

# The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 32, No. 23

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 24, 1953

Whole Number 1635

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

# God Is Challenged to Introduce Himself

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, September 20th, 1953

(Electrically Recorded)

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."—1 Kings 18:36.

### Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, we should not dare to come where Thou art were it not true that Thy Throne is a Throne of grace, and that we come by Divine invitation. And since Thou hast summoned us to Thy presence Thou must have something to say to us, and something to do for us. We ourselves do not know what we need except we know our own helplessness; we know that apart from the energy of the Divine Spirit we cannot live as Christians, we cannot pray as believers; we cannot serve as servants of God unless Thou dost help us. But Thou hast promised us, and Thou hast not failed to implement Thy promises.

So this evening we beseech Thee to draw near to us. It may be an important evening for someone. It may be a crisis hour, an experience of the crossroads of life. Whatever it be, O Lord, let the light from Heaven shine upon us, and grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be led in paths of righteousness for Thy Name's sake.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bless Thine own dear people. We want to be better men and women; we want to render to Thee a purer, a higher, a nobler, service. We do desire above everything, if we know our own hearts, that Thy Name should be glorified, that men should magnify the Lord, and acknowledge Him as their God. Yet we have no power to make them so to do. Only Thou Thyself canst do it, and therefore we depend upon Thee, that Thou wilt use Thy people in Thine own way for the furtherance of the interests of Thy kingdom in the salvation of men, and the edification of those who are already believers.

Should there be one here this evening without the pale, whose eyes have not been opened to behold the Lamb of God, who perhaps is a professing Christian, a church member, nominally belonging to the Lord, and yet who perhaps has never really seen Thee, in whose life the Holy Ghost is not a factor, to whom the Word of God does not speak with supreme authority—O Lord, reach that man or woman this evening by Thine abounding grace. It may be there are some utterly indifferent to these things, some who may

have come just as a matter of form without any real thought of meeting with God and having direct dealings with Him. We pray that Thou wouldst discover each one of us as we are to ourselves as we appear before Thee. Grant, we beseech Thee, that this evening service may lift us all a little bit nearer to God. May it make us more useful as His servants, as His instruments. So let this service be glorifying to Thy Name, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

**T**HIS was Elijah's prayer as we saw in the Scripture lesson of this evening on Mount Carmel when he challenged the prophets of Baal to a determination as to who was really God. Elijah lived in a day of great spiritual declension and dearth when the whole nation had turned away from God. They had turned from God to worship idols, and the people who had been called by God's Name had become sheer pagans. Israel's idolatry had been a good many years coming to its present state of flood. Jeroboam led them astray when he set up calves of gold in Bethel and in Dan, saying, "Behold thy gods; O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And from then forward Israel had steadily declined. She had not had one king who did not worship idols. They had all turned aside, and walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. And it had come to such a pass that God determined to visit them in chastisement.

You are familiar with the story of how Elijah appeared on the scene, giving no account of himself except to say that he stood before the Lord. And he declared, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." And the heavens were shut up for three and a half years. The brooks and the rivers, and all sources

of water supply, had dried up; the fields were barren and bare, and the granaries were empty. The whole nation had been reduced to a state of famine, and they knew not which way to turn. I read to you this evening how Ahab the wicked king, of whom it was said, "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up," — Ahab said to Obadiah the governor of his household, "We will divide the land; you go one way and I will go another, and we will see if we can find a drop of water anywhere to save the animals' alive." It must have been an appalling situation. And I can imagine that it was one of the temptations of life, to Elijah not to ask permission of the Lord to shorten that time of terrible desolation. But the three years went on, and the word of the Lord by Elijah had been fulfilled. Night after night there was no dew. Day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, there was no rain. Then at last, by Divine direction, Elijah determined to show himself to Ahab. You have the story. I read it to you in order that this inspired record might be clearly in your minds.

It was a daring thing, was it not, for Elijah to do? He must have been sure of his ground when he challenged all the prophets of Baal, and the people of Israel, and Ahab himself, to meet him at Carmel, and submit to that tremendous test, challenging the true God to speak for Himself. That is what he did. The prophets of Baal received no answer to their long-continued prayer. They were frustrated and defeated, humbled and mortified. I suppose beyond expression, when the god whom they professed to follow gave no answer to their cry. Elijah would not have been popular in our day. He actually mocked them, and laughed at them, in their folly. He said, "You say he is a god; cry aloud, he may be talking so that he cannot hear you, he may be in a journey somewhere, he may be fast asleep and need to be wakened up. Cry aloud." Was that not a daring thing? O yes, there is a place for such irony as that. It is well sometimes to hold in holy contempt the enemies of Jehovah.

Then at last when the altar had been repaired—you noticed what care Elijah took to ensure the proof of the supernaturalism of the test, for when he had built the altar, and put the wood and the sacrifice on the altar, he said, "Now fill the barrels with water, and flood it all with water. Do it again a second time, and a third time." And they did it, until the trench round about the altar was full of water. The altar itself, and the sacrifice, and the wood, were dripping with it. One would have found it difficult to set fire to that by any natural means. Then Elijah prayed this prayer that I read to you, and he asked for three things. He asked that God would sovereignly introduce Himself, he asked that He would vindicate His servant, and he asked that He would magnify His own Word.

We live in a day when it is impossible to persuade men even of the existence of God. I remember when I was a young minister we rarely found anybody who denied that there was a God, but today you can find them by the millions — find them in so-called Christian countries, find them by the tens of thousands in Toronto—avowed infidels, who simply laugh at the idea of God, and of their answerability to Him, and of the idea that any day of accounting and judgment is in the future. We have had a terrible experience the last fifty years, when unbelief crept into our colleges, and then into our pulpits. And institutions built by Christian enterprise,

## The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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

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

Editor

T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editors

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

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

S.S. Lesson and Exchanges

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

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Telephone RAndolph 7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

endowed by Christian generosity—colleges and churches, and I know not what—have become the veritable instruments of darkness and of the devil; teaching men to doubt everything and be sure of nothing, leading them to mock at the very idea of God.

But you say, "That surely cannot be true. There are thousands of people in church today." It is a respectable thing to go to church, it is a respectable thing to profess some kind of religion, to sing the hymns of Zion. But if you talk to many of the people you will find they have no real experience of God. Let me greatly dare and say that it is true of some professed ministers of the gospel; they know nothing whatever of a personal acquaintance with a living Saviour, and they have no dependence whatever upon the Word of God. There are churches all over this city, great churches, great buildings, where the people never meet for prayer; they have no prayer meetings at all. Blessed be God there are exceptions, but oh, there are so many where God is not honoured. My dear friends, we do live in a day of deep and dark apostasy. There was a time when the modernists polluted, and were content to pollute, the streams of religious knowledge. Then, that being insufficient, they attacked the very source of religious knowledge, and recently, at the cost of millions, and with such an advertising campaign as I think was never known for anything before, they put out a supposed Revised Standard Version of the Bible. It was advertised, and people were asked to accept it before it was put on the market, before you could buy a copy. And poor simple people believed that some great scholars had unearthed some more authoritative sources, and that we now had a more reliable Bible. The translators of that Bible, almost without exception, were semi-infidels; they were modernists who deny every supernatural element in the Book. And now, not content with that, they have issued what they call an Interpreter's Bible in ten volumes. Twelve of the editors of it were on the committee of translators, and it is packed full of the veriest blas-

phemies I have ever read. So they have gone to the Bible itself to corrupt the very reservoir of truth. And I noticed that the Old Convention recently passed a resolution asking the people to give more attention to the study of the Bible, especially as now they had this great Revised Standard Version of the Bible to help them to understand it. Why, it is full of mis-translations, it is full of misrepresentations of the truth! It is an instrument invented and put forward and supported and sponsored by the devil himself, who is the father of lies. The United Church has approved it; and the Old Baptist Convention has approved it; So people are turning away even from this inspired Book, turning away from the truth to fables. My dear friends, we live in a terribly apostate age. What are we going to do?

It was a dark day for Elijah. He said, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord." We are not as badly off as that. Thank God He has reserved to Himself not only the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, but He has reserved to Himself many who still believe and proclaim the glorious gospel of the blessed God. But they are relatively few in number; very few in number. The vast majority believe very little.

### I.

But HOW ARE WE TO INTRODUCE AN UNSEEN GOD? How are you to prove that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him? You cannot do it; I cannot do it; no human can do it at all. The history of the Christian church, indeed the inspired history of the progress of religion, the worship of the true God, in the Old Testament and the New, is a record of revivals, of periods of declension and decadence, where people turned away to the utter forgetfulness of God. It was so in Israel. They did not know God, and they did not want God; they had no love for God. And the chastisement with which they were visited did not bring the nation to repentance. It is common to suppose that judgments soften people, but they do not. Men who come out of Kingston and other Penitentiaries, in the majority of instances, come out much harder and more wicked than they were when they went in. The world has passed through two devastating and desolating wars, and we may be standing on the threshold of a third — I do not know. But surely when hell has been let loose upon us, and we have seen earth's rivers running red with blood, and we know that even as I speak to you at this late day in Christian history countless millions of people are slaves with no liberty at all—in Europe, in European and Asiatic Russia, and elsewhere. The whole world seems to be slipping back, as Mr. Churchill feared it might in one of his great speeches—it seems to be slipping back into utter darkness. And in communities like ours crime is rife, wickedness flaunts itself everywhere, and it looks as though things were getting worse and worse. And there are people like the Ontario Government—they are just liquor sellers, that is all. They are in the liquor business. Their Liquor License Board is the sales department of the liquor interests of this country. What can you do? They laugh at you. We have for Mayor of this city a man who was once a Baptist, but is always on the side of the world, the flesh, and the devil—always. We do not find men standing for righteousness in our day.

What shall we do? I do not know anything we can do except bow before God and tell Him we are beaten, as

we always have been; tell Him we have no power, no learning, no logic, no eloquence, no organization—nothing that men can do to allay the terrible situation. I am not a pessimist; I am only telling you what you all know. I told you this morning of a little boy of only eleven years of age who has already been four times in the hands of the police, and was warned that if he comes back he will be sent to the Reformatory. And many of the women are as bad as the men. It was said that if the women were given the vote it would clean up society. Just walk down Church Street or anywhere any night where there is liquor to sell and see the crowds of women going in and getting it. They are not going to clean up society—drunk, and worse than drunk. I remember when I came back from England in 1934 I stood on the steps of this church on the corner — that was nineteen years ago — and I saw more drunkenness in five minutes, and more drunks, than I had seen in Great Britain in two months, and I had been in all the principal cities of Great Britain and of Ireland, Cork, Dublin, Belfast, and Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, London, and I know not where else. It was bad enough, but nothing like as bad as this.

When this church was burning, Hepburn and his crew were at Queen's Park (the Provincial Parliament Buildings) holding a jubilation. Jarvis Street Church was going out of business. And while the firemen were still here a real estate man came to me, and said, "You can buy this church at the corner, or you can buy the other church over on Sherbourne Street. They will soon be for sale, and one or the other of them will close up, and you can buy it for far less than you can restore this." He said, "This would make a magnificent site for a great hotel." I said, "Maybe, but it is a magnificent site for a church, right down in the midst of all this iniquity." And I said, "It is going up again." Even some of our own people said, "Are you going to put up the spire?" I said, "Certainly we are; we are going to have something around this corner pointing heavenward." And it went up, and it is all free of debt, now appraised as being worth a million and a quarter dollars. It is a lighthouse, and one of these days God is going to visit us with a great and overwhelming visitation. I am sure of it.

"Let it be known this day," said Elijah, "that thou art God in Israel." Oh, let a great cry ascend from our hearts that God will come and introduce Himself. The Bible is full of it. He introduced Himself to a raging tiger called Saul of Tarsus, and made him the chiefest of the apostles. It is His way to say, "I am God, and beside me there is none else."

What did Elijah mean? The Lord knew what he meant. In effect he said, "Visit us in such a way that there will be no mistake as to Thy identity. Come to us so that the people will have to say, 'That is God.'" You remember the plagues of Egypt, how the magicians did so with their enchantments, and when at last they reached the limit of their magic they had to confess, "This is the finger of God." That, my dear friends, is the only hope. Dark? Yes. Not quite as dark as it was in Luther's day. Not quite as dark as it was in Wycliffe's day, who was called the morning star of the Reformation. Not quite as dark as it was when God laid hold of John Knox and John Calvin, raised up mighty men, and clothed Himself with them, and hurled them at His enemies till they had to admit that God lived.

Elijah asked that God would work in such a way as

nobody else could work, and then everybody would have to say, "That is God." "Now," said he to the prophets of Baal, "with all your cleverness show what your god can do, and I will show what my God can do." Would you dare to issue a challenge like that? What if God had failed Elijah! What if God had failed! It is blasphemy almost, sacrilege at least, to ask the question; it would be to ask it seriously. Elijah knew God, and Elijah knew that He could not and would not fail, that *there on Carmel God would introduce Himself*. Nothing else will save the present situation in this city or any other city.

My dear friends, we live in a day when *ministers are terribly tempted, and are resorting to all sorts of tricks*. They have the movies, and—I do not know what to call it—some jazz performances, as though they were going really to accomplish something. But it cannot be done. You cannot cast the devil out with music or dramatic performances. Only God can cast the devil out, and only God can introduce Himself.

Now Elijah had submitted this test: "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." We read the story,—wood and sacrifice, but no fire. Both parties agreed, and even the prophets of Baal said, "It is well spoken." And thus they accepted the challenge, and prayed all day long. "But there was no voice, not any that answered."

*Why did Elijah ask God to answer by fire?* Because He had done it before. He did it in the rebellion of Korah; He did it when the Hebrew ritual was set up; He did it at the dedication of Solomon's Temple—fire came down from heaven. And this God Who is a consuming fire Elijah asked to remove the veil and to answer by fire. It was a terrible prayer, was it not? It was enough to make anyone afraid. Shall I exhort you, dear friends, to pray? Why should I need to, you who are Christians? If you have the faith of Elijah can you not believe that God can and will answer by fire?

*What do I mean by that?* You remember how they crucified the Man of Nazareth, laid Him in a rocky sepulchre, and sealed the tomb, and said that He was dead. But *He came from the grave and introduced Himself*—not to all the people, but to witnesses before appointed. They did not seek Him, they did not know where to look for Him. He appeared to them on the Emmaus Road. And when they were gathered with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, trembling, suddenly they saw Him, and they cried out. He said, "Why are ye troubled . . . for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." The second time He told Thomas, you remember, to put his finger into the print of the nails. How was the resurrection proved and established? *Jesus proved it. Jesus Himself appeared.* Read the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians and you will see the record of all the appearances of those who witnessed the resurrection of the Son of God. My brethren, if that is true that God was in Christ, and He was crucified and buried, and that He rose again and ascended into Heaven, and that we have now an Advocate on High, *shame on us if we do not join in the ministry of intercession*. All our meetings for prayer ought to be packed, and they would be if you really believed that God would answer your prayer. You would be there. Elijah believed it that God would answer by fire.

Then I remind you *how this New Testament dispensation was inaugurated when*, as they were gathered in the upper room, once more God answered by fire, "and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it

sat upon each of them." As an explanation Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said, "This Jesus Whom ye crucified with wicked hands, and buried, God has raised up, and He has gone home to His Father, and has received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and He has shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And it was when God in the Person of the Holy Ghost came to the assembled believers on the Day of Pentecost and introduced Himself—it was then that they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Nothing else will evoke that confession. God answered by fire.

What happened on Carmel? Four hundred and fifty modernist preachers, prophets of Baal, four hundred prophets of the groves, all the people of Israel, when the fire came and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the altar, the water, and licked up the dust, the heathen and the idolaters fell on their faces saying, "The Lord he is God." You cannot have that in any other way. No preacher on earth can bring that about, but only the presence and power of God the Holy Ghost. And it is ours for the asking.

I said *preachers have been tempted*. Well let me tell you I made up my mind long ago that so far as I was concerned we will win through with the gospel of God's grace preached in the power of the Holy Ghost or not at all. We will not stoop to these dishonouring practices. Let us wait for God to introduce Himself, and He will do it.

## II.

Elijah said, "Let it be known . . . THAT I AM THY SERVANT." Are we justified in speaking of ourselves? Are we here in Jarvis Street justified in praying a prayer like that: "Let it be known that we are Thy servants?" You see Elijah had created a bit of trouble in Israel, so Ahab said. Anyway Israel was troubled. So is it here. And they blame me for it now—Baptists down in the Maritime Provinces, and all over. I was Pastor of the Cathedral Church, and we had most of the wealth and influence of the Denomination here. I had everything to lose and nothing to gain by challenging them here, but I did. And they went out, four hundred and fifty at a time. And then in the Convention they brought their professor from England to support them, who said, "I will believe the word of science before I will believe that Book. I will put the authority of science first." We had all that, until our name has been as the apostles' names were — as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. And some little ministerial midget — I think I ought to be sarcastic too, and say to some of these men, "I regard the whole aggregation of you with holy contempt. You have departed from God, and from His Word." We depend upon God to vindicate us. "Let it be known . . . that I am thy servant." Let it be known that this is a New Testament Church. We are not an aggregation of cranks. I preach from this pulpit exactly the same thing that was preached from the Jarvis Street pulpit, and has been for one hundred and twenty-five years. We have not changed. We only refused to be turned aside from the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever, that is all. We have not changed. I have nearly two thousand sermon manuscripts at home. I used to write my sermons. I haven't time now, but I used to write them with meticulous care. Sometimes I read them over, and I go back through the years, and while I hope there may have been an enlargement of knowledge, and perhaps some variation

in the presentation of things, I have been delighted to go back even to the first sermon I ever wrote and bow before God and say, "O Lord I have not changed." The text of the first sermon I ever wrote was this: "This same Jesus." I did not know that I should look at it when more than half a century had passed. But I have no other gospel than the gospel by which I was saved, and I pray that God will vindicate me, and vindicate you, vindicate us, in this Jarvis Street Church. How could He do it? By visiting us with His salvation. Can you tell me what a New Testament church is for? I do not know unless it be to bring souls to Christ and then to train them up in His way. I do not know what any Biblical Zion is but so to live and minister that it can be said of it, "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this (and that) man was born there." We have seen it, we have seen multitudes converted in this place.

The apostasy prevails throughout the world — I have been around the world and I know something of religious conditions on all continents. And it is just the same — the tide is out, even in mission fields. Modernism has gripped the mission fields. Revival must begin somewhere, God has to choose some place in which to introduce Himself, some church, some body of people whose faith He will vindicate. And you know when souls were born in Zion it was said, "Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." I believe God will do that for us in Jarvis Street Church; I expect to live to see it.

### III.

One other word before I close. ELIJAH PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD MAGNIFY HIS WORD. He said, "Lord let the people know that I have not done all this of myself; let the people know that what I have done I have done at Thy word, and by Thy command. Vindicate me and Thy word, and magnify Thy word, that all the people may see that the word of God stands, and that what He has promised He will perform." No rain, no dew; nothing but judgment. "Now will you put away your idols? Will you cleanse the nation? If you will you shall hear the sound of abundance of rain." And God vindicated His Word, He magnified His word that day. You cannot prove the Divine inspiration of this Book by learning or logic. Oh, you can prove it intellectually, you can pile up your evidences until rational men will say, "That is true; the Bible is the inspired Word of God." But when they have said it they do not believe it unless God the Holy Ghost has come into their hearts. It is quite possible for people to have a carnal orthodoxy, a mere intellectual acceptance of the Bible, without any knowledge whatever of the power of it. My dear friends, what we need is the mighty power of God, so that the Word of God will prove itself. When you see the drunkard, and the libertine, and the socialist, and the respectable unbeliever, and the agnostic philosopher, and all the rest of them — when you see them overwhelmed by the power of God, bowing before Him and crying out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," then people will believe the Bible. There is no other way by which its truth may be proved.

They doubted who Jesus was when He went to the place where Lazarus was entombed, and I suppose they all wondered what He would do. They said, "Couldn't

He have prevented his death? He opens the eyes of the blind. What is the limit of His power? Couldn't He have done something to save these sisters from weeping?" And Jesus came and stood before the tomb, and He said, "Take ye away the stone." And you remember the sisters were shocked. The stench of death was there they thought, and they could not bear to look upon the loved form. But they rolled the stone away, and then, —oh, what a glorious word!—He lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe." And when He had said that He lifted up His voice. I wonder what the voice of Jesus was like? The seer in Revelation speaks of "the sound of many waters." What sort of a voice was it that said, "Let there be light," and there was light? This whole ordered universe sprang into being in obedience to the almighty fiat. But this Man of Nazareth, clothed in flesh and blood—what is He going to do? I can see them looking at each other. "What do you think is going to happen?" Then He lifted up His voice, and with such a voice as this earth never heard apart from Him, full of music, full of power—He lifted up His voice and said, "Lazarus, come forth." And the dead began to move, and shuffled out in his grave clothes. He said, "Loose him, and let him go." What do you suppose the people who stood by said? I know what they said. They said, "He is the Son of God. That was the Word of God. No one but God could do that."

God did that at Pentecost, and the people were converted by the thousand—when the fire came multitudes came together. Nothing interests people so much, even in this dark day, as to see men and women made new creatures in Christ—the drunkard sobered, the libertine cleansed, the good for nothing father becoming head of his household and caring for his children, the people returning monies they have stolen, and making restitution in every direction for wrongs they have done. When that takes place the unbelieving world, in spite of all that the modernists may say, will respond. "This is the finger of God"; that is the workshop of the Holy Ghost.

I call you, to whatsoever church you belong—let us pray, pray, pray, at home, together, everywhere. Pray Elijah's prayer, and God in His own good time will answer. Let us pray.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bless Thy Word to us this evening. Come to us in our littleness, in our impotence, our utter helplessness. Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, —as when the smelting fire burneth the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy Name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence! Send us the fire O God, and make this place the workshop of the Holy Ghost, for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

### A WORD OF APPRECIATION

The *Moody Monthly* of Chicago carries a regular column from the pen of Dr. Wilbur M. Smith entitled "Magazine Articles of Major Importance". In the issue of September, 1953, Dr. Smith comments thus on a sermon preached by Dr. Shields and printed in THE GOSPEL WITNESS AND PROTESTANT ADVOCATE, May 28, 1953:

"I seldom refer to sermons in this column, but here is a magnificent sermon — like the great days of preaching of old — by Dr. T. T. Shields, on John 17:24, a text that could paralyze a minister of lesser gifts, but unfolded here in a moving way."

## IN A STORM AT SEA

A Thursday Evening Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Greenway Hall  
September 17th, 1953

(Electrically Recorded)

"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

"And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

"And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

"And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

"And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

"Then they that were in the ship, came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matt. 14:22-33).

**I** BELIEVE that one of the evidences, indeed one of the proofs, of the divine inspiration of scripture is that even these scriptural narratives, in principle, fit so exactly into Christian experience that we may turn to them again and again to find help for any and all the circumstances of life.

Here is a picture of a GROUP OF DISCIPLES ON A STORMY SEA! That, of course, is not at all unusual. But we shall examine it with its inspiring accompaniments.

There are those, perhaps, who imagine that the Christian life is very much like a pleasant canoe trip, down a softly-flowing stream, or across the tranquil waters of a mill-pond, or some small lake. I have to confess that I have not found it so. I remember at the close of the first Great War, Mr. David Lloyd George, in one of his great speeches, said that what the world now needed was a period of undisturbed tranquility. And somebody remarked, that was a need which was ever present, but very seldom enjoyed.

### I.

Our Lord had sent the disciples away, and went into a mountain that He might be alone, apart from the multitudes. HE WANTED TO BE ALONE THAT HE MIGHT PRAY.

We do well to follow His example. *There is a place for solitariness and quiet in the Christian life.* There are some people who want, always, to be in crowds. I sometimes wonder how Christian people, belonging to institutions that practically all the time from Sunday to Saturday are holding meetings of some sort, not a few of them of rather an excitable character—inasmuch as the people who attend, have to attend to their daily work—I sometimes wonder how they manage to find time to be alone, to pray, and to meditate upon the things of God. We all need that: we are not to forsake "the

assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is". On the other hand we should not neglect the private cultivation of our spiritual natures, and if we are really to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we shall have to find our way to some mountain-side apart; or if it be not literally, physically, a mountain, then somewhere apart, where we may be alone with God.

As I speak to you for a few moments of what occurred to the disciples, whom Jesus had commanded to get into a ship and go to the other side, I remind you that He was not forgetful of their journey, nor unaware of their location, their whereabouts, and doubtless, while in the mountain at prayer, He thought of those who were out on the stormy sea.

We may well remember that *our Lord has ascended to greater heights than any mountain could furnish.* He has even ascended into Heaven, and makes intercession for us at the right hand of God. I think we do not sufficiently emphasize, or meditate upon, this tremendous fact, that we enjoy the perpetual intercession of the Angel of the Covenant, Who is ever pleading the promises of God in our behalf. It is written, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And it is equally true that if any man is in trouble, or distressed, or, like the mariner upon a stormy sea, at his wits' end, we always have an Intercessor Who is ever mindful of our situation, and Who bears our name before the Lord.

How beautifully that is set forth in the book of Leviticus, and in the book of Exodus, where the raiment of the high priest is described—with his beautiful garments, his breastplate of precious stones, and his shoulder straps, adorned with precious stones, and a mitre upon his head, inscribed with the words, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD". And when the high priest went in to the Holy of holies, unrequested by the people, but divinely ordained so to do, he bore upon his breast, and upon his shoulders, and upon his head, the names of the tribes of Israel. He is there to think for us; he is there to uphold us with His strong shoulders, and He is there to bear us before God upon His heart — to bear us whom He has loved with an everlasting love.

That by the way.

### II.

THE DISCIPLES, THEN, ARE IN A SHIP IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA, TOSSED BY THE WAVES, FOR THE WIND WAS CONTRARY. I suppose *most Christians sometimes have their experiences of stormy seas.* I don't know how many times you have crossed the Atlantic. I have crossed it many times. And there is a spot in the Atlantic, which the mariners call "the devil's hole", for however smooth the sea in one's approach to it, or beyond it, when you have passed through it, almost invariably that stretch of water, for some reason or another, not always, but nearly always, is like a boiling pot, and for those who are not good sailors, it is rather a disturbing experience.

Now my dear friends, in the voyage of life, life is often likened to a sea voyage, in the scripture and elsewhere, and in the voyage of life we are almost certain, some time or another to come to "the devil's hole", to a place where the waves are turbulent, and the winds are contrary.

I remember crossing one time, and sitting beside a young man who seemed determined to make the very best of the most excellent bill of fare provided. He



ordered everything on the menu. There was a dish of fruit, of which one could take plenty, before breakfast proper. Then, if you wanted it, there was cereal, hot or cold. This young man took full advantage of the fruit bowl; then invariably ordered a big dish of oatmeal porridge. He then got a banana, and cut it up on top of the porridge, then smothered it with sugar, then drowned it with rich cream. It was enough to upset anybody, just to see him at it. But following that he would have whatever his fancy dictated, bacon and eggs, or steak, and I know not what. He certainly ran no risk of feeling hungry before luncheon. He properly filled up, as you do when you stop at a gas station, and the service man says, "Fill her up?" and you nod. Well, he nodded. So he continued for several days, but one morning when I came down to breakfast—I happen to be fortunate enough to be a good sailor, I have never been sick on the sea, or in the air—when I came down to breakfast this morning, the chair at my side was vacant. I said to the steward, "What has happened to our young friend?" He said, "I rather suspect he has gone under. He lasted a good deal longer than I thought he would. But I was sure that sooner or later it would come."

There are many Christian people like that. They live as though there were no "devil's hole", as though life were one long continued day of enjoyment, a picnic, a summer day always, golden, bright, and glad. But sooner or later they go under, and perhaps their rather intemperate enjoyment ministers something to their discomfort when the day of storm breaks.

Sometimes *we get into a storm by our own choice*: we could stay out of it if we would. You remember, of course, the ship of Alexandria, on which Paul sailed, as a prisoner to Rome. And you will recall, that when they came to that place about which you have been reading recently, where the earthquakes were, "and where the south wind blew softly," supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete." Paul advised them against the voyage. He said it would be to their hurt, and to the lading of the ship. But the master, the captain, listened to others rather than to the things spoken by Paul, because the weather was fair, and the wind was favourable. If they knew anything about Providence at all, they probably said "How providential!" And they set sail—and ran into a storm!

Now the problem of divine guidance is not an easy one, but there are many who imagine that when circumstances are favourable, when all doors are unlocked and unbarred, when the seas are tranquil, and the wind is favourable, they say, "Now this agrees with my plan and purpose, and I think I shall set sail." I do not so read the scriptures. Very frequently the servants of God were led in directions opposite of that in which they might enjoy tranquility. Paul spoke of an open door being presented to him, but there were many adversaries. He had purposed to go to the Romans but he was let hitherto. When he would have gone into Bithynia, "the Spirit suffered them not". The story of the journeys of the disciples, in The Acts of the Apostles, record that very frequently the Lord put what now we call a "road block" across the path where one's natural desires would lead him to go. But if we persist, against all evidences of God's contrary guidance, we get into the storm as the ship of Alexandria did. We may not lose our lives, but we may lose the ship, and everything that is in it, and escape as by "the skin of our teeth".

I am suspicious of those who would insist that they can define the pathway divinely ordained at the end of a logical syllogism, and who, therefore, determine to go, no matter what stands in the way. We shall be wise to be careful. Sometimes, because we have not sense enough to use our own judgment, God puts a block across our pathway, and woe be to us if we pass that divinely-appointed barrier.

But it was not so in this case. *The disciples were on the stormy sea by explicit command of the Lord Jesus Himself.* He told them to get into a ship, and to go unto the other side.

Therefore we must not conclude, on the contrary, if we find ourselves in rough waters, that we must have missed our way. Very probably we are in the way of divine appointment. Nor must you be disappointed if, when with meticulous care, you have endeavoured to ascertain the direction of the divine will, and at last have determined on that course—I say, you must not be disappointed if everything seems to go awry, and you get into the midst of the storm.

I remember hearing of some student landlubbers hiring a boat, and getting an "old salt" familiar with the seven seas, to pilot their boat out somewhere on Georgian Bay. That is a very treacherous piece of water. Storms can brew in a few hours. And so it happened in this case. The boat was nearly standing on its beam end at times; and the pilot was very silent, and very serious. These boys were splashing in the water, and having a great deal of fun. When they saw the seriousness of this old sailor, they taunted him with his fearfulness. They said, "We are not afraid!" He looked at them scornfully, "No," he said, "you silly fools, you don't know enough to be afraid. If you knew more you would be afraid." He knew that they were in a very dangerous situation.

*When you get into the stormy waters, my dear friends, don't make light of it.* Do not assume a false, and external bravado, as though to say, "We are not afraid!" There are situations in life which come to us all, which are enough to make anybody afraid. And you are not a coward if you cease your singing, and become very, very serious-minded.

It may be domestically, it may be in business, it may be in respect to your physical frame, it may be in the general circumstances of life, the seas are stormy and the winds are contrary, when there is a time for us to be quiet, to be very quiet before God. Have you had experiences like that? It may be you did not know what a day nor an hour might bring forth; and you were full of fear.

It is not said that these disciples prayed. It may be they did—I do not know. But it is said, *apparently unasked, that in the fourth watch of the night Jesus came unto them "walking on the sea"*. It must have been rather early evening, I think, when Jesus dismissed the disciples, and went up into a mountain to pray. It may perhaps have been about sundown that He commanded the disciples to get into a ship and to cross the lake; and He had probably been a good while alone on the mountainside; but how long the disciples were tossed about in that little boat I do not know. It may have been for a good many hours, while Jesus was up in the mountain alone. I only know *He did not come as soon as the wind began to blow.* I know that by the fact that it was blowing long enough to stir up the water, and it takes a while for a strong wind to disturb the tranquil water's

surface. But by the time He arrived they were right in the midst of a very rough and stormy experience.

Well now, the Lord does that with us. He does not come the moment we send for Him. I got a letter from a man in England a short while ago. Someone had given him a *GOSPEL WITNESS*, or a volume of my sermons, and he wrote about one thing, and he said, "I never thought about it before", that when the sisters of Lazarus sent to Jesus saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick", "He abode two days still in the same place where he was". He gave Lazarus, I remember I said in the sermon, time to die. He could have come at once; but He did not. And the sisters said, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Sometimes the Lord does seem long in coming. He does not always come the moment you call for Him. He stays still in the mountain. But in this case apparently He came "in the fourth watch of the night"; but *He came unasked, and uninvited.*

Oh, I like to remember some of the times when the Lord has come to me when, so far as I could recall, I had not specifically asked Him to come into that set of circumstances. But you see the Lord knoweth what we have need of before we ask it. Has he not come to you like that? Has He not come sovereignly walking upon the sea on those rough waves? You know if they had been solid instead of aqueous, watery—waves, He might have been expected to come. But He came walking on the waves that threatened to engulf them. Have you not often found that so; as Cowper has it:

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform,  
He plants His footsteps on the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

"Ye feeble saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
With blessings on your head."

Well, it often is so that something other than clouds, the adverse circumstances of life, and the contrary winds, those things that seem to us to turn the world upside down, so that we hardly know east from west, or north from south, or head from feet — come to us, and we hardly know where we are. It may be that you have a kind of spiritual seasickness. Did you ever have that? Just out of condition! What is the matter with you? "I don't know." Well, we are often like that, when "we don't know". The troubled sea upsets us very often. But "in the fourth watch of the night", in the darkness of the night, in the midst of the storm, unasked, Jesus interposed. He came walking upon the sea.

I give it as my testimony, I should not be here to-night if I had not experienced that principle a hundred times. Haven't you? And you are almost sorry after that you had not anticipated it, and set yourself up, and told the Lord all about it, and asked Him to come walking on the sea, so that you would be all ready to welcome Him when He came. But you didn't do anything of the kind, but He came unasked. What a blessing that is, is it not?

*We are often afraid of God's way of delivering us.* He came walking on the sea, and they were more troubled about Him than they were with the sea. They were old salts—at least they were sailors anyway, and they were familiar with troubled waters. But when they saw something that looked like a spirit walking on the waters, that was something new, something new in the way of

divine deliverance. Our Lord frequently does that. He says, "Behold I shall do a new thing"! He loves to do new things. He loves to surprise us with the extraordinary. I am sure you have had that. "They were troubled". Have you been afraid, when something happened that seemed to be even worse than the stormy sea? You have said, "Lord, I wanted deliverance, but not this—not this! Anything but this." And you cried out, fearing some great disaster was impending.

*They did not recognize Jesus in His new role.* He has a way of appearing "in another form". You remember after the resurrection He appeared to the disciples in another form. It seemed as though they were meeting a new Christ. Christ! Yes; but somehow a little different from the Christ we met yesterday. I delight in that divine variety. There is a verse in the Psalms to this effect: "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." There are dangers in monotony, dangers in religious monotony. We may welcome sometimes a bit of change, and be glad when deliverance reaches us from an unexpected source, and in an unidentifiable form. Over the waste of troubled waters they looked, and they cried out. They thought it was a spirit.

I wonder why people are so much afraid of spirits? You tell the average person a certain house is haunted, and he or she will go around a block to avoid it. They are afraid some ghost will jump out at them from the bushes. I am not afraid of ghosts as long as they have no flesh on them. It is the flesh and bone variety that are most to be feared.

But after all, there is another aspect of it, our greatest foes are spiritual, and we have reason to be afraid of assaults from the realm of the spirit. That is something we do not know how to cope with, and I suppose this was so in their case.

You remember that prayer meeting in the house of John Mark, when the church gathered together, and prayed for Peter who was in prison. And while they were yet praying, there came a knock at the door, and one of the girls called Rhoda left the company praying, I suppose they were on their knees. She went to the door, and when she heard Peter's voice, she was afraid to open the door. I suppose she said, "Herod could not wait till morning. He has chopped off his head, and this is his spirit". And she supposed that it was Peter's spirit; and she went back and told the others. But the real Peter—very real he was—"continued knocking". I think I must preach on that some time. I never have done so. It comes to me now: I can see a volume in it. "Peter continued knocking". When people don't believe you, when people doubt the miracles, when people say, "You are only a ghost anyhow", keep on knocking until you provide your proof.

Well, that was another instance of their fearfulness on account of what they supposed was the proximity of a spirit. "And Jesus spake unto them saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Let me go back to that story of the ship of Alexandria; all the sailors, and all the passengers, and all the prisoners, were all fearful, thinking that the end of everything had come to them. And they threw out anchors, and devoutly wished for the day. Then the one calm member of the ship's population stood forth, and said, "Be of good cheer." Why was he able to say that? because he added, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom



I serve, saying, fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

You see the Angel of God came to the storm-tossed disciples in the midst of the sea, and emulating the Master Himself, said, "Be of good cheer."

I like to cheer people up when I can. It is not always you can. I remember a kind of would-be cheerfulness that we were treated with some years ago, in one of our Executive meetings of The Union of Regular Baptist Churches. We had a pretty heavy deficit. We were behind at the bank some thousands of dollars — if I am not mistaken it was in the midst of the depression. And one of the very emotional brethren began to sing that there was nothing to worry about—I don't know the song. But they began to sing, and they tapped the table, "Nothing to worry about!" I can see the late Deacon Jennings sitting there. He did not smile, and he did not sing. They sang away lustily, "Nothing to worry about." And he said, "I think there is. You won't go and sing that nonsense to the bank manager. He will tell you there is something to worry about." He was a very practical sort of man.

Oh, there is a sort of Christian Science cheerfulness. My friend, the late Dr. A. C. Dixon once told me he could tell a Christian Scientist when he or she walked down the street. I said, "How do you do it?" "They wear a smile that is put on. It is part of their religion, to smile when there is nothing to smile about." He said, "I can always tell them when I meet them." I don't know much about Christian Science, but there are people who think they will get over their troubles by denying them, or ignoring them, and by saying, "Cheer up! Cheer up!" or as they say in England, "Cheerio!" when there is nothing to be cheerful about.

I am not interested in that kind of religion. But when an authoritative Voice, Who is able to command the winds and the waves, says, "Be of good cheer," it is time then to stop your worrying. Don't you think so? Oh, the Bible is full of it — how God comes to us, and when everything else fails, we have His Word for it — "Be of good cheer".

And He identified Himself, "It is I; be not afraid." Newton sings:

"By prayer let me wrestle,  
And He will perform;  
With Christ in the vessel  
I smile at the storm."

Or if He has not even set foot upon the deck yet, but you see Him walking on the waves, and you hear Him saying, "Be of good cheer", it is time to be happy.

What do I mean? I mean that very often in the midst of a set of circumstances that are baffling, problems that seem insoluble, driven by the wind, and tossed, not knowing what to do at all—somehow or another into the midst of it all He comes, saying, "Be of good cheer".

I have told you before, but let me tell it to you again. I like to recall it to mind. When I had my first great public debate in Ottawa, I took one man into my confidence, a Deacon of this church, who was an eminent lawyer. He promised to be with me, and to second my resolution. I went to the Convention, and when I registered I found a telegram there from this man saying that he would be detained in Court, and would not be able to be present. I have always believed it was a diplomatic absence. Somebody had got after him. Anyhow, I was alone. One other man I had taken into my

confidence, but he would not see me. He dodged me in every way. So I was alone. I went back to my hotel, the Chateau Laurier. My wife and I had a little suite there, a bedroom and a sitting room. My wife had not attended the meeting. She had gone to bed. I came in quite quietly, and sat down with my Bible. I said, "Now, to-morrow is the day, and I haven't a soul to stand with me. I shall see what the Lord has to say about it." I did not open my Bible at random. I thought very likely I would find something in Paul's word to a young preacher, Timothy, that would be useful to me, so I turned to that epistle, to see what I could get. I turned over the pages — I won't say carelessly, but just observing the pages as they passed—until I came to the last chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy. And my eye lighted on a passage, which blazed like an electric light. This was it: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." That was all I needed.

I went into the next room, and I wakened my wife. She said, "What is the matter? Is there something wrong?" I said, "No; there is something very right." She said, "What is it?" "I have just had a message from the Lord. I want to read it to you, and I want you to get up, and help me in a thanksgiving service for the victory we shall have to-morrow." And I read this passage, and we knelt together and gave thanks to God. The next day there was the greatest manifestation of this mighty power of God I have ever witnessed. And God gave us the victory.

My dear friends, that is how He does. He comes to us in difficult circumstances, and sometimes when we have not specially asked—although I had asked Him on that occasion, I must say—and He identifies Himself in a new way. Now I did not intend to say anything of this—that is just by the way. That is just the walk that leads up to the treasure-house. But I could not help plucking a few flowers by the way.

### III.

IT IS ABOUT PETER I INTENDED TO SPEAK TO YOU. Now it must be for only a minute or two, for my time is gone. Peter answered and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Peter was never lacking in initiative. And he was not unbelieving in this case: he was agnostic. Do you know what an agnostic is? An agnostic is one who does not know. Agnosticism is know-nothingism. The agnostic does not say, "I do not believe": he says, "I don't know. It may be true, it may not be true. I do not know."

Now in respect to this particular experience, *Peter was agnostic: he was not-unbelieving*. It might be the Lord, and it might not. But he asked for some proof; as we shall see later, he had faith, but it was very little faith. So he said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water". He might almost have said, "Lord, help me to face these circumstances, and trample them under foot, and be master of the situation." He said, "Bid me come unto Thee, walking on the water that has so filled us all with fear." Do you ever do that? Face the thing that is terrifying. Say, "I won't be afraid." Two verses I often put together in my own thinking. I heard my father preach on the two texts at once. A

sermon on the progress of faith, and this was the first text: "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee." The second text was, "I will trust and not be afraid." Turn those two texts over in your mind. They are worth thinking of in juxtaposition and contrast.

Well, "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee"; and the Lord said, "Come." I verily believe that God does come to His believing children, in this day, miraculously. I believe He works in the lives of believers, miraculously. It will be greatly daring if I were to say it, and yet I will say it — I hope you won't misunderstand. I have seen in my own Christian experience the same supernaturalism in a thousand particulars, illustrative of the miracles of the Old Testament. "Really so?" Yes; really so. "Well, I don't know about that." I do! If you had written the Old Testament, you would have naturalized every element of supernaturalism in the Book. That is what men are doing to-day — explaining it away. But that record of supernaturalism was written by an inspired pen. It was written from the divine standpoint, and identified these events as divine interpositions. You and I lack the inspiration to write the record. But, blessed be God, we may have the joy of experiencing the supernatural, notwithstanding. And if you look back over your life I think you will find many instances in which you have walked on the water, circumstantially, I mean. You have trodden beneath your feet the very difficulties that filled you with terror. But when you leaned upon God, and He said, "Come", you have stepped out boldly walking on the water, to go to Jesus. Oh, you can walk on anything, when you are going to Jesus, and if you are going at His invitation: "The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." Of course!

Peter came down out of the ship, and walked on the water to go to Jesus. And I haven't any doubt as he got down out of the ship, when he saw that Figure, he walked with confidence on the water to go to Jesus. But just then perhaps the wind veered a little, and a great wave came over him. "What's that?" And he took his eyes off Jesus; and he saw the waves, and he began to sink. "I have set the Lord always before me," said the Psalmist, and "because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." If we keep the Lord always before us, and keep our eyes always upon Him, when He bids us come walking on the water to come to Him, I believe we shall arrive safely.

But Peter *began to sink*. Some of you perhaps have been like the man I have heard Bill Fraser tell about, who fell out of a skyscraper of twenty stories. As he passed the thirteenth storey some one was looking out of the window, and he said, "I am all right so far." Oh yes, we started well, walking on the waves to come to Jesus, but after a while we were disturbed, and suddenly the water ceased to support us, and we began to sink. We did not complete the victory.

Then here is another divine interposition: Peter cried out, saying, "Lord, save me." Have you noticed how short many of the effectual prayers of scripture are? Often only two or three words: "Lord, save me." Just then he had not time to pray a long prayer. I have before now wished that some other people were walking on the water, so that their prayer would be a swift ejaculation, so that they would not have time for a long prayer.

But now what I want to point out to you is this, that *in that sphere of doubt, when once we admit doubt to*

*our minds, we can conjure up all sorts of difficulties.* If you begin to doubt, you can imagine almost any kind of evil. I have a thick shrubbery at the foot of my garden. I have it floodlighted so that I can turn a switch, and it is all lighted up. But sometimes if it is warm enough, *and not too warm*, I like to sit out on the verandah, and put all the lights out, perhaps when the moon and stars are shining. I can see the lawn, and down there I can see that dark shrubbery. There is a little gap here, and a little gap there. Why I could people it with all the sprites imaginable! Who is there? What is there? I wonder what it is?

And so he walked on the water, and looked into the darkness, and he began to sink, and then he began to worry. "Oh, my, Oh, my!" I don't know but that Peter, who had had a lot of experience, thought he could see all the fish that were in the lake, and he was going down to meet them. Oh, doubt can create many hobgoblins.

But the Lord stretched forth His hand: Blessed is the man who can be content with the word of God. Blessed be God that He has compassion on our little faith, and *sometimes supplements the word of God with the hand of God*. Because Peter was not quite content with a word, the Lord laid His hand upon him. Have you not had that experience? I have—I am ashamed to say it, but I have. I have felt His hand touch me when I had allowed doubt to enter my mind.

The Lord *did not charge Peter with unbelief*. He knew Peter. But He said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" There was a gentleman who used to live over in the Westminster Hotel, a very remarkable man, a graduate of Edinburgh University. He built these planetaria, such as you see in New York and elsewhere, where you can sit and see the sky of all the world, the Southern Cross, and all the rest of it. But he had been a leader in the raising of big funds, a million dollars or so for the Salvation Army, and for the Gage Institute, and all that sort of thing. That had been his job. In talking about these ventures of faith—he was a Christian man—he said, "The big thing when you embark upon a thing of that sort, is to see that you don't let that little demon of fear get into the man that wears your suit of clothes." That was the way he put it. "Once you allow that," he said, "you are done." "Don't let him in. No matter how he knocks, don't let him in."

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Oh, let it be, dear friends, I don't know your particular case, but when once the Lord has interposed in these troubled lives of ours, and when He has identified Himself, saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid" — when you have His sure word of promise that He is with you, then let doubts be banished: do not dilute your faith with doubt. Take my two texts, "What time I am afraid I will trust", and keep on trusting until you are able to say, "I will trust, and not be afraid." May we all, through the comfort of the scriptures, have hope.

Let us pray:

Lord we thank Thee that Thou hast given us such abundant reason to trust Thee. Thou hast destroyed, indeed, by Thy sure word of promise the last vestige of any foundation upon which doubt can really rest. We do trust Thee. We do believe in Thee. We would this evening rejoice in Thee.

It may be someone is here to-night, who has had some trouble of long standing. It may be somebody has tried to walk on the water to go to Jesus; has managed it for a while, and then began to sink. Oh, help us all that, having received Thy help, we may receive Thee into the ship, as did these people, and worship Thee saying, "Thou art the Son of God," Amen.

### A WARNING! - AGAINST THE NEW "INTERPRETER'S BIBLE"

(The sinister companion to the RSV Bible, both sponsored and backed by the National (Federal) Council of Churches, an organization whose leaders are proved to be Socialistic, Pro-Communitic and Unitarian.)

By David Otis Fuller, D.D.

Wealthy St. Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

The New "Interpreter's Bible" is 12 Volumes Large, 10,000 pages and 8,000,000 words. A clear-thinking Christian editor has spoken the truth about this latest attack, "We are today witnessing the mightiest attack on Christianity that has been made since the Caesars. In view of that, all laboured effort to strike a middle-of-the-road position between Christianity and its enemies, is sickening."

As we investigated the 1,100 pages of Volume 1 of this "Interpreter's Bible" we found the words "myth", "legend", "folklore" constantly used in describing stories from the Old Testament.

The following are a few samples of the awful apostasy from and deep-seated hatred of, God's Holy, Infallible Word, the Bible:

**ON CREATION:** Vol. 1, p. 482, "The creation of man is invested with special solemnity. God first consults with divine beings other than himself, 'Let us make man . . . Hebrew religious thought was familiar with the idea of a heavenly host with whom God took counsel."

**On the FALL OF MAN:** Vol. 1, p. 501, "The story in this chapter (Gen. 3) of man's disobedience to God's command and of his expulsion from the garden to a life of toil is dependent upon an ancient myth which J (one of the unknown compilers of Genesis) drastically revised. A fragment of this myth is now preserved in vs. 22."

P. 502 " . . . intelligent people must get free from dogmatic definition of 'good' and 'evil' and above all, from obsessions with the notion of 'sin'.

There are those who like to think themselves intelligent and welcome that conclusion. And there are many others who, on a different ground, will join them in repudiating the story of 'the fall' of Adam, and the fall of the whole human race in him. They repudiate it not only because they consider it an unsubstantial myth, but also because they hold that the traditional theology which has been built upon it is full of error and distortion."

**ON THE FLOOD** Vol. 1, p. 536, "It is generally recognized that this story is ultimately based upon the Babylonian myth preserved in the Gilgamesh Epic. According to this the gods decided to send a flood upon the earth . . . A universal flood such as J2 describes, to say nothing of P's account, would of course be a physical impossibility . . . The myth of the Flood, it may be assumed, was, like the creation myth, ultimately carried to Palestine."

**ON ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE OF ISAAC:** Vol. 1, p. 642, "Here in the story of Abraham and Isaac there is imbedded the fact that once men not only practiced human sacrifice, but did it at what they thought was divine command. Suppose they did that now? Any man who thought of it, if his thoughts were detected, would be put in a mental hospital. Any man who actually carried it out would be convicted of murder and executed.

So the story of Abraham going out to sacrifice may seem either incredible or else profoundly disturbing to children in Sunday school or to adults who hear it read in church, unless they know what to sift out of it in order that the real truth may appear."

**CONCERNING SALVATION BY BLOOD:** Vol. 1, p. 917, "From the earliest records of primitive sacrifice man has been obsessed by the efficacy of innocent blood to save from disaster. Both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches have perpetuated this primitive tradition in all their ritual, in their hymns and sacred books. Realistically, shed blood is horrible beyond words . . ."

P. 918, "To Paul and Augustine, both men with cruel pasts, both men living among scenes of sacrificial cruelty, the slaying of the lamb could become the central picture of their faith . . . a satisfactory theory of atonement for murder by murder can be reached only by sophisticated and theological ruses unacceptable to fair minds today. We need a new statement of Christian doctrine which will discard outworn imagery . . ."

"The time has come when we can discard some of the imagery of blood which was entirely satisfactory to Paul and Augustine, as it was to Moses . . . and we can guard against evil in more rational ways than by painting our doorsteps with the blood of innocent lambs. For in the "fountain filled with blood" idea there is undoubtedly much of the mistakenly mystical justification and glorification of war."

**ON THE PERSON AND WORK OF OUR WONDERFUL SAVIOUR,** Vol. VII, p. 123, "A more naive attitude to nature (cf. Mark 11:23) as natural to him as it is strange to the modern man, may have led him to address the elements directly in implicit dependence upon his Father's will. It is much less certain that he stilled the storm, although the comment in the boat is most natural and can have been made on the spot."

**On JAIRUS DAUGHTER:** p. 124, "Little girl . . . arise." The narrative is ambiguous; one who concludes that the incident of the young man in Nain (Luke 7:11-17) was a case of premature burial, and that the facts behind the didactic drama of the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46) cannot be recovered, will take the view that the girl was roused from a state of coma.

**THE GADARENE DEMONIAK:** Vol VII, p. 712, " . . . such details as the parley with the demons (Mk. 5:9, 10) and the destruction of the herd of swine (vss. 11-16) are secondary and have the appearance of typical elaboration in folk tales . . . The notion that the legion of demons could enter the swine was popular superstition, no doubt; but it seems better to leave the story as it stands, as a folk tale current in a pagan neighborhood but a folk tale about Jesus and his restoration of a notorious and dangerous demoniac . . ."

In Mk. 6:48, 49, we are told twice Jesus was "walking upon the sea". Vol. VII, p. 128 interprets it as follows "When the disciples were driven back from Bethsaida, Jesus rejoined them. Wading through the surf he came upon them suddenly . . ."

**On the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST:** Vol. VII, p. 863, "Multitudes of Christians no longer look for the coming of Christ in any such literal fashion. The result has been that they have allowed the buoyancy to drop

out of their religion. Would it not be well to remember that the literal expectation was only the husk and not the kernel of the New Testament doctrine of the last things?"

On the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: Vol. VII, p. 914, "But Jesus breaks out of every man-made tomb. Now and then on the bulletin boards of post-offices we see pictured the face of a man who has escaped from jail with this warning, 'Dangerous man at large'. That is, in very truth, the message of the Resurrection. The most dangerous Man in the World is at large. Jesus Christ has broken jail."

Now that you have the FACTS, what are YOU, professing Christian, going to do about it?

REMEMBER THIS AND NEVER FORGET IT!—

THE SAME CROWD BACK OF THIS BLASPHEMOUS "INTERPRETER'S BIBLE".

... IS THE VERY SAME CROWD that would Stalinize and Sovietize America (the proof for that is overwhelming.

... IS THE VERY SAME CROWD that is back of the Revised Standard (per) Version of the Bible.

... IS THE VERY SAME CROWD with which thousands of professing Fundamentalists fraternize and fellowship in the apostate Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.; the American (Northern) Baptist Convention; the Methodist Episcopal Church, etc. . . .

Lincoln, our greatest President, said: "To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."

Will you maintain a cowardly silence while this blasphemy spues from the synagogue of Satan?

OR—As a born again Protestant, will you protest this foul flood of hate against Almighty God and His lovely Son, the eternal Christ of God?

Now—Is the time to stand and be counted for Christ.  
NOW—is the hour of Opportunity.

THIS—is YOUR hour! What will be your answer?

LET GOD SPEAK THROUGH HIS WORD  
TO YOU AND ME!

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words make merchandise of you (or 'exploit' you too with their bogus arguments); whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

But these as natural brute beasts (or, natural animals without reason) made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you.

For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." II Peter 2:1-3, 12, 13, 18, 21, 22.

### BOOK REVIEW

REVISED VERSION OR REVISED BIBLE? A Critique of the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament (1952) by Dr. Oswald T. Allis. Published by The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia. Paper cover, 60 pages; 60 cents in U.S.A.

Many people may wonder why such a storm of protest has been raised by Evangelical leaders on the occasion of the publishing of a new version of the Bible, since ordinarily all lovers of the Bible rejoice to see the Word of God being given more prominence and wider distribution. Dr. Allis points out the reason and the inevitability of such a protest, for this new revision of the Scriptures is in reality a revised Bible, containing alterations and comments which do not represent, but rather definitely misrepresent the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Scriptures and undermine the authority of the Word of God.

With clear and forceful reasoning, the author, an honoured and eminent Conservative scholar in the field of the Old Testament, states his case. He points out that the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament which we have to-day is practically identical with that of the second century A.D., and that our Saviour Himself accepted these Scriptures as the Word of God. Those responsible for the Revised Standard Version display a different attitude entirely and make their own changes in the Text. Far from being faithful translators, they depart from the standard of the Authorized Version of 1611, the King James Version, so that this new Version "is not merely a modern translation but a modernist translation."

The numerous foot-notes in the Revised Standard Version betray the modernistic tendencies of the Committee of Revisers. Dr. Allis analyses the more important of these notes, proving that many of them are "inadequate, unfair, unintentional"; that others make the Hebrew absurd, and that many changes are entirely "unindicated and unexplained" and rob the passages of their most precious meaning. Of particular interest to those who honour the Word of God is the marginal note relative to the translation of Isaiah 7:14, "Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son." This note is an evidence of the assault upon the historic position of the Evangelical church with regard to the Virgin Birth of our Lord.

Under the guise of modernizing the English of the Authorized Version, the revisers have made an attempt "to modernize the Biblical style which the Authorized Version so admirably reproduced." The use of "you,

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

We should be greatly helped if our GOSPEL WITNESS readers would advise us, not less than a week in advance, of their change of address, when they anticipate moving. Also please give us the old address, so that we may quickly locate your name.

your" and such forms; rather than the more reverent "thou, thee, thy" is particularly objectionable in itself, but more so in view of the statement of Dean Weigle, as quoted by Dr. Allis: "After two years of debate and experiment it was decided to abandon these forms and to follow modern usage, except in the case of language addressed to God". The doctrine of the Deity of Christ is thus denied in their translation of the confession of Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

In conclusion, Dr. Allis points out that this new version "treats the Old Testament with a freedom which is incompatible with that high regard for its trustworthiness and divine authority, which is so marked a feature of the revision of 1611. This is the great reason that this "revision", however excellent it may be in some other respects, cannot be satisfactory to Bible-believing Christians and cannot be accepted by them as a "standard" version. A version to be acceptable to them must tell them as accurately as possible what the Bible says and not what some consensus of scholars, who however learned are after all mere mortals like themselves, think it ought to say."

Dr. Allis, as a thorough, reverent student of the Scriptures, speaks with authority, and all who believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God will rejoice in his brochure, *Revised Version or Revised Bible?* — a concise, yet adequate criticism of the new *Revised Standard Version* of the Old Testament.

—DR. O. L. CLARK

### THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

In the present day it is the fashion to bring many and serious accusations against our loved Bible, the Authorized Version, or King James version as it is sometimes called. These charges of inaccuracy prove upon examination to be in no way as terrible as they are made to sound. The translators of those days certainly did not have before them the vast number of manuscripts which are available to-day, but we cannot blame them for that, but should rather be grateful to God that they were able to produce such excellent results from such slender sources. There can be no doubt that for the production of our English Bible there was exercised the highest scholarship of an age when classical erudition was at its best. Moreover, the following notes will indicate with what scrupulous care the work was done, and whatever the motives were which prompted King James to sponsor and encourage the work there can be no doubt that the translators themselves brought every sanctified qualification they had to bear upon this holy task. King James, who had taken up the suggestion with enthusiasm saw that men of the highest qualifications were chosen to carry out the work. Forty-seven persons were appointed and divided into six companies, and to each company was assigned a different portion of the Scriptures together with the Apocrypha. Three companies undertook the work of the Old Testament, two companies the New, and one company the Apocrypha. Each one of those chosen was required to make his own translation of the portion allotted to the company to which he was attached. Then the company would hold meetings at intervals in order to compare the translation work and draw up an agreed translation from the individual manuscripts.

After an entire book had been thus agreed it was sent

round to the other companies to be "considered of seriously and judiciously". These companies made notes of their reviews and criticisms, and the book after passing through the hands of all the companies was sent back to the translating body who proceeded to examine and study the criticisms. If however, agreement could not be reached reference was made to a select committee who constituted the final revisers.

This work occupied about three years, and the carefulness with which the translation was made evidenced the realization by both promoter and workers of the need for the greatest accuracy.

In the reproduction of the Word of God to-day it is also agreed that the greatest accuracy and uniformity is needful in the production and circulation of millions of Bibles and New Testaments. So much is this so that it is now very rare to find even a misprint in the vast range of sizes and styles of Bibles published.

Unhappily it was not always so, for in the past typographical errors were very common, and strange and various were the renderings of some paragraphs in the Word of God. Moreover there was one instance in which a printer was fined £300 for issuing an edition containing a serious misprint.

Perhaps the most extraordinary misprints were those in the Bibles issued by a Mrs. Anderson in Scotland, between 1676 and 1711. This Mrs. Anderson had the exclusive right of printing Bibles for Scotland at that time, and Edgar, in his *Bibles for England* quotes the following strange specimen issued in 1705:

"Whysoulditbethoug tathingincredible wtyou, yt God should raise the dead?"

We may indeed be thankful that such things are not perpetrated to-day.

—*The Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record*

### SABBATH VIEWS OF HEAVEN

When a gentleman was inspecting a house in Newcastle, with a view to buying it as a residence, the landlord took him to the upper window, expatiated on the extensive prospect, and added, "You can see Durham Cathedral from this window on a Sunday." "Why on Sunday above any other day?" inquired our friend, with some degree of surprise. The reply was conclusive enough. "Because on that day there is no smoke from those tall chimneys." Blessed is the Sabbath to us when the earth-smoke of care and turmoil no longer beclouds our view; then can our souls full often behold the goodly land, and the city of the New Jerusalem. —SPURGEON

### BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

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

*The Gospel Witness*

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

### PATIENCE IN RETREAT

Patience is hard, sometimes. Whilst I am climbing the mountains, passing through the wilderness, daring dangers, I feel comparatively quiet, or even glad. But to sit down when the angel tells me to sit, and not to stir till he comes back again — who can do it?

There are lines of retreat in every great life, when Christ must be driven into Egypt, when the prophet must be banished into solitude, when John the Baptist must be in the desert eating locusts and wild honey, when Saul of Tarsus must be driven off into Arabia — times when "in patience we must possess our souls." But an asylum need not be a tomb, retreat need not be extinction. Make the best of your leisure. You want to be at the front, instead of that you have been banished to the rear. It is for a wise purpose. Gather strength, let the brain sleep, yield yourself to the spirit of the quietness of God, and after what appears to be wasted time or unprofitable waiting, there shall come an inspiration into thy soul that shall make thee strong and fearless, and the banished one shall become the centre of nations.—PARKER.

### THE GOSPEL WITNESS ON THE MISSION FIELD

Baptist Mission,  
West Africa.  
Sept. 1, 1953.

Dear Dr. Shields:

From the jungles of Africa comes this message from one who has been greatly blessed by your printed messages. I want to say a special "Amen" to your wonderful thoughts on "The Fragments That Remain". As a young missionary of only seven years' experience in Africa I have feasted countless times on His "handfuls of purpose" in the "fragments that remain". God bless you abundantly in that portion of His desert.

I have never met you, Dr. Shields, but I feel as if I had come to know you personally in my college days under the teaching of the late Dr. Hooper, who was indeed a great admirer of yours. You were often quoted in our classes. It was not, however, until I came to the mission field that one of our girls from Canada gave me some of her copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS to read. She said the messages had been such a blessing to her and asked if I would like to share them. — and I are now parted by many hundreds of miles in Africa, but occasionally I still get to read a GOSPEL WITNESS from her subscription. Its messages always make me stronger.

May our dear Heavenly Father continue to bless others through you; and as you remember in prayer the Lord's messengers the world around do pray that we might be used in this "desert place" in the jungles of the Cameroons for the salvation of these thousands lost in darkness.

In Him,

### SEMINARY RE-OPENING

Prospective students as well as present students of Toronto Baptist Seminary are reminded that the 1953-54 session of the Seminary will commence on Monday, September 28th. Registration will commence at half-past two on that date, and classes will be resumed on Tuesday, September 29th.

We are looking forward to the coming of a French student-professor, Mr. Samuel Pourret.

—O.L.C.

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 Fourth Quarter Lesson 1 October 4, 1953

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

### GIDEON

Lesson Text: Judges 6:36-40; 7:11-22.

Golden Text: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."—2 Corinthians 10:4.

I. Gideon called: Judges 6:36-40.

Weakness on the part of Israel was usually the result of wickedness. This time the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Midianites (verses 1-6). The Midianites and their accomplices the Amalekites proved to be hard and cruel taskmasters, depriving the Israelites not only of their freedom, but also of their food, their possessions and their lands.

The Midianites were a wandering tribe, the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham (Gen. 25: 1, 2). We read of their connections with Joseph (Gen. 37:28) and with Moses (Exod. 2:15, 21; Acts 7:29). The Amalekites were shepherds, living in the region between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea. They resisted the Israelites at various times in their history (Exod. 17:8-13; Numb. 15:45; Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Sam. 14:48; 15:23; 30:18).

Even in that dark and wicked time the Lord raised up a prophet to interpret the disaster and to call the people to repentance (Acts 7:18-20). Gideon was the son of Joash, a descendant of Abiether, the grandson of Manasseh (1 Chron. 7:18). To human eyes Gideon seemed an unlikely choice for a champion of Israel, yet God had called him just as he was — fearful, perplexed, discouraged, of low estate and weak faith. We never know when the Lord will lay His hand upon the scholar who seems to us most insignificant and unpromising.

Notwithstanding the threats of the combined forces of the Midianites and Amalekites who were arrayed against him, Gideon was made strong in the Lord when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (verse 34; Judg. 3:10; 1 Sam. 16:13).

The request for a sign is not always an indication of strong faith, for we are to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:7). Yet, God deals patiently and tenderly with His children, making allowance for their weaknesses (Psa. 103:13, 14). Gideon wished to be certain that the Lord had actually called him to be the deliverer of Israel. Signs are not given to satisfy curiosity (Matt. 16:4), but to strengthen faith (Gen. 15:7-18; 24:13, 14; 2 Kings 20:8-11).

II. Gideon Strengthened: Judges 7:11-15.

The Lord, Who had laid His hand upon the leader, prepared the people also. The army must be reduced till only the three hundred devoted ones remained (Judg. 7:1-7). All honour belongs to God; it must be made evident to Israel that the coming victory would be accomplished by Divine grace, the people being helpless.

The host of Midian lay beneath Gideon in the valley, not merely physically, but also metaphorically. The battle was, as good as won, for the Lord had given Gideon His sure word of promise (Exod. 14:13, 14; Judg. 3:28, 7:9; 2 Chron. 20:17; 1 John 5:4, 5).

The Lord did not wait for Gideon to ask for a sign, as on the occasion of his call (Judg. 6:36-40), but offered to prove to him that victory was certain (Isa. 7:14). He was to visit the enemy's camp secretly that night, that he might afterwards be strengthened (1 Sam. 14:8-12). But he was first shown the force of the foe, their great numbers and superior equipment (Numb. 13:33; Deut. 9:1, 2; Josh. 11:4), in order that he might realize that victory must come from the Lord (Psa. 33:16-22; 47:1-3; 55:18; 2 Cor. 3:5).

As the strength of the enemy ministered to Gideon's humility, so did their apparent weakness contribute to his confidence. He derived comfort from their discomfiture, knowing that the one who is defeated in spirit is already conquered (Prov. 18:14). On the other hand, those who trust in the Lord are invincible (Psa. 46; Rom. 8; 37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 3:16; Phil. 4:13). The Midianite's words even supplied Gideon with an appropriate battle cry, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon" (verses 14, 18).



### III. Gideon Victorious: Judges 7:16-22.

The assurance of victory from the Lord did not preclude Gideon from using strategy (Neh. 4:9). Prayer and works must be inseparable companions. The three hundred men were divided into companies and stationed on the heights overlooking the valley where the enemy were stationed, to make it seem to the enemy as though the Israelites were encircling them with a multitude of soldiers. The blare of the trumpets, echoing and re-echoing on the hill, and also the sudden glare of the torches would give the same impression.

Gideon dared to say to his men, "Look on me and do likewise," because he himself was following the Lord. Every faithful parent, teacher and Christian worker should be able to say the same (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6). But whether we give such a command or not, pupils are liable to do so of their own accord.

The organization of business men called Gideons have adopted the name of this judge, and they use a torch within a pitcher as their insignia. The trumpet, pitcher and lamp are all used in Scripture as symbols of Christian testimony. As the trumpet was used to summon people to worship or to war, it stands for a clear, strong witness to the truth of God (Numb. 10:1-10; Isa. 58:1; 1 Cor. 14:7, 8; Rev. 1:10, 11; 4:1). The earthen pitcher was fragile, and was of no value except as it protected the light and enabled it to shine forth (Jer. 18:6; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:20, 21). The lamp or torch represents the truth as light, which will dispel the darkness of sin, ignorance and death (John 1:3-5, 9, 10; 8:12; 12:46). The Christian is to be the lampstand, the vehicle by which the light which God supplies may shine forth in the world. (Zech. 4:1-6; Matt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15, 16; Rev. 2:1, 5).

Every man stood in his own place (Neh. 3:28). Such co-operation saves the church from much trouble arising from pride and jealousy (1 Cor. 1:10, 11; Heb. 12:15). Every member of the body of Christ has a unique function to fulfill (1 Cor. 12:4-8, 12-31).

God will ultimately put to confusion all the enemies of His people, as He did the Midianites (1 Sam. 14:20; Psa. 83:9-18; Isa. 9:2-4; 10:24-27). So completely were the Midianites crushed that they were almost exterminated (Judg. 8:1-3; 12:1).

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Sept. 28—Israel in Bondage	Judges 6-1-10
Sept. 29—Gideon Called	Judges 6:11-24
Sept. 30—Gideon's Apprenticeship	Judges 6:25-32
October 1—Gideon's Army	Judges 7:1-10
October 2—The Jealousy of Ephraim	Judges 7:23-8:3
October 3—Gideon's Victories	Judges 8:4-21
October 4—Gideon's Death	Judges 8:22-32

#### "THEY SAT DOWN AT THY FEET"

"Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet."

—Deuteronomy 33:3.

**M**OSESES, the great prophet and captain of Israel, was soon to relinquish his earthly duties. As a fitting climax to his noble service, the Lord commissioned him to pronounce a benediction upon the people, as they were marshalled before him, tribe by tribe, in the plain over against the Red Sea on the border of the Promised Land. To each of the tribes he spoke in fitting manner, prophesying prosperity to one, security to another, fruitfulness to another, as he mingled prophecy with warning.

Before addressing the individual tribes, Moses in a vision saw the whole multitude as compassed by the goodness and power of Jehovah. The Shepherd of Israel had revealed Himself as a God of love, justice and mercy; He had cherished, shielded, guided and empowered them. Consequently, the children of Israel had nothing to fear. Enclosed, as it were, within the mighty hand of God, they might rest contented there. The scene changes, and the aged prophet, "whom the Lord knew face to face," beholds Israel as though sitting at the feet of her beloved Lord.

In ancient times the conquerors were represented as giant figures, standing upright with one foot placed upon the neck of the prostrate form of the vanquished one. This symbolism is used in Scripture to describe the attitude of the conquered to the conqueror; the victim is at the feet of the victor. "He hath put all things under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:27); "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). This, then, is the attitude of *submission*; the vanquished at the feet of his conqueror or the subject at the feet of the monarch. The children of Israel were seen sitting at the feet of Jehovah, remaining obedient to the Lord and entirely submissive to Him. John the Beloved Disciple fell at the feet of the Christ Who appeared to him in glory (Rev. 1:17), but was prevented from doing homage to the angel who brought to him that revelation (Rev. 19:10). All glory belongs to the Lord.

The slaves were represented as sitting at the feet of their masters in the attitude of *humility*. We are enjoined, therefore, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He might exalt us in due time (1 Pet. 5:6). The Israelites should ever have remained in this position of humility, realizing their own weakness and insufficiency. Christ our Saviour set the example of humility, for He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant . . . And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:7-10). The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, exhorts us to follow the Saviour in His humility: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus".

The subject and the servant, but also the suppliant will be found sitting at the feet of his superior. Queen Esther in all earnestness "spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite" (Esther 8:3). Thus, God's people were seen in the vision of Moses to be sitting at His feet in the attitude of *supplication*. It was proper that they should beseech Him to give them a new heart, that they might be inclined to keep His commandments. Similarly, as Mary in her sorrow came to the place where Jesus the Saviour was standing, she fell down at His feet (John 11:32).

On a former occasion, as Christ the Saviour graced the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, Mary was found sitting at the feet of Christ, hearing His word (Luke 10:39). Among the Jews it was the custom of the teachers to sit down as they taught the pupils at their feet. As a youth of twelve years, Christ the Saviour was found "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). The Apostle Paul, in describing his life as a Pharisee, records the fact that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the noted scholar (Acts 22:3). This, then, is the attitude for *instruction*. If only the children of Israel had been willing to remain at the feet of their Lord and Master, all would have been well. But, all too quickly they abandoned the position of submission, humility, supplication and instruction; their history is a long record of rebellion, pride, independence and stubbornness. Let us profit by their mistakes, and let us ever be found sitting at the feet of our Lord.

—O.L.C.

## THE GREAT CONTENTION IN TWO VOLUMES

The Story of THE GREAT CONTENTION has been completed. The type has been preserved, and is standing, and we intend to issue the whole story in volume form. We believe we can compress the 38 chapters into two volumes. What the cost will be, we cannot yet say. After it is all put into page form, and the size and number of the volumes, has been determined, it will be necessary then to make an index, which cannot be done until it is all paged. This will take a considerable time. But when it is finished it will be an historical record which will be of great value, not only to those who agree with us, but to those who dissent from our position.

In order that we may have some idea of what number of volumes we shall publish, we append to this notice, a reply form, in which we ask our readers to let us know whether or not they will be interested in obtaining these volumes when they are published.

### REPLY FORM

**THE GOSPEL WITNESS**  
130 Gerrard St. East,  
Toronto 2, Canada.

Without obligation to purchase them, the undersigned informs *THE GOSPEL WITNESS* that he/she is interested in the volumes of *The Great Contention*. But before giving an order he/she desires to know what they will cost.

The undersigned would appreciate information on this matter when it is available.

**NAME:**

(Rev.), (Mr.), (Mrs.)

(Miss) .....

**ADDRESS:** .....

**Denomination** .....