches. We think we can vouch for the latter, and as to the former, the local police seem to have warned them away from the Roman Catholic monopoly on bingos and lotteries.

The fact of the matter is that all Roman Catholic "bingos" are "rigged" in the sense that the priests who sponsor them are the real winners and the simpletons who part with their money in hope of easy gain are their victims. Such enterprises are immoral and dishonest in the same way that all gambling is immoral and dishonest. We sincerely hope that the police will continue to enforce the law without mercy against Orangemen so as to force them completely out of this shady business that is quite in keeping with Romanism but utterly at variance with the spirit of genuine Protestantism. We are thankful this case is the exception, not the rule. We would not go so far as to express the hope that the police would allow Roman priests to exploit the gambling instinct of the masses without let or hindrance, but we do say that so long as this is done, it will constitute a standing proof not only of the special immunity of the Roman Church to civil law but also of the conveniently low level of its moral requirements.—W.S.W.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PREACHING TO AWAKENED SOULS

People go to sleep for a long time, but all on a sudden they begin to rub their eyes, and to enquire about this, and about that, and about something else. Well, now is the time, when the spirit is thus aroused, to preach the gospel to that awakened mind. It seems to me that no nobler opportunity could present itself than now. Now is the time when the corners of the streets should ring with ministers' voices; when the Word of God should be distributed in every house, when you should give away tracts, not such poor tracts as are mostly given away, but tracts with something solid in them, and these should be given away by millions, for just now men are thoughtful, and let them have the grand reality revealed to think about.

—C. H. SPURGEON

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

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DR. SHIELDS IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS

IN A telephone conversation last Thursday night, Dr. Shields reported from Florida that his holiday in the south was drawing to a close as he had accepted an invitation to preach for several Sundays in the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, of which the late Dr. J. Frank Norris was for many years the pastor. We thought we detected a note of enthusiasm in the Editor's voice as he announced the end of his vacation and the beginning of a new assignment to duty, but knowing his aversion to loafing holidays and his love of preaching holidays, we were not greatly surprised.

In a wire dispatched Saturday from Fort Worth for reading at the public services of Jarvis Street Church on Sunday, Dr. Shields informed us that he had been welcomed at the airport by Rev. William Fraser, formerly his secretary in Jarvis Street, who is now associated with the First Church, Fort Worth. Mr. Ritchie, the pastor who has been called to succeed the great Dr. Norris, is a young man in his twenties who has already proved himself to the church first as a superintendent in the Sunday-school, then as a student in the Seminary, and finally as a successful pastor of a nearby pioneer cause. We invite our friends to pray that the ministry of Dr. Shields in Fort Worth may be a source of much blessing and inspiration to pastor and people as they seek to hold forth the word of life in this church where Dr. Norris laboured long and fruitfully.—W.S.W.

GOD'S "YEA" AND THE WORLD'S "NAY"

When our Lord is going west, the devil and world go east; and do you not know that it hath been ever this way betwixt God and the world—God drawing, and they holding, God "yea," and the world "nay"? But they fall on their back and are frustrate, and our Lord holdeth His grip.

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

How a Proud Man Was Healed

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, November 2nd, 1952

(Electrically Recorded)

"And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

"And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

"And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

"And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

"And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage,

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."—II Kings 5:4-14.

LAST Sunday morning I spoke to you as simply as I knew how about the little Israelitish maid who waited on the wife of Naaman, the great Syrian commander, who, notwithstanding his exalted position, was a leper. She recommended that he should go and consult the prophet in Samaria, and be healed of his leprosy. I think we will continue the story for a little while this morning, to see how it turned out.

I.

I think THIS STORY IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HUMAN TENDENCY ALWAYS TO CORRUPT AND MAKE COMPLEX THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL. The little maid who preached the gospel to Naaman's wife preached it in a very simple fashion. She told her that there was a prophet of Jehovah in Israel who would recover her master of his leprosy if he would go to him. But when the king of Syria heard it he seemed to say, "Well if the prophet could do it, how much rather could the king, for he is greater than the prophet." So he wrote a letter, and sent it, with talents of silver and of gold, and changes of raiment. I have read to you the story of how the king of Israel thought he was seeking a cause of war. But when Elisha heard it he sent for him, and when he told him what to do Naaman became very angry, and went away in a rage, until some wise person among his servants talked a little sense to this man. He said, "It is only a little thing; don't be foolish, but go and wash as he said." And he dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and he became clean.

Now my dear friends, wrapped up in this story is the principle that *men always welcome a religion that necessitates no humbling of themselves before God.* Naaman was a very important man. I do not suppose he was one whit more important than he supposed himself to be. But he had done valiantly as a soldier, and really believed that he was an unusual sort of man, as I suppose he really was. But he wanted a religion that would be appropriate to his rank, and to his position. The king agreed with him, and so sent a letter to the king of Israel, with all the rest of it. You find that there are people to-day who are just as foolishly proud, and proudly foolish, as Naaman was. Many people are caused to stumble by the very simplicity of the gospel. They want to invest it with all kinds of ceremony, pomp, and pageantry, as though the Lord God were interested in millinery, and that sort of thing. They want a religion that will allow them to come in as a very important person, without humbling themselves before God. Hence we have Roman Catholicism. It ministers to the pride and the egotism of people. The pope is the king, and the cardinals are princes of the church if you please, and the clergy are all very important people. Their fine robes rather dazzle the poor victims of their superstition. But it is a religion that is designed for the natural man, and that is why it is so popular. I suppose that is true of all of us. We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God, we have done wrong in ten thousand ways, and what a world of blessing could come, not only to us, but to millions of people, if we and they could only humble ourselves

and themselves before God, acknowledge that we are not important people, but just common ordinary lepers, who need the cleansing of the Lord. But that is just what people naturally will not do. Indeed, very often the splendid robes of men like Naaman cover up the leprosy, and they are unwilling even to acknowledge that they need salvation at all.

Then you see how *Naaman carried with him a letter of recommendation to the king*. You know the man who went down with the Pharisee to the Temple to pray, the Publican, carried no letter of recommendation with him, did he? He got down just as low as he possibly could, and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner. I have no right to Thy consideration, but here I am in need." But this man carried a letter of recommendation, no doubt reciting all the exploits of Naaman in the field of battle, and telling the king of Israel how great a man Naaman was. I have known people who come to the Mercy Seat like that, with a recommendation. I heard of a Negro once listening to a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. Someone asked him what it was all about—as he heard this orator screaming away. And the Negro said, "I sho don't know sah, but he do most powerfully recommend himself." And he was powerfully recommending himself. There are people who go to church like that. You can see it by the way they walk up the aisle, you can see it by the way they walk into church, before they get to the aisle. "Here comes a very important person." And they expect everybody to recognize their importance when they condescend to go to church. How many churches there are in this city that are remarkable for the people of social standing, and of wealth, and all that kind of nonsense, who condescend to attend the house of God. Thus do men spoil and corrupt the simplicity of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then this man brought to the king of Israel talents of silver and of gold, and changes of raiment, and he wanted to pay for the healing of his servant. It is an extraordinary thing that people are willing to pay for their religion, when they are supposed to be saved by grace, or are told that they may be. They do not always show such great liberality in their contributions, but if you put a price on religion, and tell them they may have it at a price, they are ready to pay for it. It has been a matter of wonder to me that people are ready to receive bargains in everything but in religion. The Departmental stores advertise a "Door-Opening Special," and if you want to get something for nothing you have got to be there just when the door opens. And people feel that they are rather clever when they can get something for nothing, but when they are offered everything for nothing in the religion of Christ, the salvation that is His, they will not take it. They are too proud, and they would rather come with their talents of gold and of silver and changes of raiment. I wonder if there is anybody like that here this morning.

The root of the whole matter was that *he was a very proud man*. And we all are very proud. I do not know why. I never could understand why the spirits of mortals should be proud. We have plenty to be ashamed of, but nothing to be proud of. That is the tendency even of the little girl with the pretty blue ribbon in her hair. How proud she is of it! And when she gets a new pair of shoes how she puts out her foot, and boasts of her new shoes, or a new coat, or whatever it may be. I suppose it is perfectly natural, because most likely she learned it all of her mother, and perhaps a little from her

father. What a lot of idiots we are after all, to be proud of anything! I remember in a little church of which I was Pastor years ago there was a man who had somehow learned to play. I do not suppose he had had a lesson in music in his life, but he had learned to play some of the hymns. They had a little organ, and it was always interesting to me to see that man perform. I have seen some of the great pianists, like Rachmaninoff, and Paderewski, humble in their way, but when this man sat down, the airs he put on! He seemed to think there must be ten thousand people at least admiringly looking on at this marvellous man who could play maybe, "What a Friend we have in Jesus." Well that is natural; it is natural to us all. We are just foolishly proud when we have nothing to be proud of, but a great deal to be ashamed of.

I remember once when I was presiding at a great meeting in Houston, Texas. There was some man away at the back of the tent who got up and spoke, and said he was a graduate of McMaster University, and he gave us his credentials. The late Dr. Norris was on the platform, and he said, "Now wait a minute friend. This is J. Frank Norris, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth. You can always find me there, and if I am not there my people know where I am. You have my name and address. Now sir, I do not like to engage in anonymous conversations; what is your name please?" The man answered, "I shall not give you my name." "Well," said Dr. Norris, "you know far better than I do what reason you have to be ashamed of it." We heard no more from that gentleman that night. He subsided.

II.

Now we all have reason enough to be ashamed. I suppose that *Naaman was a little bit ashamed of his leprosy*. He was not, I suppose, personally responsible for it. How he contracted it we do not know. But I am sure that when anyone had a loathsome disease like that they would like to conceal it as long as possible, and in his heart he was rather ashamed of it, but covered it up with his pride. Oh, how we ought to humble ourselves before God for being sinners. That is what we are, every one of us. We haven't anything to recommend us at all. Mr. Spurgeon, when he was a young man—well always I think, but I know when he was a young man he frequently quoted a couplet from Toplady's Rock of Ages:

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

There was a critic who attended his services, a gracious man apparently, and he always wrote a letter to the young preacher, Monday mornings, for he was very young then, though very popular, correcting some of the errors he had fallen into on Sunday. One time he wrote him a note and said, "I write to inquire, sir, upon whose authority you presume to call a man made in God's image 'covetshus'?" He had mispronounced the word "covetous" and his discerning critic called his attention to it. Mr. Spurgeon, telling his students, said, "I never pronounced that word like that again." Then on another occasion this critic wrote, "Your hearers, sir, have already been sufficiently informed of the vacuity of your hands. See sermon so and so, so and so, so and so." And the numbers were given. Unconsciously to himself

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

he had fallen into the habit of resting on that couplet too often, and saying,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Let me tell you the gracious God to Whom we bow has not even yet been sufficiently informed of the vacuity of our hands. We can come with that story just as often as we like, and tell Him we have nothing:

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

There is a pretty story told of Mr. Spurgeon, if I may refer to him again, when he went out to the Stockwell Orphanage one day, as he did frequently. But this was some special day, and the friends of the orphans came to the Orphanage and brought them little presents. Mr. Spurgeon was sitting down on one of the seats on the grounds of the Orphanage, and a little boy came up. He leaned on the great preacher's knee, and looked up in his face, and he said, "Mr. Spurgeon, supposing you hadn't any uncles, or aunts, or any daddy or mother, or anybody at all to bring you anything—supposing you were like that, because that's me." Mr. Spurgeon said, "I emptied my pockets for that lad." I remember, as a contrary story, a man's coming to me to ask me to help him buy a horse! He pulled out a roll of bills—I think he had about seventy-five or eighty dollars toward the price of the horse, and he wanted me to make up the balance. I said to him, "I think you have done very well so far; I do not think you need my bounty. I have nothing to give you." He did not come with empty hands; he was proud of the fact that he had something. Of course he was a fraud I have no doubt.

Now my dear friends, do not bring your roll of bills; do not bring your list of good works. But just come without anything at all, poor and needy.

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

III.

But THIS MAN WENT AWAY IN A RAGE. He would not hear of anything like that, and he became very angry. He said, "I don't like that preacher. Actually he did not come out and speak to me; he sent a messenger out. Why I thought he would make a great ado, and would come out and call on the name of His God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. I expected at least he would do that." But Elisha wanted to teach him a lesson, and he did not even come to speak to him, but sent a messenger who said, "Go and wash seven times in Jordan." "I won't do that." And he was angry. I know some people who imagine that before they are saved some Elisha will have to come and make a real fuss over them. I thought that before I was converted. Oh, I was a foolish lad. I actually thought I knew something. I have lived long enough now to know that I knew nothing then, and I know less now, if there is anything less than nothing. But I really did feel I was very important, and that when I should be converted he would have to be a real preacher that would reach such an important person as I. But he was not; he was a very ordinary one. That is the way God has of taking the pride out of us, and bringing us down. Elisha sent a messenger.

Then he was not only proud; but *he was prejudiced*. He said, "There are rivers in Damascus that are better than the Jordan. Why cannot I wash there and be clean?" I remember asking a man one time if he would

receive Christ, and he looked angrily at me and said, "Not in this church, sir." I said, "My dear friend, I do not care where you go, or in what church you receive Him, if only you will receive Him." O no, he would not receive Christ in this church! Don't be so foolish. If the Lord had wanted Naaman to wash in the rivers of Damascus He would have so instructed him. I do not suppose there was any virtue in the waters of Jordan at all, not a bit, but it was just God's way of testing him. And He said in effect, "By doing exactly as I tell you, you will submit to Me, and show that you believe in Me; that is all." When the Israelites were told to look to the brazen serpent it was not supposed that the brazen serpent had in itself any virtue whatsoever, but that was God's condition—"Look, and then you will live." It was as simple as that. Now wash and be clean. "No, I won't do it," said the man. And he was taking his money, and his changes of raiment, and going back home to Damascus—and still a leper!

But neither his pride nor his prejudice cured his leprosy. He was still a leper. My dear friends, we do not receive salvation in that way. Be as angry as you like, and as prejudiced as you like, but that is not the way.

Then one of his servants said—perhaps he did not say, "Don't be foolish," but he ought to have said it—"If he had asked you to do some great thing" What a blessing God hasn't asked us to do some great thing. Shall I tell you why? Because you are not a great man, and you are not a great woman, and if the Lord had conditioned your salvation upon your doing some great thing you would have to go without it, because you could not do it. What a blessing it is that God has made salvation so simple. A Presbyterian professor sent me a book—I was telling brother Tarr about it—on Christian Baptism. I have not read it carefully, but I perused it a little, and I said to brother Tarr, "Why a man would need to be a religious Einstein to understand that—I used two or three words, and then some of the students asked me what they were. I said I could not follow this labyrinthine Jesuitical casuistry. I should not know whether I should be baptized, or what I ought to do, if that were the way. You know God does not do things like that. It is very simple to breathe, isn't it? You did that without being told, or without being shown how. It is very simple to eat, isn't it? I remember my father saying to me when I was a little boy, calling me by name and looking very serious: "Why you eat like a beggar." I said, "I am sorry. How does a beggar eat?" He said, "Just like anybody else." We all eat the same way. We eat, or we drink, or we walk, or we breathe—you do not need to be a great scientist to learn how to do that. Do you think that the Lord who loves us would condition our salvation upon some great thing, that would take us years to learn how to do? I do not think so. I think He made salvation just as simple as He has made physical life. I know some of the doctors, and the rest of them, just overwhelm us with their technicalities, and I wonder sometimes how the race managed to survive until now, before all these wonderful things were discovered. Well I suppose they all have their place. But anyhow, the Lord has made salvation very simple, and it was simple for Naaman. "There is Jordan; just go down and get into it seven times, that is all. Dip yourself in Jordan seven times." Why seven times? I do not know, but I think it was perhaps as a test of faith. I can see Naaman dipping himself in Jordan, and then coming up, looking at his hands, and saying, "I am still a leper." Ah, but Naaman, only once. And down he went a second time,

and he said, "I am still a leper." That is only twice Naaman. So he went down time after time, and came up the sixth time still a leper. He might have said, "I wonder is it worthwhile? But I will go all the way. He said seven times, didn't he? All right." And he went down the seventh time, and when he came up his flesh was like the flesh of a little child, simply because he had submitted to God, and had done exactly what God had told him to do. And that is the way to be saved.

- And speaking of baptism, I should despair of convincing anybody, according to that book that I have. I am going to try to review it some time, and I think I will have a merry time with the author when I do. It was very simple you know in the days of the apostles. At Pentecost Peter did not say, "Now you remember that Abraham was your father, and all the children of believers are in the covenant; baptism takes the place of circumcision, etc. etc., and you ought to believe, and you ought to be sprinkled." Nonsense! He did not say anything of the kind. He said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children—somebody says, "There you have it."—and to all that are afar off,—yes, but listen; here is the limitation—even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And if God has called you, repent and be baptized, every one of you. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and then go all the way and do as you are told.

Years ago, I think when I was in Hamilton, a woman who had professed conversion said to me, "If I am not baptized shall I lose my salvation?" There was a little girl who had come in from play, and I said, "Is that your little girl?" She said, "Yes." I had a little talk with her, then I turned to her mother, and I said, "Suppose you were to say to that little girl, 'Now Lucy (or whatever her name was) I want you to go down to the store and get something for mother.' And suppose she were to say, 'I won't go,' would she cease to be your child? Would you open the door and throw her out, and then shut the door?" She said, "Of course you know I wouldn't." I said, "She would still be your child would she?" She said, "Yes." I said, "What sort of a child would she be?" "If she did that she would be a very naughty child." Then I said, "If you do not do exactly as the Lord tells you, you will be a very naughty child too." She said, "The Lord must have a lot of naughty children." I said, "He has a lot of naughty children, who miss a great deal of blessing because they do not obey the Lord." Do not be a naughty child. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, obey Him, and you shall have the blessing.

"BY THY CROSS AND PASSION"

"He hath given us rest by His sorrow, and life by His death."—JOHN BUNYAN

I.

What hast Thou done for me, O mighty Friend,
Who lovest to the end!
Reveal Thyself, that I may now behold
Thy love unknown, untold,
Bearing the curse, and made a curse for me,
That blessed and made a blessing I might be.

II.

Oh, Thou wast crowned with thorns, that I might wear
A crown of glory fair;
"Exceeding sorrowful," that I might be
Exceeding glad in Thee;
"Rejected and despised," that I might stand
Accepted and complete on Thy right hand.

III.

Wounded for my transgression, stricken sore,
That I might "sin no more;"
Weak, that I might be always strong in Thee;
Bound, that I might be free;
Acquaint with grief, that I might only know
Fulness of joy in everlasting flow.

IV.

Thine was the chastisement, with no release,
That mine might be the peace;
The bruising and the cruel stripes were Thine,
That healing might be mine;
Thine was the sentence and the condemnation,
Mine the acquittal and the full salvation.

V.

For Thee revilings, and a mocking throng,
For me the angel-song;
For Thee the frown, the hiding of God's face,
For me His smile of grace;
Sorrow of hell and bitterest death for Thee,
And heaven and everlasting life for me.

VI.

Thy cross and passion, and Thy precious death,
While I have mortal breath,
Shall be my spring of love and work and praise,
The life of all my days;
Till all this mystery of love supreme
Be solved in glory—glory's endless theme.

—FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL

THE FATHER'S HOUSE

Be not discouraged to go from this country to another part of the Lord's earth: "The earth is His, and the fulness thereof". This is the Lord's lower house; while we are lodged here, we have no assurance to lie ever in one chamber, but must be content to remove from one corner of our Lord's nether house to another, resting in hope that, when we come up to the Lord's upper city, "Jerusalem that is above," we shall remove no more, because then we shall be at home. And go wheresoever ye will, if your Lord go with you, ye are at home; and your lodging is ever taken before night, so long as He who is Israel's dwelling-house is your home (Psa. xc. 1).

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

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
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The Gospel Witness

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THE GREAT CONTENTION

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

By Dr. T. T. Shields

THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

My Deacon and I returned from these three-days of conference, feeling that surely the long-desired revival was on its way — and I am of the conviction that it was, that it might have come. Church Union was being discussed by the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches. It was proposed that these churches throughout the Dominion should unite in one great body. Anyone of spiritual discernment could easily forecast the result of such a union. No great spiritual awakening has ever come, in all the world's history, by such means. And such discussions of union are always symptomatic of declining spiritual life. Indeed, it seems to me that such discussions invariably resemble the conduct of a man of whom I read, who, as the evening time of life drew nigh, became concerned about his burial. He bought a plot in the cemetery, selected his monument, had his name cut upon it, leaving a space for the date of his death, and even selected the casket, so that he might know in what sort of coffin he was to be buried.

Discussions of church union are never signs of revival; but may always accurately be described as an undertakers' conference, called to arrange for the obsequies of a body from which the tide of life is rapidly ebbing. There was need for a great spiritual body in Canada; and if the Baptist denomination had taken advantage of "God's occasion passing by," if on arriving at Kadesh-Barnea, as I believe we arrived at the Convention in Ottawa in 1919, we had determined to cross the river and possess the promised land, there might have come to Ontario and Quebec the greatest spiritual awakening it had ever known.

These "spiritual aims" conferences, as they were called, were but the sending forth of spies to see what manner of country this promised land of milk and honey really was; and beyond all doubt, some of these conferences, those which I have described, with others held elsewhere, were as the clusters of Eshcol.

Preparing to Return to the Wilderness

What immediately follows is really the report of the ten spies, to the effect that the cost of entering into the promised land would be too great, and who, by their report, prepared the way for God's Israel to return to its wilderness experience.

Soon after these conferences the Toronto Baptist Ministerial Association was addressed by Mr. S. J. Moore, one of the most prominent and highly esteemed laymen of the Denomination. He had just returned from a visit to California, and impressions received there, together, I suppose, with a general knowledge of the religious situation in Canada and the United States, had greatly stirred him. He addressed the ministers on the subject of worldly amusements, and expressed the view that the addiction of professing Christian people to these amusements was greatly retarding, if not wholly paralyzing, the efforts of the churches.

I recall how clearly Mr. Moore stated his own attitude, that it had never presented to him a personal problem, because he had long seen the necessity for being entirely separated from these things; and as I now recall the address, he urged the ministers to seek to lead their people to a similar separation. It was a fine presentation of the subject; and in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Moore, I personally expressed a wish that it might be possible for Mr. Moore to give the same address to a company of laymen. I pointed out that, while ministers were not absolved from the duty of instructing and leading their people in these matters, the fact that these worldly amusements, particularly attendance at the theatre, injuriously affected attendance at religious services, led some people to assume that a minister's opposition to these practices might be due to his envy of their superior attraction; whereas if a layman were to speak as Mr. Moore had then spoken on the subject, people might give "the more earnest heed" to the question.

In replying to the vote of thanks, Mr. Moore said that while we had been discussing the matter, he had been going over in his mind the names of those who were sometimes described as the "leading laymen" of the Denomination; and he said he could not think of as many as twenty who would stand with him in this matter. Then, as he soliloquized on the subject, he reduced the number from twenty to twelve; and so on down until, if my memory of the matter is correct, and I think it is, he at length said that he could not think of even half a dozen of the "leading" Baptist laymen who would share his view as to what the Christian attitude toward these worldly amusements should be.

The Question of Worldly Amusements

Near about the same time a meeting was called in Toronto of the leaders of the Spiritual Aims Conferences. The meeting, I think, was held under the auspices of the Executive Committee of the Forward Movement. The various leaders reported times of refreshing at nearly all the conferences, and the question of worldly amusements received a good deal of consideration.

The conference of leaders held an evening session which, because of another engagement, I was unable to attend. But at the evening session the leaders passed a resolution to the effect that it was their observation that nothing was hindering the spiritual progress of the churches as much as the growing tendency on the part of Baptist church members to participate in these worldly amusements, notably, dancing, card-playing, and theatre-going; and they suggested that the Forward Movement Committee should give the question careful consideration, and make some pronouncement upon it.

In due course the Forward Movement Executive met, to consider how effect might be given to the recommendations of the conference leaders. Naturally, the resolution on the amusement question occasioned consid-

erable discussion. One man quoted the Chief of Chicago Police as having said that the motion-picture theatre was the greatest crime-producing agency in the world to-day. Another, I recall, told a story of a certain man who applied to Dr. Jowett's church for membership, but expressed the desire to have a talk with the minister before he united. In his conversation the prospective member asked Dr. Jowett whether he considered it to be consistent for a professing Christian and church-member to attend the theatre. Instead of answering directly, Dr. Jowett said to the man, "I understand, Mr. So-and-So, that your favourite recreation is equestrianism?" His enquiry was answered in the affirmative. Then Dr. Jowett said, "But you have not asked me whether I think it is consistent for a professing Christian to ride horseback?" The man smiled and said, "No, certainly not; I have no doubt whatever about that." Then said Dr. Jowett, "Have you any doubt as to the propriety of a Christian's attending the theatre?" The enquirer admitted he had, and Dr. Jowett replied, "If that be so, I suggest that you give the Lord the benefit of the doubt."

I distinctly recall that one of the most prominent of Toronto Baptist pastors, Dr. John McNeil, expressed the view that it would be dangerous to touch the amusement question, that it would almost certainly cause trouble in the churches. It was in response to that minister's remarks that another said what I have reported about the Chicago Chief of Police.

Following that meeting, it appeared to me that, whatever others might do, it was clearly my duty to bring the subject of worldly amusements to the attention of my own congregation. I hope my readers will acquit me of being guilty of a Pharisaical attitude in what I am about to say, for I cannot see that I am entitled to any credit for it. It may indicate a want of prudence on my part; or, by some, the attitude might be defined as indicative of a want of tactfulness. But call it what you may, most sincerely I declare that throughout my ministry it has never occurred to me to consider what would be the consequences of proclaiming the truth. It has been enough for me to see the truth clearly, to feel a solemn obligation to declare it. Therefore pooling the result of my own observations with that of my brethren, I felt it my duty to preach on the subject of worldly amusements.

I had not the slightest idea that what I should have to say would have special application to the members of Jarvis Street. So far as I was aware, the church was entirely free from any connection with such matters. I recognized, of course, that people generally, and young people in particular, needed instruction, and I hoped that what I might say would exercise at least a preventive ministry. I did not suppose that it would cut deeply; but I am sure that had I known it would, it would not have changed my course.

Jarvis Street Prayer-Meetings

Until 1921, Jarvis Street Church had but one regular prayer-meeting, held each Wednesday evening; and this meeting was always very largely attended. Generally the Lecture Hall was filled. Anyone attending those prayer-meetings would have regarded Jarvis Street as being made up of definitely spiritually-minded people.

But I was able to discern what, of course, would be unknown to the casual observer: I knew that if the meeting were extended much beyond nine o'clock, there would be vigorous objection from some quarters. I knew

there was not that spiritual abandon which should characterize a company of people who desired to "continue in prayer". However, by all ordinary standards, the mid-week prayer-meeting in Jarvis Street was a well-attended and successful service.

But in 1921, as we very definitely set ourselves to seek a larger measure of blessing from the Lord, I called a special prayer-meeting for Monday evening, to be held in my study. There was no special announcement: I called a few by telephone, suggesting to them that they might call others. The result was, the study was crowded. I called a similar meeting, in the same way, for Saturday evening; and again the room was crowded. The experiment was repeated, and the meeting held in the large parlour, into which we have since crowded as many as two hundred people. The room was well filled; and from the beginning of January, 1921, such meetings for prayer have been held continuously to this date.

For a considerable time they were held Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday; but that made a very busy week-end — Saturday, Sunday, and Monday — so that we later changed the Monday meeting to Tuesday, and the Wednesday meeting to Thursday. The late Mrs. Greenway, wife of Deacon George Greenway, I remember, remarked that the new arrangement might easily be remembered because Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, could be recalled by the Pastor's initials, T.T.S.

How to Conduct Prayer-Meetings

Very early under this new order of things, Deacon George Greenway opened the meetings because very often someone took advantage of the meeting-night to come a little early to see the Pastor, and the interview was not always ended by eight o'clock. That arrangement soon became an established custom, and from January, 1921, Deacon George Greenway was a prayer-meeting fixture — to the joy and unflinching comfort of the Pastor, and to the satisfaction and pleasure of the whole church, until he was called home.

There are few men who know how to conduct a prayer-meeting. Many ministers talk a prayer-meeting to death; others scold it to death. In Jarvis Street, the prayer-meetings are really meetings for prayer, not for addresses, nor for extended testimonies. When testimonies are given, they are always spontaneous utterances, and never the fruit of expostulation. We early learned that a silence in prayer-meeting is no more "awkward" than a silence in heaven. Rather, it is impressive, and a prelude to still more earnest audible prayer.

Anthracite vs. Soft Coal

I remember to have read somewhere of the discovery of anthracite coal. It was thought that it ought to be useful as fuel, but great difficulty was experienced in getting it to burn. The discoverers had been accustomed to various kinds of soft coal, and having put kindling under the anthracite, they expected it to flame up as soft coal would do. When it did not, they poked it, and kept on poking, until it died out altogether. Several different kinds of grates were tried, but without avail; until at last one experimenter, weary of the attempt, left it alone in disgust — and, coming back to it a little while afterward, found it in a white heat, and the container ready to melt.

We learned the possibility of having anthracite prayer-meetings. They did not flame up in a few minutes. We

saw something of the operation of the principle, "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." In Jarvis Street we believe one may pray with the spirit and the understanding, inaudibly; and that when the fire has burned to an appropriate heat, the tongue will speak. Thus Jarvis Street, in 1921, soon became somewhat noted for the intense spiritual heat generated in its prayer-meetings.

Mr. Greenway, as I have said, always opened the meetings, and conducted them with consummate wisdom. The Pastor joined him as soon as it was possible. Sometimes the leadership remained unchanged to the end; sometimes the prayer-meeting was like a train with two engines: on the same track, pulling the same coaches, in the same direction, and reciprocating in unison. The practice has continued, we are thankful to say, without a desire for change on the part of anyone, for many years, until Deacon Greenway was called to service in the immediate presence of his Lord.

These prayer-meetings were well under way in February, 1921, and on Saturday evening, February 12th, I asked the meeting specially to pray for the divine blessing on the Sunday morning service. The next morning I preached on, "The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements", and, in order that my readers may judge whether this sermon was a scripturally sane presentation of the subject, although the sermon has already been printed four or five times, I reprint it here in full. The sermon was not reported stenographically, but is printed from the manuscript, which was completely written before the sermon was delivered, as was true at that time of practically every sermon preached from the Jarvis Street pulpit.

The sermon will follow in next week's chapter.

(To be Continued.)

LETTER OF ROWLAND HILL

To a Young Man Who Wrote to Him
Respecting the Ministry

Wooton, October, 1826

My Dear Young Friend,—As the office of a Minister seems to be beyond all others the most useful, so I am not surprised that such as feel themselves devoted to God, are desirous to fill that office; and though the groundwork in those that may be called to fill that important trust, must be found in a *real work of grace upon their own hearts*, yet there are other qualifications absolutely needed before they can prove themselves "workmen that need not be ashamed." There must be a measure of natural gifts, as well as spiritual graces; and though we may know how far we may possess the one, by a close examination of our hearts before God, the other, I should suppose, can only be discovered to us by a due and proper use of means.

There is what the Scripture calls an *aptitude to teach*; a quickness and readiness of thought, well regulated by the letter of the word, and by that wisdom which is from above: and for the want of this, many have entered into the ministry to prove a burden to themselves, and a *dead weight to the churches* they may be called to serve. Now, this holy aptitude, in my opinion, can only be discovered by the practical exercise of such gifts, and of which others are always better judges than we can be ourselves; and then such will be naturally *called forth* for the further exercise of them, by such as have felt the spiritual good of them to their hearts; and then, if providence sets before you such open doors as these, you

may better judge how far you are called to the sacred office. As for all human erudition, however good in its place, yet in itself it is nothing; it is much worse than nothing. How many of our half-dead churches are contented to be filled with *mere pulpit lumber* of this sort! while the prosperity even of living churches is greatly impeded thereby; and in addition to this, what heart-burnings, animosities, are the result, which too frequently terminate in painful divisions and separations, to the disgrace of the sacred cause.

In these free remarks, while I cannot entertain the most distant doubt respecting your want of integrity and uprightness before God, yet I have lived too long in the world not to know the need of such hints as these; and I am sure you will take them as they are really meant.

Let me also drop a further hint as it respects your present situation in life. All tradesmen, who, by their own honesty and integrity, can preserve for themselves an honourable independency, fill a creditable situation in life, and are not debarred from being occasionally useful in the church of Christ. You, at present, are most usefully engaged in our Sunday-schools; and the gratuitous services of yourself and others are highly creditable and beneficial to the cause. While thus engaged, you may by degrees feel your way how far the Lord may design you for more extended usefulness in the work; and this alone a future day can decide.

And now for my last hint till I shall (D.V.) again see you in town. A person who enters the ministry, and is obliged to be *entirely* dependent upon the people for his support, unless he be one of remarkable abilities, is frequently called to suffer severely from those who furnish him with his support; and if you should throw up a profitable concern, you may suffer for it in a future day. While I would at all times wish to live dependent on God, yet it is a great privilege to live a little independent of the world.

I shall be both thankful for your affliction and thankful for your recovery, if it has proved a profitable season for your soul. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions. What a mercy, to be the better for the rod!

With cordial love to your family and all friends, believe me to be,

Very sincerely yours,

ROWLAND HILL.

DIVINE ORDERING OF HUMAN LIFE

For He sendeth us to His world, as men to a market, wherein some stay many hours, and eat and drink, and buy and sell, and pass through the fair, till they be weary; and such are those who live long, and get a heavy fill of this life. And others again come slipping in to the morning market, and do neither sit nor stand, nor buy nor sell, but look about them a little, and pass presently home again; and these are infants and young ones, who end their short market in the morning, and get but a short view of the Fair. Our Lord, who hath numbered man's months, and set him bounds that he cannot pass (Job xiv 5), hath written the length of our market, and it is easier to complain of the decree than to change it.

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S
ANNUAL LETTER?

"THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto
Sunday Evening, December 28th, 1952

(Electrically Recorded)

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory!"—1 Cor. 2:7-8.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We read in Thy Word, O Lord, that Thou art light, and with Thee is no darkness at all. And Thou hast come that they who follow Thee should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. We delight to recognize this evening that many in Thy presence, the majority, and perhaps all, are no longer darkness, but light in the Lord. By Thine abounding grace Thou hast made us children of light. Help us, O Lord, in Thy mercy, to walk as children of light. Thy Word tells us that the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Therefore, though Thou hast given us light, we would ask for more light. The Sun of righteousness has arisen upon us with healing in His wings. We would fain walk in His light from the dawning to the zenith of His glory; and we rejoice to remember that this Sun never sets, for the Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land.

We are here this evening as pupils in the school of Christ. We desire, O Lord, to be apt students. We would give ourselves to the learning of the truth, and whatever our experience of Thy grace may be, like the apostle Paul, we would count not ourselves to have apprehended, but follow on, if that we may apprehend that for which we have been apprehended of Christ. We desire, by Thy grace, to attain, not to our ideals, so crude and imperfect are they, but we would by Thy grace come to a realization of that sublime plan and purpose cherished in the mind of the Eternal when He called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We thank Thee for all the provision Thou hast made for our growth in grace, for when He who is our Lord ascended on High He received gifts for men; and He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Being rooted in Him, as we trust many are, enable us to grow up into Him Who is our Head in all things. Teach us a little more of the mysteries of Divine grace this evening. Initiate us, O Lord, more fully into the sacred secret wrapped up in the gospel of Thy Son. We marvel at its treasures; we are amazed at the wealth of its wisdom. We rejoice, O yes, we have rejoiced a little, and we would fain rejoice still more, in the experience of His power.

So this evening, Lord, as we open Thy Book we would do it with a sense of complete dependence upon the Divine Author. Only the Spirit Who indited this Word, Who inspired the holy men of God, who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost — only the Spirit Himself can lead us into this treasure-house of truth. But oh, Spirit of God, Thou hast the master key! And did not our great and glorious Saviour promise that when Thou shouldst come Thou wouldst take the things of Christ and reveal them to us, and that this Thou wouldst do in such measure that we should be led into all the truth? Oh, may we not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. So often we quote it, and quote it perhaps sometimes without due recognition of the content of that great admonition, that we are to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Speak to us simply this evening O Lord, for we are such dull scholars. Make Thy Word to be especially plain and clear, and may that which is entirely beyond the ken of natural men, beyond the reach or understanding of the human intellect — may these things be brought within our comprehension, so that we may know Thee, and the power of Thy resurrection.

For all the assemblies of the saints, for all preachers and teachers of Thy great gospel, for all who in any way, perhaps in mission halls, perhaps by the passing out of tracts, or by oral testimony, whatever the means, be pleased graciously to bless it. Render every effort of believing men and women effectual to the salvation of souls, and to the upbuilding of Thine own dear people.

Now Lord brood over this assembly. Make us to feel something of the presence of the Divine Spirit. May we know something of the goings of God upon our own spirits. And so lead us, and still lead us; lead us on, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

PAUL, you may remember, went to Corinth from Athens, where he had addressed the philosophers at Mars Hill. I commend to you the reading and study of that marvellous address which is found in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. I have stood on the spot where Paul stood when he delivered that address. Hard by there is a bronze tablet on which that address from the seventeenth chapter of Acts is written in Greek. You will remember there were no great results apparent from Paul's preaching at Athens, but there were a few who responded to the gospel he preached; for the record says: "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." And some strange expositors who are always looking, it seems to me, for something new, have assumed that Paul felt that he had made a mistake in Athens, that he had endeavoured to meet the philosophically wise Grecians upon their own ground; and that when later he arrived in Corinth he there "determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I think it is rather an imaginative and fanciful idea. I cannot find that Paul ever deviated from his course. He preached Christ and Him crucified at Athens as he did at Corinth, for we read, "He preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

He confesses, however, that when he came to Corinth he was with them in weakness and fear, and in much trembling. I commend that verse to you young preachers, and to all older ones. When the time comes that anybody essays the task of preaching the gospel without a consciousness of weakness and fear and trembling, there will be something radically wrong. May God preserve us from the unholiness of assuming familiarity with holy things. But Paul explains that his speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, not with persuasive words. He did not try to show off, as perhaps he might have done, to his own undoing, and to the loss of his hearers. But he did not so indulge himself — he spoke not with words of man's wisdom, but he said "in demonstration of the Spirit and of the power." It has seemed to me that that is a very daring statement for any preacher to make: "I preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I remember to have read long ago in one of Mr. Spurgeon's early sermons a remark of his about the ministry of the Divine Spirit, and what marvels the Holy Ghost sometimes accomplished in the assemblies of the saints. And I came upon a statement which made me almost shudder at the time, when he said something to this effect: "When in the progress of this discourse you shall become conscious of the power of the Holy Ghost resting upon me, you will understand what I mean." What a tremendous thing to say, was it not? But it was the language of faith. He believed that it would be even so. The apostle Paul must have felt the same confidence here, as also when he wrote to the Romans: "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

So to these Corinthians he said, "I depended not upon enticing words of man's wisdom, not upon my persuasive speech; I spoke as simply as I knew how, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, for this reason: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Sometimes when God has drawn near, and there has seemed to be special blessing, I have heard people say, "I wonder that anyone should leave this place unconverted this evening." And I have always felt it incumbent upon me to remind them that we should all leave unconverted unless God in His sovereign mercy should quicken dead souls. No, no, it is not the speech of the preacher, it is the quickening power, the creative and recreative power of the Spirit of Light and of Life Who does the work.

"Howbeit," he said, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect," by which he did not mean perfect in the absolute sense, but rather, "We speak wisdom among those who are mature, initiated; those who in some measure are spiritually educated will recognize that in this simple speech of mine there is really the wisdom of God." "Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." I remember some years ago a very great service that was held in this church. The preacher that evening was the late Professor E. M. Kierstead, who for many years was my very intimate friend. He was a marvellous man of God. There were hundreds of ministers present in that meeting, and that evening he drew upon the resources, not merely of his vast learning, his erudition, but upon the resources of his experience of the things of God. He was a traveller, anyone could tell, who had been in the spiritual tropics of which he spoke.

"The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields
Or walk the golden streets."

I shall never forget that evening. I do not know how long Dr. Kierstead preached, maybe a couple of hours, but it was hours too short for me. When he came from the platform I said, "Doctor, I would gladly have travelled thousands of miles just to be present to hear that address." But among those present was another McMaster Professor — Mr. Whitcombe would know him — who used sometimes to lecture to the students from a book, and he was as wooden as one of these wooden figures that used to be outside cigar stores. I do not think he had any imagination, and he seemed to be devoid of spiritual life, perhaps I ought rather to say he seemed to belong to that class of whom Paul said, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" One could not talk to him about the things of God; he would not have known what you were talking about. I saw him that night after the great Dr. Kierstead had delivered that marvellous address, and he said to me, "It's a pity he hadn't been sick, and stayed at home in bed, instead of giving us that kind of stuff." I said, "You didn't understand it, did you?" He was completely on the outside.

That is the kind of thing with which my text deals. Paul says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the

Lord of glory." That is a very profound text is it not? Ah yes, there is water to the ankles, waters to the knees, waters to the loins, waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over, like Ezekiel's river flowing from beneath the throne. Where shall we begin? Here you have the philosophy, the reason for the reception or the rejection of Divine truth.

I.

So we begin with this. PAUL AVERS THAT THE GOSPEL WHICH HE PREACHES IS THE WISDOM OF GOD. In the preceding chapter that we read this evening he adds another word: "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The gospel is the wisdom and power of God. The wisdom of God is manifested of course in the works of His hands. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." You could appropriately quote that text to an unbelieving scientist; for when he tries to wrest the secrets of nature from the handiwork of God, though he may not find a personal God there, yet he must be impressed with the marvellous wisdom there displayed. Whether he sweeps the heavens with his telescope, or has come down even to the analysis and the division of the atom — wherever he looks he has to confess that in wisdom all these things are made. He may not know whose wisdom, or what wisdom, but wisdom is there, and is manifested in the intricacies of all these inter-acting laws, in all the works of God's hands. I looked in our book for a hymn, and it was not there. I fear the gradual decline of appreciation of spiritual values is manifested in the modern hymn books. The great hymns of the church, many of them, are not there, because the poor little editors did not understand them, and they said, "It isn't any use putting that hymn in." Last summer Mr. Slade and I stood at the grave of Isaac Watts in Bunhill Fields in London. Here is one of his hymns:

"Nature, with open volume, stands,
To spread her Maker's praise abroad;
And every labour of His hands
Shows something worthy of a God.

"But in the grace that rescued man
His brightest form of glory shines;
Here, on the cross, 'tis fairest drawn,
In precious blood, and crimson lines.

"Here I behold His inmost heart,
Where Truth and Mercy strangely join
To pierce His Son with keenest smart,
And make the purchased pleasures mine.

"Oh! the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God, the Saviour, loved and died!
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From His dear wounds and bleeding side.

"I would forever speak His Name,
In sounds to mortal ears unknown,
With angels join to praise the Lamb,
And worship at His Father's Throne."

My dear friends, the wisdom of God is wrapped up in the gospel. How shall I explain it to you? I do not know that I can, but I will try.

There was, of course, in the Divine purview the problem of sin. That was a rebellion that challenged the Divine rule, that infringed upon the Divine sovereignty. Thus it was an attack upon the very nature of God Himself. It had to be dealt with. How could God deal with sin? To leave it alone would have meant that anarchy would have universally ensued. But how can He deal with it? You

remember the case of Absalom, do you not? — the beautiful daring and dashing Absalom: From the crown of his head to the sole of his feet there was no blemish in him. Physically I suppose he was a superb specimen of manhood. Perhaps because of that he was able to obtain a large following, of whom it is said, "They went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything." But they followed him, and lifted up their hand against the king.

You remember the sad story of David's leaving his capitol city, and like his greater Son, going up the slopes of Olivet weeping as he went. And the hearts of the men of Israel, all of them it seemed, were after Absalom. So the king was exiled from his kingdom, and the trumpet was blown, saying, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." And when the armies of Israel were numbered under the command of Joab, and they went out to do battle with this rebel, you remember what David said? He did not say, "Come back Joab;" he recognized the necessity of quelling that rebellion. But what he desired to do was to save the rebel, while putting an end to his rebellion. And so he said to Joab, "Deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom." And he repeated it, "Deal gently with the young man, Absalom, for my sake." You know the story, of how the messenger of justice found Absalom suspended by his glorious golden hair in the branches of an oak, and taking darts from his quiver he thrust them through the heart of Absalom. He did not deal gently with him. When at last the news was broken to David his heart broke and he said: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" But he did not die for him; Absalom died. And they buried him under a heap of stones, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance."

But the problem of human sin was not the only problem. It was part of it, but there was a wider rebellion. If I may dare to say so, there was a vast power watching how this human rebellion would be dealt with, for there had been war in heaven, and principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world's darkness were at war and are still at war with God and against all righteousness and truth. Moreover the time was to come when the prince of this world would be cast out. Was rebellious man to be cast out with him? How was God to find a way whereby He could be just and yet the justifier of the human rebel? I agree with a certain French statesman who was asked whether he was in favour of abolishing capital punishment. He replied, "Most certainly I am. Let the murderers begin." Well said, for if they begin, there will be no need of capital punishment. Ah, but man has already sinned, and "the soul that sinneth it shall die."

What is God to do? How is He to restore order in such a universe? How is He to maintain His truth, and righteousness, and faithfulness, and justice, and honour, — His divine integrity, in a word, His holiness, yet save the rebel? Sin must be punished. The rebellion must be subdued while all the powers of darkness were awaiting an opportunity to challenge the divine integrity. What shall be done with the handwriting of ordinances that was against us? And perhaps David, dimly and darkly, got a glimpse of what was to come, and might have been in his own case, when he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" God from the very beginning planned to do that very thing which David wished he had done for Absalom. Here was a wisdom which was ordained from before the foundation of the world for our glory, as well as for His own.

But, my dear friends, *all this requires the power of God*, not only the wisdom of God. That is why Paul says, in the first chapter that to us who believe He is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Yes; the gospel is "the power of God", because, you see, involved in that scheme of redemption was the fact — the purpose first, and then the performance — the fact of the Incarnation. Jesus was to come: God was to be manifest in the flesh, to be "made sin for us", to take upon Him our sin, and to die for us, as David wished he had died for Absalom.

But, my dear friends, do not rest there. *He must lay down that indissoluble life, but He must take it again; hence the necessity of the resurrection.* Will you follow me a minute. There is a great passage in the first chapter of Ephesians where Paul prays that the Ephesians might have "the eyes of their hearts enlightened"; "that (they) may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints". Now this is the passage I want — listen! — "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe."

If you turn the pages of your Old Testament you will find that the Spirit of God repeatedly refers to, and sometimes merely alludes to, the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, and the deliverance of His people from Egypt. "Thou shalt remember," He repeatedly says: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." They were referred back to that stupendous miracle, when a nation was born in a day.

And we have New Testament warrant for seeing in that a type and prophecy of the greater miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of all believers in Him. Read the story of His body being laid in Joseph's new tomb. Read of the enemy who said, "We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." And Pilate, with fine irony, as I believe, said, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." But when they set a watch to make that sepulchre as sure as possible, they had all the help of all the powers of Hell itself to keep that sepulchre sealed. Not Waterloo, but the Garden grave was the scene of the greatest conflict, the greatest battle, and the greatest victory of all time. Oh, I love that word which speaks of our Lord's being put in the grave; when it is said, "It was not possible that he should be holden of (death)". No; "made after the power of an indissoluble life", and with all the resources of Deity, He laid down His life, and He took it again.

Read of Him in Revelation. He has the keys of death and of the grave. They swing at His girdle. Those women said, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" But when they came to the sepulchre, they found the stone was rolled away already. He had a Master key! He swung back the gates of death, and the grave, and in defiance of all Hell, He stepped forth the Conqueror of death and the grave.

Well then, the gospel, my dear friends, is simply a declaration of that historic fact; the death in our behalf, and the resurrection in our behalf; and the resurrection of

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S
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all God's elect people in Him. That is the gospel. "We speak," said Paul, "the wisdom of God" — but "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom." That does not mean the mystery of the magician. What it means is the sacred secret that is with them who fear God. *We speak of the wisdom of God only to the initiated. The society of believers, the blood-bought church of Christ is the greatest secret society in all the world.* It really is, I can tell, and I think you can tell, very often when you meet a man who is not of that society. He does not know the language. He does not know the signs. Talk to him for a little while, and you say, "Poor man!"

I remember hearing Professor Marshall, with whom I did battle in a Convention. I had already cross-examined the Chancellor, and he knew what was coming, and he did not want anyone to be subjected to his predicament, for really I had had a merry time with him. So, when speaking to the question on the atonement of Christ, and what was involved in the death of Christ, I said, "There is nothing easier than to misunderstand, and therefore to misrepresent your opponent. If you want to be fair you must be at pains to understand the position of your opponent, so that you will not misrepresent him. Now," I said, "Professor Marshall is here" — he was sitting down in front of me — "I understand that he objects to the idea that there was any penal principle in the atonement, that there was any element of punishment, which was suffered vicariously in our behalf by One Who was innocent." Professor Marshall got up, and he said, "I believe He suffered for us, but He did not endure our punishment." The Chancellor was sitting in the choir. I was going to have an interesting time when I got Professor Marshall to his feet. But when he came to that point, the Chancellor stood up and looked at him, and waved him down with both hands, and Professor Marshall sat down suddenly. He said, "I object to being catechised on the floor of the Convention." I said, "Thank you, that is all I wanted you to say. You do not believe that Jesus bore the penalty of our guilt."

I am not surprised that the man who does not know Christ objects to the fundamental principles of the gospel, because, you see, this belongs to the high realm of the Spirit. Would you expect one who was ignorant of the multiplication table to understand the intricacies of Euclid, the complexities of calculus, and the real mysteries of Einstein's relativity? — do you know what that is? I don't. I don't know that anyone does outside of Einstein. Would you try to teach Euclid or calculus or Einstein's relativity, or any other aspect of higher mathematics to a kindergarten class of boys and girls, who have not yet learned the multiplication table? Of course not! They could not understand it.

III.

You may talk to some professor of theology. He knows a lot of things, but he does not know the gospel, and you will very soon discover it. And if he speaks scornfully of these precious truths of revelation, do not be disturbed: just say, "Poor man, he does not understand!" "Oh," you say, "we cannot treat learned men like that!" Why not? Listen: Can anyone understand the thoughts of God who does not know God himself? That is why the scripture says, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

You say, "But if he does not believe how can I introduce God to him?" You cannot introduce God to anyone: God must introduce Himself, always. He has reserved a point

at the genesis of life for His own direct appearance. I have often used the illustration, but I refer to it again, that lovely story in the Old Testament, when the men trembled before the great Governor of Egypt, wondering who he was. And at last he could restrain himself no longer, and he said, "Cause every man to go out from me," and they all went out. Then he staggered them with the announcement, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." There was no one in Egypt who could have introduced Joseph. They could never have guessed his identity. Joseph had to introduce himself.

Parallel to that is the story in the Acts of the Apostles of that man who was like a beast of prey, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." And everyone in Damascus was trembling because they heard Saul of Tarsus was on the way there. Among them there was a man called Ananias. And when the message came to him to go to Saul, he said, "Please don't send me to him. I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem." But the Lord said, in effect, "Ananias, I have had a talk with this man Myself. Do not be afraid." How did it happen? On his way to Damascus there was a light from heaven, which never was on sea or land, and a voice broke in upon him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". No one but Jesus could have said that.

Preach the gospel with all your might; pray as earnestly as you can, live as circumspectly as grace may enable you to do; but always remember there is a point where you have to step back, and God steps in, or else the soul will not be converted.

But surely we must pay attention to these men of scholarship! But can anyone comprehend the divine wisdom of the cross who does not recognize God in Christ? A man says, "I don't believe that Jesus Christ was God." My answer to him is, "I shall have to hand you over to God, so that He can prove it. I cannot argue with you." What can he know? Nothing! That is the meaning of that scripture — Hear it again: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." He does not know anything about it. He must have a new birth, an anointing from above.

IV.

And my text tells us about a lot of learned men, and cites THE SUPREME HISTORIC PROOF OF MAN'S NATURAL BLINDNESS TO SPIRITUAL REALITIES: "The princes of this world"! Who were they? The spiritual rulers, the members of the Sanhedrin, the doctors of the law who knew all about it. They knew the law, but they did not know the Lawgiver, and so they were ignorant. And my text says that even those men, so versed in religious law, so instructed in the letter of Holy Writ, were yet devoid of spiritual illumination, and insight; and as for this wisdom, and the gospel, none of the princes of this world knew it. They could not understand it at all. They did not know who Jesus was. I think there was that in the Saviour's prayer, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Paul said that what he did he did ignorantly. Well, perhaps, your learned men would not like to be told they are ignorant; but they are. In respect to this realm of truth of which my text speaks, they are as ignorant as Hottentots: they don't know anything about it: "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory".

I would set this word in contrast. Here are these learned

men with their phylacteries, with their Hebrew texts, on their robes, and who were looked upon by the people as being almost impeccable and infallible: "If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee" said the people to Pilate: "Whom none of the princes of this world knew". What was it they had done that they would not have done had they known? "They would not have crucified the Lord of glory." So dense was their darkness that they saw not "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

Oh, my brethren and sisters, see how dependent we are upon the operation of the Holy Ghost!

I remember when I was a young man, preparing a sermon while I was away from home, and it was a sermon on this text: "Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." I preached the doctrine of electing grace with all my might. I pointed out that Philip was just the Shepherd's crook, and nothing more. Philip did not know whom he was drawing, and Nathanael did not know what was being done for him. But the great Shepherd put His crook about him, and drew him to Himself. I said, "That is the way God saves sinners: 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.'"

The Pastor of the church said to me, "I believe that as profoundly as you do, but I do not know whether it is wise to preach it. Don't you think sinners will presume?" I said, "I don't know. It is in the Book, and my attitude is this, that the Lord will have to look after His own truth."

The next Sunday I was at home, and I preached that sermon again. There was a man there who had been a saloon keeper. He was the most profane man in town, and everyone thought of him as such. His wife was a member of my church. When I went there first she said, "I promised to go to another church with my husband if the Lord would save him." I said, "Why did you do that?" She said, "He will not come to a Baptist Church." "Well," I said, "it is not as hard to make a Baptist of him as to make a Christian of him." I said, "I will join you in prayer for him." His was one of the cases I could not forget. As often as I bowed my knee, I prayed for that saloon keeper. But he never came to church; he never went to any church.

I had a Friday night Bible Class, and after a while in the Summer time, he came and sat on the steps outside, and pushed the door open so that he could listen. He would not be seen inside. Then occasionally he came with his wife to a Sunday evening service. After a while he came to the morning service. I never asked him to come: I just told the Lord all about him, and the Lord knew about him better than I did.

One night this rough customer walked into prayer meeting. I made a point of meeting him at the door, and I said, "Glad to see you, Mr. So-and-So." His wife was not there, and he said, "Well, the family had to be represented." That was his apology.

But this Sunday night of which I speak, he was there, and I spoke very quietly. I said, "Some of you have been greatly upset when you have come to this church, and have gone away repeatedly vowing that you would never

come back. But you did come back. Some such perhaps are here to-night. Now you can fight with me. I am not equal to the conflict. But don't you dare fight with my Master. If He is speaking to you, you had better listen. For you know, if you don't hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, sometimes He sends His dogs after His sheep. He has strange ways of bringing them to Himself. But when He makes up His mind to bring them, come they must." I think I quoted the text: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth."

I did not know it at the time, but I learned after, that he used to go home Sunday night after the service, and walk the floor, saying to his wife: "Nellie, that man hit me all over. I will not go again." But next Sunday he would be there as usual.

This particular night he was quieter than usual. He let his wife go off to bed, and then went across the road to a barn he had, where he kept some horses. He climbed up into the hay mow, and there the Wrestler of Jabbok's brook dealt with him, and he surrendered.

The next Sunday night he got up in the after meeting—nearly everyone stayed—and he turned around to a lot of young men who were there, and said, "Young men, let me tell you something." He was an uncultivated man. He did not use the word "wrestled", but "wrassled". He said, "I have wrassled with Jesus Christ for many a year, and nobody knew it; but thank God, this first Sunday in the New Year he was one too many for me, and He downed me."

Oh, God took care of His own truth! It was the hidden wisdom ordained before the foundation of the world; and He drew the veil, and the light shone in: "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness"—that is creative—"God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts"—that is a new creation, as I told you this morning,—"to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If you are not a Christian, but if you find even just a kind of slumbering desire Godward, it may be it is a breaking of the day through the drawn blinds. Throw up the blinds of your prejudice, and let God's light shine in. Say, "Lord shine upon me," and He will do so, and you will see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Let us pray:

Oh, Lord, we thank Thee for this great truth which is so much beyond us, and we can only leave it with Thee, and pray that Thou wilt be pleased in Thine own way to use it to the salvation of men, and the upbuilding of Thy people. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

GODLINESS AND LEARNING

It might be instructive to inquire why it is that wherever godliness is healthy and progressive, we almost invariably find learning in the Church of Christ attendant on it: while on the other hand, neglect of study is attended sooner or later by decay of vital godliness. Not that all are learned in such times; but there is always an element of the kind in the circle of those whom the Lord is using. The energy called forth by the knowledge of God in the soul leads on to the study of whatever is likely to be useful in the defence or propagation of the truth; whereas, on the other hand, when decay is at work and lifelessness prevailing, sloth and ease creep in, and theological learning is slighted as uninteresting and dry.

—REV. ANDREW A. BONAR, D.D.

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

ROME ANNULS BRITISH LIBERTY UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

The accompanying news report from *The Ottawa Citizen* tells a story of intolerance and religious bigotry and, what is worse, of the denial of British rights that would scarcely be credible if it were not told by a reliable newspaper in the capital city of Canada. The arrogant way in which the rights of British citizens to religious liberty and to freedom of the press is being flouted in the Quebec city of Hull under the shadow of the Canadian Parliament is in keeping with the political philosophy of Mussolini's Italy or Franco's Spain but it is utterly contrary to British liberty and British laws. We protest with the utmost vehemence.

Last summer a young veteran from Toronto was arrested and held in jail on a charge of distributing, in contravention of a city by-law, copies of the Gospel of John in French without note or comment. Through these pages some hundreds of dollars were collected to fight with legal weapons this flagrant injustice. The matter has been taken up by a committee in Ottawa to whom we have handed over all funds raised for the defense of this case. The matter is still pending and the committee has promised to keep us informed of developments.

Incidents of this sort prove beyond all doubt that the spirit of the Inquisition has not died in Roman Catholic Quebec. The dark clerical powers of that province refuse Protestants the right to give out the Word of God and throw into jail inoffensive Christian workers who distribute invitations to Gospel meetings. These insidious influences who work behind the scenes, employing the civil powers to work their wicked will, would employ the same brutally murderous fashion of liquidating non-Romanists that are now being used in Colombia, or that were formerly displayed in the bloody Inquisition. This sort of thing will continue and grow worse in this Canada of ours until Protestants arise and demand that their civil and religious rights be respected.—W.S.W.

BAPTIST BLOTTER-PASSER CONVICTED IN HULL COURT

From *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 12, 1953

An Ottawa man who pleaded guilty to distributing religious tracts in Hull without a permit was given a suspended sentence by Municipal Judge Rodrigue Bedard, Q.C., in municipal court this morning.

Maurice Lalonde, 32, of 120 Guigues Street, Ottawa, a member of the Baptist Church, admitted that he had distributed blotters advertising a children's meeting to be held in Wrightville's Baptist Church on Montclair Boulevard Thursday evening.

Meanwhile a Hull Baptist minister claimed the arrest was illegal and that the law was ultra vires. He said the work of his church was more important than the observance of the "no-permit" by-law.

Lalonde was arrested Tuesday by Constable Clement Courville of the Hull Police Department as he was giving away the leaflets to children.

The accused appeared before Judge Bedard on Tuesday, pleaded guilty to the "no-permit" charge and was remanded until this morning for sentence.

Regular Happy Hour

Rev. W. J. Wellington, minister of the Wrightville Baptist Church, told *The Evening Citizen* that the meeting Lalonde was advertising was "The Happy Hour For Children", a regular Thursday evening program featuring film slides and gospel messages for children.

Rev. Wellington said he "was not sure" Lalonde had been distributing the blotters but "I had a fair idea he had been

at work when I found a number of them missing Tuesday afternoon."

The minister, who was refused a permit to distribute gospel tracts in Hull three years ago, said he was aware the blotters would be given out without the city's authorization.

"But I believe our work is more important than the observance of that by-law," he said.

Mr. Wellington questioned the treatment accorded Lalonde after his arrest Tuesday. "He was taken to the police station, charged with the offence and held over in jail. He was not permitted to call his wife Tuesday evening."

"I tried to arrange bail for him that evening but I was told no Justice of the Peace was available."

The minister said he went to the municipal court for the hearing the next morning but arrived too late "to be of help to our man". He said he asked Police Chief Adrien Robert why Lalonde was not permitted legal advice and was told: "He could have had it if he had asked for it."

The minister said Lalonde's case paralleled that of Richard Kilpatrick, of Toronto, who was also arrested in Hull last summer for distributing gospel tracts.

Kilpatrick's case is still dragging on but he is back in Toronto on \$40 bail. Mr. Wellington said he and friends are ready to fight Kilpatrick's case "in the Supreme Court" if that is necessary.

"LOOK NARROWLY TO THE WORK"

I beseech you, Sir, by the salvation of your precious soul, and the mercies of God, to make good and sure work of your salvation, and try upon what groundstone ye have builded. Worthy and dear Sir, if ye be upon sinking sand, a storm of death, and a blast, will lose Christ and you, and wash you close off the rock. Oh, for the Lord's sake, look narrowly to the work!

Read over your life, with the light of God's day-light and sun; for salvation is not casten down at every man's door. It is good to look to your compass, and all ye have need of, ere you take shipping; for no wind can blow you back again. Remember, when the race is ended, and the play either won or lost, and ye are in the utmost circle and border of time, and shall put your foot within the march of eternity, and all your good things of this short night-dream shall seem to you like the ashes of a bleeze of thorns or straw; and your poor soul shall be crying, "Lodging, lodging, for God's sake!" then shall your soul be more glad at one of your Lord's lovely and homely smiles, than if ye had the charters of three worlds for all eternity. Let pleasures and gain, will and desires of this world, be put over into God's hands, as arrested and fenced goods that ye cannot intromit with. Now, when ye are drinking the grounds of your cup, and ye are upon the utmost end of the last link of time, and old age, like death's long shadow, is casting a covering upon your days, it is no time to court this vain life, and to set love and heart upon it. It is near after-supper; seek rest and ease for your soul in God through Christ.

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

BE AT NO COST ABOUT IT!

Sir Thomas More, when in the Tower, would not so much as trim himself, saying, "There was a controversy between the king and him for his head, and till that was at a happy end, he would be at no cost about it." Skim off the froth of his wit, and you may make a solemn use of it. Certainly, all the cost you bestow on yourselves, to make your lives pleasurable and joyous to you, is mere folly, till it be decided what will become of the suit between God and you, not for your heads, but souls, yea, souls and bodies, whether for heaven or hell.

—*The Sword and the Trowel*

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 Second Quarter Lesson 1 April 5, 1953

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

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Lesson Text: John 20:1-18.

Golden Text: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."—1 Cor. 15:20.

I. I Am He That Was Dead: Come, See! Verses 1-10.

Christ paid to the utmost the penalty of our sins, and the Scriptures are most explicit in stressing the fact that Christ actually died (John 19:31-37). We have the evidence of the soldiers to this effect (John 19:31-33), the token of the blood and water (John 19:34, 35) and the fulfilment of Scripture (John 19:36, 37).

Again, had the Lord Jesus not died, His body would not have been placed in the tomb, but all the details of the entombment are given (Matt. 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42) to show the fallacy of the report given out by the soldiers (Matt. 28:11-14). No one could steal the body of the Saviour (Matt. 28:65, 66), and if it were true that it was stolen while the guards slept, how would the guards have known that it was stolen? No Roman guard would have laid himself open to the charge of neglect of duty, a fault which would involve the penalty of death. The very place of burial corroborates the Scriptural record of events, for He was to make His grave with the wicked, and be with the rich in His death (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57). Christ was sovereign in His resurrection, as in His death (Rev. 1:18).

Mary Magdalene was one of the devoted women who were last at the cross and first at the tomb of the Lord Jesus (Mark 16:1; John 19:25). Contrary to current opinion, for which there is no Scriptural warrant, Mary was not a sinful woman, so far as we know. The Lord had delivered her from demon possession, and in gratitude she spent her life in faithful service to Him (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:1-3).

In the darkness of the early dawn Mary perceived that the stone had been removed from the entrance to the sepulchre, and that the body of Christ was not resting there. Following the more courageous and impulsive Peter, John entered the sepulchre, and what he saw convinced him that Christ had risen from the dead. The very arrangement of the grave-linens proved that the body could not have been stolen, but that it had been raised by the power of God. Probably the contour of the precious body was preserved, Christ having arisen without disturbing the grave-clothes, as a butterfly escapes from the cocoon in which it has been imprisoned. These tokens confirmed the evidence of the Scriptures (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:24-27; 13:32-37) and also the word of Christ that He would rise from the dead (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 24:6-8; John 10:17, 18; 16:16).

The evidence of the empty tomb is a message of hope and of life! Come, see the place where the Lord lay!

II. I Am He That Liveth: Go, Tell! Verses 11-18.

Mary's sorrow was increased by the thought that she no longer knew where the body of her beloved Lord was resting. In the time of war many bereaved ones are deprived of even that comfort which comes from a knowledge of the whereabouts of the earthly tabernacle, once inhabited by those whom we have loved long since, and lost awhile. Her mind filled with foreboding and fear, Mary looked into the tomb. Wonder of wonders! It was no longer empty! Two angels in white were now on guard.

The weeping woman failed at first to recognize her Lord when He appeared to her. Perhaps it was because her eyes were suffused with tears, and she could not see distinctly. Perhaps her eyes "were holden" as were those of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). We would not be surprised, also, if the glorious body of Christ, while resembling the body in which He had lived, suffered and died, yet bore some evidence of the mysterious change which it had undergone. But when the Saviour called her by name, Mary knew Him (John 10:3-5). No other voice could rouse or soothe her, as could the voice of her Beloved. "My Master!" she replied. What a voice our Lord must have! so strong, yet so tender; so powerful, and yet so kind.

Christ said to her: "Do not cling to me; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." Three suggestions have been made as to the significance of this request: (1) that Mary desired to know Christ merely in His humanity, whereas a new spiritual union with Him was now possible (2 Cor. 5:16); (2) that Christ desired to go immediately to present to the Father the tokens of His finished work, and that He ascended for that purpose between this time and the time of statements recorded in verse 27 and in Luke 24:39; (3) that Christ was counselling Mary not to remain longer in the attitude of devotion at that time, but to go and deliver His message to the disciples. She would see Him again; He was not yet ascending. There is a time for fellowship, and a time for service.

The message of the risen Christ is a message of assurance, of hope, and of life. Go quickly, and tell it!

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- March 30—The Resurrection of Christ
Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-14.
- March 31—The Risen Christ Luke 24:1-43.
- April 1—The Necessity of the Resurrection
1 Cor. 15:12-19.
- April 2—Christ's Great Anointing Heb. 1:1-9.
- April 3—Power to Us Is Wrought in Christ Eph. 1:15-21.
- April 4—Salvation for Us Is in Christ's Power
Rom. 10:1-10.
- April 5—The Lordship of Christ 1 Cor. 8:1-6.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Low in the grave He lay. Arise, my soul, arise! The head that once was crowned. Christ the Lord is risen to-day! Rejoice, the Lord is King! Dying with Jesus.

USE THIS FORM TO REPLY TO THE EDITOR'S LETTER

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

Dear Dr. Shields:

Enclosed find my gift of \$ _____
toward THE GOSPEL WITNESS Fund, in response to your Annual Letter.

Name _____

Address _____