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"Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind"

WE SHALL take wide liberty respecting the text which forms our caption. There are some things we ought never to forget. The Psalmist exhorted his soul, "Forget not all his benefits". It was charged against Israel that "they soon forgot his works". It is evident from the Scriptures that many of the greatest saints derived inspiration from the memory of God's former goodness: "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice"; "Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications"; "We love him because he first loved us". There are scores, hundreds perhaps, of scriptures of the same purport. Therefore let us not forget the goodness and mercy which followed us all the days of 1952.

Some who read these lines were bereaved during the past year, and because of that some must now walk alone. Let us not forget the virtues of our departed friends. Let us cherish the memory of everything about them that was good; but as to your bereavement, your sorrow, your loneliness, try to forget it. God still lives, and will go with you through the New Year:

Go bury thy sorrow, the world hath its share,
Go, bury it deeply, go, hide it with care;
Go think of it calmly, when curtained by night;
Go tell it to Jesus, and all will be right,

Go tell it to Jesus, He knoweth thy grief;
Go tell it to Jesus, He'll send thee relief;
Go gather the sunshine He sheds on the way;
He'll lighten thy burden—go, weary one, pray.

Hearts growing a-weary with heavier woe
Now droop 'mid the darkness—go, comfort them, go!
Go bury thy sorrow, let others be blest;
Go give them the sunshine, tell Jesus the rest.

But there are sorrows more poignant than the pangs of death. There are pains no opiate can assuage. There are griefs that are akin to despair. There are some who have had to bury their hopes, their fondest anticipations, the recollection of their noblest dreams; for there are some who have loved ones who are worse than dead, and they find themselves wrapped around with a cloud in

which, for the time at least, they can discern no silver lining.

But it is not healthy to dwell upon these things. Mayhap by the sovereign mercy of God there may come some mitigation of your griefs in years that lie ahead. But in the meantime seek help of God to forget the things that are behind. It may be the past year has been marked by the smart of someone's ingratitude, by the bleeding wound of someone's betrayal. Shall we make our lives miserable by remembering the worldliness of Demas, and his consequent forsaking? Shall we mourn over the Ananiases and Sapphiras we have met? Shall we worry ourselves by remembering the Hymenaeuses, the Alexanders, and the outright Iscariots? Let us try to forget them. None of the Apostles attended the funeral of Judas Iscariot, if he had one.

Memory to this writer has long been like a vast picture gallery, where the portraits of innumerable saints, for which we give thanks upon every remembrance of them, are hung; and the memory of them has inspired and refreshed us ten thousand times.

And there were other pictures. We thought highly of them and found delight in contemplation of what we thought they were. Demas, and Ananias, and Sapphira, and Hymenaeus, and Alexander, and Iscariot were among them. But we have had to take their portraits down and cast them as rubbish to the void, and learn to go on without them. It is remarkable how grace stoops to fill the void thus created. But be it remembered that these things must be removed from our vision. It is easy to shut out the sun with something that is very small; and, suffering from wounds that bleed within, it is sometimes difficult to see clearly. But let us go on. Among God's elect we shall find a multitude of choice spirits who will outshine any of those whom we must leave behind. The New Year will bring us new friends, new opportunities for service, new experiences of the faithfulness and fellowship of God, new successes, new victories, new coronations!

Years ago one Saturday night we scribbled some verses on the back of an envelope. They were published,

and we have had not a few testimonies to their helpfulness. Therefore, we print them again as a New Year's motto:

I MUST GO ON

I must go on, my hand is put unto the plough
The wind blows cold, the sluggard leaves the sod unturned,
Nor cares that in the time of harvest he must beg;
But I have seen a Ploughman spite of wind and snow
Plough an unbending furrow to the end,
And ceaseless in His toil break up the fallow ground,
And through the mist and murk of unpropitious days
Lay up in store the summer's golden harvest joy.
That Ploughman is the Master of my soul;
Therefore, in spite of storm and stress
I must go on.

I must fight on, I have in conscience drawn the sword,
The fight is hard, the armed Ephraimites may flee
And fill the streets of Gath and Askelon with mirth;
But I have seen a Warrior take the field alone,
Unsheath His sword against infernal foes,
And with undaunted soul cut through the serried ranks,
And though forsaken of the men He came to save
Pour out His blood to win a victor's crown.
That Warrior is the Captain of my soul,
And I, though I should stand alone, like Him
I must fight on.

And I must love, my heart no longer is my own;
The world allures and fickle hearts may turn aside,
Nor care though ashes mark the place of yester's flame;
But I have seen a Lover spite of scorn and hate,
Love through an agony of blood and tears,
And ceaseless in His love for e'en His enemies
Lay down His life forsaken of the earth and sky,
And rising win a bride and ring the marriage bells;
That Lover is the Lover of my soul,
And I unto the endless end like Him—
I, too, must love.

R.C. PRELATE CALLS FOR ANOTHER CAMPAIGN OF PERSECUTION

THE daily press prints the following seasonal greetings from a Spanish Cardinal on the day after Christmas. Even the communists in Korea ordered a cease-fire in celebration of Christmas, but the return of the season when the angels sang their messages of peace on earth is merely an occasion for the Spanish Cardinal to rally his medieval reactionary bigots to a fresh onslaught against the handful of harassed and sorely tried Protestants in Spain.

Spanish Cardinal Urges Crusade Against Protestants

Seville, Spain, Dec. 26 (AP).—Pedro Cardinal Segura called to-day for a "grand crusade" against Protestants whom he accused of waging a major propaganda campaign throughout Spain.

The fiery archbishop of Seville said he had received reports from all over the country of anti-Catholic pamphlets being distributed by Protestants, which "are combating the authority of the Pope and the episcopacy."

"They (the Protestants) are engendering suspicion against Catholic priests," Segura declared. "They are combating . . . Catholic priests and calumniating them. They are combating the fundamental dogmas of our faith, such as the doctrine of the Eucharist and the nature of the Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church."

In the past, similar outbursts of intolerance on the part of the Spanish Cardinal have been the signal for a renewal of mob violence and organized terrorism against a courageous handful of Spaniards who dare to believe that true religion is a matter for the individual conscience that cannot be dictated by Franco and his ecclesiastical supporters. We have no doubt that in a few weeks we shall read again of other acts of terror and persecution in Spain.

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and

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

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The particular attention of the Canadian and American Knights of Columbus is called to the utterance of their church's representative in Spain. In America these doughty papal knights tell us that the Church of Rome loves liberty and grants tolerance to those who oppose her. In Spain, the Cardinal asserts the true Romanist doctrine, for use where Rome is supreme, that liberty is an evil thing, that no one may be permitted to criticize the Church of the popes or even to give out Gospel literature or the Word of God.—W.S.W.

WHAT SIN REALLY AIMS TO DO

Every sin is a kind of cursing God in the heart; an aim at the destruction of the being of God; not actually, but virtually; not in the intention of every sinner, but in the nature of every sin. That affection which excites a man to break His law, would excite him to annihilate his being if it were in his power. A man in every sin aims to set up his own will as his rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions against the will and glory of God; and could a sinner attain his end, God would be destroyed.—STEPHEN CHARNOCK

GREAT NEW YEAR'S MORNING MEETING

for Prayer and Fellowship

10.30 a.m.

An Institution in Jarvis Street

for About 100 Years

Everybody Invited

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A Prayer for the Old Year and the New

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, on a Sunday Evening
(Stenographically Reported)

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Psalm 51:7.

Prayer before the Sermon

We draw near to Thee, O Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ. For the multitude of Thy mercies, for Thine immeasurable love, we give Thee thanks. We thank Thee for all Thou hast shown us of Thy grace during the year now closing. We bless Thee for many in Thy presence who, during the year, have come to know Thee as their Saviour, who will greet the new year as they did not greet the beginning of this year, in company with Jesus Christ.

Every day Thou hast been with us, and Thy promise that Thou wouldst be with us all the days has been fulfilled to us for another year. Every good gift and every perfect gift which has been received has come from Thee. We confess our unworthiness, our utter sinfulness, and acknowledge that it is all of Thy mercy that we are not consumed. But we give Thee thanks that Thou hast blessed us through another year, and we would bow in Thy presence this evening as men and women, boys and girls, who need Thy grace for the year to come. We want to be better men and better women. We desire more worthily to represent Thee in a world that so urgently needs Christ. Fulfil to us Thy promises in still larger measure. May we receive power by the Holy Ghost's coming upon us, that we may be witnesses unto Thee here, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

We praise Thee for Thy grace to us as a church. Thou hast been with us. Thou hast sustained the enterprises which Thou hast entrusted to us. And Thou hast given us innumerable tokens of Thy favour. Thou hast manifested Thy presence again and again. We thank Thee for the prospect of the future, for Thy resources are inexhaustible. Thou wilt be the same in the year to come as Thou hast been during the year now closing.

We pray that Thy benediction may rest upon every member of this congregation and upon every one of our readers. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to draw nigh to us all to-night. Make us sensible of Thy nearness. Be not to us as a God Who is afar off, but as One Who is nigh. Let Thy grace abound toward every one of us. Bless the homes into which this message will penetrate this evening. Wherever there are people in trouble, may the comfort of the Holy Ghost be vouchsafed. Where there are any without Christ, may salvation come to that house. Bless the unconverted fathers and mothers, and children, and friends and neighbours. Wherever people hear the message of the hour, O Lord, may the power of Thy Spirit be felt. May the wind that bloweth where it listeth carry the message of the gospel to countless thousands who need it.

We thank Thee for this word from within the walls of a penitentiary. Bless, we beseech Thee, that dear man. We know nothing of his experiences in the past, but we pray that Thou wilt restore to him the years the locust hath eaten. Help him to rejoice in God his Saviour, and even there to bear witness to His saving power; and make him, in the years to come, when he shall have regained his liberty, to be a mighty power for good. There may be others whom we do not know who hear in their prison-cells. We pray for a like blessing for every one of them, and for those in hospitals, sanitarium, and other institutions, where this message shall reach. We beseech Thee, let Thy blessing be given to them also.

Now in this service this wet night, when many who are ordinarily present, are detained, make bare Thine arm. We

thank Thee that Thou art never absent from the assemblies of the saints. Thou art sovereign of all circumstances, of all conditions; therefore we beseech Thee to manifest Thy grace in this place this evening. Similarly would we pray for every company of believing people, for every gospel messenger, for every witness for the cross in this land, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. May the blessing of the Lord be upon us all.

Bless the nation, and the rulers of all nations. Give us peace, if it please Thee, in our time, O Lord. Give wisdom to those who rule over us, and if it please Thee visit us, not so much with temporal prosperity, though this we desire, but visit us with a Heaven-sent revival that will restore to the nations the confidence which these latter years have destroyed. Hasten the time when Thou shalt come Thyself and take to Thyself Thy great power and reign. This blessed hope we cherish, and for the appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ we long. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we beseech Thee. Meanwhile, keep us true to Thee, and bless us now for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

I SUPPOSE we shall follow our usual practice as this day draws to a close, and as we greet the New Year, we shall do as we have done many times before, and wish each other a happy new year. I would not make light of that practice. I think it does us good to think of other people, and to express such kindly sentiments respecting others' welfare. But how impotent we all are to make our wishes effective! If only we could really make our friends happy by wishing them a happy new year! And how happy we ourselves should be in thus communicating happiness to others! But notwithstanding our good wishes there will be those perhaps to whom sorrow and difficulties will come; for the next year will have its shadows, as this year has had. And I thought it would be a good thing if we could learn how to send a wish somewhere that would be effective for ourselves, and for others too.

I think the text I have read is a most appropriate prayer for the closing of the year. There is not one of us who does not need to breathe just such a prayer as this, who does not need to pray after this fashion, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." If we all thus pray, and receive—as we shall—the divine answer to our prayers, then we may, in very truth, have a happy new year; and have new experiences, all of us, of the grace of God.

This is very, very simple. Nothing could be simpler. Have you noticed how frequently in the Word of God repentance and faith are joined? I fear we exhort one another very often to believe, when we ought to be equally faithful in exhorting others to repentance. There can be no true faith without repentance. Repentance is

an element in faith, and only as we repent of our sins can we receive forgiveness for them.

In this simple prayer you have the request of a penitent heart, someone who feels his need of cleansing. He says, "Wash me." There is a confession of faith involved in the prayer, for said he, "If God shall wash me I shall be whiter than snow."

Let us look at those two words, first of all, and then at some of their implications.

I.

First, then, THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT: "Wash me." It was thus the broken-hearted David prayed. He thus prayed because he had some consciousness of his need of cleansing. He would never have prayed that he might be washed had he not first of all been convinced that he needed to be washed.

The difficulty sometimes is to persuade people that they need to be washed. The Lord has as much trouble with His children in that respect as some human parents have with theirs. I do not know why it should be so, but there are children who seem very much afraid of soap and water, and seem not to know how useful they are, and how indispensable to cleanliness and health. There are also grown-up people who have not learned their need of cleansing. I suppose if you were to suggest to some fine gentlemen this evening who hears me, that his personal appearance would be greatly improved if he were to give a little more attention to the business of washing, he would be highly offended.

And yet that is the task, if I may so say, of the Spirit of God always, to convince men of their need of cleansing. You remember when Jesus Christ laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash His disciples' feet, when He came to Peter, Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Not that he did not feel his need of it, but because he felt unworthy of the condescension involved in the proposal. But how many there are who abhor the necessity of washing! The religion of the day fails to recognize that fundamental necessity that we need, above everything else, to be washed, and to be made clean in the sight of God.

How may we know our need? Only by the light of God's Spirit, through the Word, only as we look into this mirror which is described as "the perfect law of liberty". The man who will really, sincerely, examine himself in the light of this Book will there behold the reflection of his own character; he will be as a man who beholdeth his natural face in a glass. And he will see his need of cleansing.

That is my exhortation to you, my friends, here and elsewhere this evening, ere this year shall close. Will you look back upon its record, upon your record in respect to this year, and see if it be not true that you need to be washed; especially if you have never yet come to Christ, if you have never received the cleansing of His precious blood, if you are in a state of nature, with all your sins upon you? There is nothing you need so much as to be washed and made clean.

We shall never learn our shortcomings by measuring ourselves by earthly standards. We must bring ourselves into the light which shines from heaven, if we would learn our need of cleansing.

This is a prayer which takes precedence in the Psalmist's thought of all other desires. Suppose you could have your way to-night, suppose you were free to go to

any storehouse, to any great departmental store, to one of our great banks, to go anywhere you like and make any request that was expressive of your heart's desire, with the assurance that your request would be granted, what prayer would you offer? For what would you ask?

I recall the story of a number of men coming into London from the trenches during the Great War. They were loaded down with their haversacks, rifles, and all the rest of it, steel helmets and all. They were tired from their long journey, and they were hungry as well. In greeting them at the station somebody said to one of them, "What shall we do for you first? Is it a good meal you want?" "No", said the weary soldier, "let me go somewhere where I can bathe and make myself clean. I can wait for food until afterward." What he really said was, "Wash me. I have been a long time in the trenches, I have come to loathe myself. I am conscious of my uncleanness, and I want a fountain somewhere in which I can wash."

Have you ever been brought there? Sometimes we dream our dreams of what we would do if we were able to command the resources of great wealth. We have all built our castles, and formulated plans for great enterprises; but would it not be well for us to think of our standing before God? I suppose there are people this day who would like to have a new suit of clothes for the new year! I know we used to be able to say in this place, "We want some clothes for the poor", and be certain of getting them. But now from very many we receive the reply, "I am poor myself, and I am wearing all the clothes I have." People are wearing their old clothes. How people like to make themselves presentable before each other! I say, it would be well for us to think of our standing before God, of how we appear before Him; and then to pray that we may be so washed that we may not be ashamed in His presence.

A good many years ago I was one day visiting in the country. I was invited to a certain home to tea—or dinner, I forget which it was. The home was that of a comparatively young man and his wife, and they had a little girl. The lady invited her family upon this occasion to meet the preacher. I do not know how many sisters she had, but they were all there. When I went in they were seated around the room, and presently the little girl, Mary, came in. She went up to one of her aunts and said, "Aunt Allie, what have you got that dress on for?" They tried to quiet her, but she was not to be put off. She said, "You have on your very best dress." Then she looked around at the others. "Aunt Mary, what have you got your best dress on for?" And finally stepping out into the centre of the floor she said, "You all look as though you were suspecting company." It is sometimes dangerous to let little children talk! They were expecting company, and I suppose they had prepared for the reception of the company.

How vastly more important it is that we ask ourselves, How are we to appear before God? If we do, and survey ourselves in this revealing mirror, we shall learn to pray as the Psalmist did, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

That is simple. And I know, as I have already said, that the popular religion omits it. Some who hear me would be more pleased perhaps were I to exhort them to works of righteousness, to good deeds, something which they themselves could do. But it is useless to dress up in your best clothes if your face is not washed. The children smile at that! They know very well that it is

useless to try to make a good appearance if they are not first properly washed and made clean. I am not here to exhort you to "do your best", to give alms, and so on; but to exhort you to come before God and pray this simple prayer, "Wash me." That is what we need, to have our sins cleansed away.

In New Testament language it means to plunge in the fountain filled with blood. Nothing else will take sin away: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash our sins away. That is what this Psalm means. Have you never been washed in the blood? Then pray that prayer. "But I thought it was a complicated thing to be saved." You are very much like Naaman when he went to the prophet, sent thither by the king: "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage." He expected there would be some kind of ceremony connected with his healing, for he was a great man. But one of his servants said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" That was all he had to do—and he went and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and behold, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean".

How many people stumble at the very simplicity of the gospel! The Lord our God loves all these little children. He wants to see them all saved. And I am sure he did not make the way of salvation so difficult that the simplest of them could not understand it. He Himself said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." That is exactly what this text means. We are simply to come and be washed.

What a cry for help this is! The man cannot wash himself. He does not say, "Provide me a fountain wherein I may wash", but he says, "Wash me; apply the cleansing blood." Is there nothing you can do, my friend? Do you say, "I have tried and tried a thousand times without avail"? Will you cease from all your "trying", and breathe this simple prayer? Nothing could be simpler: two words only, "Wash me—not somebody else, but me. Wash me. Make me clean. I am the sinner. Wash me."

I could not make it simpler than that. Oh that we may all of us pray that prayer this evening.

Then you will remember when Jesus Christ said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me", Peter answered, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But Jesus Christ said, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." He washed their feet because they were soiled with the journey, but they were clean and needed but to remove the defilement of the way. We do not need, as believers, to pray again for the forgiveness of sin, but only to confess our sins, and seek absolution. "Wash me." So let us pray, every one. That is the cry of repentance.

II.

And here is THE DECLARATION OF FAITH: "I shall be whiter than snow." Why? First of all, the Psalmist said, "If only God will wash me it will be well done." If salvation were an admixture of grace and works, we

should never be quite sure the job was done. But seeing it is all of grace, and there is not an infinitesimal element of works in it, seeing salvation is what God does for us, and not what we do for God, then if He will wash us we may be sure it will be well done.

You boys and girls know that you have to pass inspection sometimes. Did mother ever tell you that? Did you ever hear about the kind of washing that is just a "lick and a promise"? I expect you have. There are shadows all around. You just touched the high spots, did you not, when you did it for yourselves? And mother sent you back again, saying, "You are only half washed."

When we wash ourselves it is a "lick and a promise"—and mostly promise. There is not much done. The Psalmist says, "Wash me." He prays that God will wash him, for if God does it it will be well done.

You have heard that hackneyed story that is told of Wesley, of Spurgeon, of Moody, of Finney, and of a great many more. The whole thing may be apocryphal, but it has in it a principle which is worth while recalling to your minds. Some drunken man staggered up to one of these preachers, whoever he was—let us say, Wesley, if you like—and said, "Do you know me, Mr. Wesley?" "No," replied Mr. Wesley, "I fear I do not." "But you converted me last month." "Is that so?", said the great preacher. "It looks like my work. If God had done it, it would have been better done."

The Psalmist said, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." If God does it, my friends, it will be well done. All the corners will be looked after. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin", this Psalmist prayed. God never made a half-finished flower; He will never make a half-finished saint. "I know", said the wise man, "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." If He undertakes to cleanse us from our sin, it will be thoroughly done.

But mark this: "I shall be white"—white as snow? He might have said that. Snow is our standard of whiteness, is it not? Do you know anything whiter than snow? I do not. When you rise in the morning, when it has snowed over night, and before the foot of man has soiled God's handiwork, you look out upon the earth mantled in snow, how beautiful it looks! I know of nothing whiter than snow. But this petitioner had had a glimpse into a realm beyond natural human vision. He was preparing for a world where higher standards obtain, and he said, "If God washes me I shall not only be white: I shall be as white as snow; and not only as white as the whitest thing on earth, but I shall be whiter than snow."

When the soul is robed in the garment of Christ's righteousness it has on a whiter garment than the original garment of innocence. The one is negative, and the other is positive. And when grace has finished the work which grace begins, the redeemed soul will be adorned with a thousand excellencies of which this world knows nothing: "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Or, as I said to you a few Sundays ago, we are "accepted in the Beloved". Or last Thursday evening, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." We are *in* Christ, and all His excellencies are ours. His perfections are imputed to us. And not only so, but He Who is the express image of the Father's person, and the supreme revelation of His glory, prayed for us, as for the disciples

who were His contemporaries in the days of His flesh, "Father, I will that they, also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." We are actually to behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; and are to be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit Who is Lord. What a salvation!

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Is that not a good prayer to end the year with? Do you want to "turn over a new leaf"? We had better have a new nature, a new heart, a new spirit, be a new creation, have old things pass away, and all things become new. That will not only be possible, but actual in the experience of every one who will sincerely, in simple faith, offer this prayer this evening: for, mark you, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

I shall ask you here in this building, and those who hear by radio, in a moment to bow with me. We need not wait until the midnight hour. It is already the new year in some parts of the world. We began our broadcast one minute past seven in order that the hearers who use this station might hear Big Ben in Old London chime the midnight hour, and ring the old year out and the new year in. We began this service, by London time, one minute past the new year. We need not wait, I say, for that hour here. Let this moment be the beginning of our new year. Let this be our watch-night service, our watch-night hour. Let us all pray here, in the homes yonder, the friend yonder in that prison who wrote to me, other prisoners who hear, hundreds in institutions—you can all remember that prayer, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Let us all bow together as we pray:

O Lord our God, we thank Thee that the price has been paid, that there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, where sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. This is our prayer at the close of the year. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. And as this prayer ascends to Heaven from hundreds, mayhap sincerely at this moment, from thousands, of hearts, calling upon Thee, O God, to wash us and make us whiter than snow, may the Spirit of God help us to rest in Thy promise that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If we know our own hearts, we call upon Thee. We do not ask for many things, but for one thing, and one thing only: wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow. Help us to praise Thee for answered prayer, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

AFFLICTION, A HELP TO PIETY

I have seen a little plant beneath an oak tree sheltered from the storm, and wind, and rain, and it felt pleased and happy to be so screened; but I have seen the woodman come with his axe and fell the oak, and the little plant has trembled with fear because its protection was removed. "Alas! for me", it said, "the hot sun will scorch me, the driving rain will drown me, and the fierce wind will tear me up by the roots." But instead of these dreadful results, the shelter being removed, the plant has breathed freer air, drank more of the dews of heaven, received more of the light of the sun, and it has sprung up and borne flowers which else had never bloomed, and seeds that never else had sown themselves in the soil. Be glad when God thus visits thee, when he takes away these overshadowing but dwarfing comforts, to make thee have a clear way between thee and heaven, so that heavenly gifts might come more plentifully to thee.

—C. H. SPURGEON

A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
on a Sunday New Year's Evening

(Stenographically Reported)

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

II Cor. 5:17.

ON THE fourth day of the creation God said, "Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." It is well that time has thus been measured for us, to make it possible for us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. The most incorrigible soul in the world is the man who denies his corrigibility, either because he recognizes no need of improvement, or because he believes correction impossible.

There are, however, few incorrigibles of the first class. There are few men or women who do not fear, amid the shadows of each evening, some spirit of their better selves, the ghost of some opportunity for betterment, which they that day have slain. And when the dying days have been multiplied, and a year has passed, even the best and brightest day, so full of sunshine and of gladness, and of all the music of life, even that is shadowed with the memory of some spoiled picture, a flower in the path thoughtlessly crushed, a fluttering bird left unministered to, a little child uncomforted, a praiseful word unspoken, a psalm of gratitude unsung! As for the other days, the weeds we left to grow have covered up the few flowers we planted, and but for God's sun which touches even the wilderness with his glory in the daytime, and His moon which shrouds it in His silver peace at night, our past would be dreary and desolate indeed.

Shall I be wrong if I assume that there is not a man or woman here this evening, or one who hears me over the air, who can regard the past with perfect satisfaction? Shall I be wrong if I assume, further, that there is not one, whether Christian or otherwise, who would not hope, if hope be possible, to rise to a better, a truer, a nobler, a holier, life?

I will not mock your or my own awareness of frequent failure, or our common consciousness of warfare with superior powers of evil, by entreating you to "try again". Nor would I rob you of that word "again" as a branch that may sweeten the Marah spring of conscious apparent defeat. Indeed, I think I could preach for a month or more, to my own profit and pleasure at least, on that one word, "again", as used in the Bible. Do you doubt it? Listen: "The Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground for man's sake"; "in the fourth generation they shall come again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full"; "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever"; "If a man die, shall he live again?" "Wilt thou not revive us again?" "The Lord shall choose Jerusalem again"; "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again"; "He hath begotten us again to a lively hope"; "Thy brother shall rise again"; "The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus"; "The Lord called Samuel again"; "Ye must be born again"; "I will come again." Every one of these passages, with many others, suggest the discovery again and again of human limitation, of weakness, of defeat, on the one hand, and on the

other of the ever-recurring promise of the grace which "doth much more abound".

Thus on this first Sunday of a New Year—one of the seventy allotted as our natural span of life—I come not to encourage you to try again, but by the grace of Him Who hath power to make all things new, to be born again, to live again, to be created again, to be like God again. That is the only New Year's message which will have any value when the judgment seat is set and time shall be no more.

So then let us look to that new life, that new love, that new likeness, all of which lie in that one word so pregnant with hope for beaten men and women, the promise of what God will do *again*.

I.

Consider, then, IN WHAT SALVATION CONSISTS. I do not use the word "salvation" in the narrow sense of immunity from punishment. We all need *that* salvation. But we all need, too, a fuller salvation than that. Have you done anything for the blind man when you tell him that someone will see to it that he is not allowed to fall over the precipice on account of his blindness? Is that salvation, to deliver from death, but to leave him in darkness? Have you saved the leper when you have given him a remedy which prolongs life, but which does not touch his leprosy?

We are in danger of thinking of the gospel as of a system of communications; as if, in the moral sense, a man should be saved from the gallows, to be left in prison; or saved from his sin's penalty, to be left in its power. I trust we are inspired by a larger and richer hope than that this evening. We desire a salvation that shall redeem us from all that is unworthy of a soul designed to bear the image of God.

In what does that salvation consist? There is but one answer: it consists "in Christ".

Let it be understood then that *salvation consists in the person of Christ*. Satan has many ways of blinding the minds of them that believe not. One way is to make use of the very things which are designed to lead us to Christ, to obstruct our view of Him and of His cross. The brazen serpent was designed to serve only as a means of grace. There was no healing power in that piece of brass. It was intended only as a test of their faith and obedience. Yet the people were led to regard that piece of brass as their saviour, and hence that which was designed to save them became their snare. It is so still. It is the tempter's favourite device. The Church, the Bible, the doctrines of the gospel, the ordinances of the gospel, the very elements employed, the water of baptism, the bread of the Supper—there is not one of these which has not been used to stop the soul short of complete reliance upon the person of Christ.

I remind you therefore that salvation does not consist in the church, but "in Christ"; nor in the Bible, but in the Christ of Whom the Bible tells. Neither is it in the doctrines of the gospel. They are designed to teach us Who Christ is, what He has done for us, why we need Him, and how we may have Him. But we may have all this knowledge and miss Christ. So also of the ordinances. Baptism is intended to signify our union with Christ. It is the divinely appointed way for us to confess our identification with Him. But we may, in a figure, be "buried with Christ", and yet not actually be in Him. The elements of the memorial feast of the

Supper, when we partake of them as we shall this evening, show forth the Lord's death, and our dependence upon Him. But we may profess to do this in remembrance of Him, and yet not be *in* Him.

Nor does our salvation consist in faith. Someone says, "If only I had more faith I should be saved." And so you make a god of faith. Faith is perhaps most real when it does not appear to be faith at all, when we are conscious only of this, that our help is in Christ Himself.

Another says, "I am a great believer in prayer." I confess I am not. I do not believe in prayer at all! That is a strange statement, but it expresses my profound conviction. Perhaps if you believed less in your prayers, you would believe more in Jesus Christ.

What is prayer? Is there any merit in prayer? Of course, it is well to pray. Do you see my meaning? Cease to estimate the excellency of your prayers, and rather estimate the grace of Him to Whom you pray. The amazing thing is that God should ever hear our prayers. You have heard of the man of whom it is said that he delivered the most eloquent prayer that was ever delivered to a Boston audience! There are prayers that are delivered in the hearing of men—and for the hearing of men.

Do not bother yourself as to the strength or weakness of your faith: think rather of the worthiness of Him Whom you believe. I beseech you to look behind all secondary or meditative matters to the person and power of the living Christ. Salvation consists in Him. Remember therefore that the things I have mentioned, the church, the Bible, the doctrines of grace, the ordinances, prayer, faith itself—that these are but agents to mediate the grace of Christ to those who are in Him. They are valuable only as they lead us past all secondary matters into the presence and to the person of a living Christ.

In what sense, therefore, does salvation consist "in Christ"? It is only "in Christ" that we can be harmoniously related to God and to His law. We may not know how things have come to be as they are. The origin of certain matters may be shrouded in mystery. We may not always be able to get back to the beginning of things, but even if we do not know why things are as they are, we ought at least to have spiritual discernment enough to know that we must somehow become adjusted to the facts of life.

I said a moment ago that I shall not make light of theology. It has its place. However men may sneer at theology, and at the Bible, however they may try to account for human life as now we know it, I venture the assertion that we cannot explain the history of the race apart from the principle of the fifth chapter of Romans; and apart from that chapter I know nowhere where that principle is revealed: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Whether you accept that or not, let me go with you as far as you can go, or start with you where we may find a place of common meeting.

One of the facts of life is that sin is here. I care not what you call it. I prefer to use the biblical term, but if you call it by another name, it makes no difference to the moral quality of the thing itself, this moral eccentricity, this spiritual aberration, this out-of-centredness, which is characteristic of every human life, which leads us to rub against the law of God, and fill life with con-

flict and friction—the Bible calls it sin. Call it what you will, it is here.

And wherever sin goes, death follows. You cannot escape it. You may shut your Bible and refuse to believe it if you will, but the facts of life are the same. If you cannot be in the true sense a scientist, you may at least be a practical empiricist. A true scientist is not only a man who knows the facts of the case, but he knows the philosophy of the facts, why the facts have come to be. He knows something of the operation of the laws of being, which lie behind the facts; and is able to tell you something of the why and wherefore and how of things. By that standard there are very few scientists, I admit. But the empiricist is the man who knows the facts, but cannot tell you why. The scientist is the young lady who has taken a course in domestic science. She knows how to make biscuits; she knows all about the vitamins and calories—and so wearies you with her technicalities that you do not want to eat them. Her mother knows how to make biscuits too; but she does not know the how of the how! She does not know by the operation of what laws she is regulated in their making, but mother knows how to make biscuits just the same—and the family know how to eat them fairly well.

So in life. In a thousand ways we adjust ourselves to facts as they are, which we cannot explain.

Why should we not have equal common sense in relation to the great matters of the soul? Though we may not uncover all the history of the past, we know that sin is here; that death is here; that that thing which destroys human life is here, and which, before it destroys men, fills them with dissatisfaction, discontent, and distress of every kind. We know all these things, and when we turn to this holy Book we find in the fifth chapter of Romans a key. You may not know where it is made, nor all about the wards of the lock, but if you take that fifth chapter of Romans to unlock the history of the past, you will find it fits into the facts of life as they are, as your key will fit into your lock when you go home to-night. And you will say, "Now I understand. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Then you read on and find that "if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

If you have any sense of fairness or of justice you will see that the principle there enunciated is wonderfully just. It shows me that I may appropriate the guilt of the first Adam, or take to myself and revel in the enjoyment of the grace of the Second. To be saved, I tell you, is to be *in Christ*. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I cannot explain it. Substitution is the best word I know: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He gave His life "a ransom instead of man"; He died in our room and stead; all our iniquities were laid upon him; His blood atones for the soul. But when we have said all that, we have not explained it.

But there is the precious fact that Christ has come to be the Head of a new race, the second Adam, a quicken-

ing Spirit, so that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". To be saved is to be *in Christ*, saved through His precious blood.

Some man down there says, "But you have not answered my question, what does it mean to be *in Christ*?" I could multiply figures. It is to be as the soldier in the fortress, secure from attack. It is to be like Noah in the time of storm, safe sheltered in the ark, because God had shut him in. It is to be like the prodigal, when he has come home and has been freely forgiven, and he finds himself in his father's house, sharer of its fulness. He is *in* his father's house. It is like the patient who is in the physician's care. Someone else is thinking for us: Someone else planning for us.

There is another relationship: it is the husband and the wife. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." But all these figures fall short of the reality, for we are said to be "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones". We are *in* Christ as every member is in the body. We are inseparable from Christ. You cannot think of a mutilated Christ. You cannot conceive of a paralyzed Christ. "A bone of him shall not be broken." A whole body, a symbol, and type, and prophecy of the body of His elect, was laid in the grave; and He rose again having all His members with Him.

That is the meaning of the ordinance you witnessed this evening. Being buried with Christ, going down into death with Him, we emerge into newness of life. We are "in Christ".

That means that we have an ever-present Counsellor. How instantaneously does the head direct the hand! It means to have with us another Will than our own; it means that the very life of God is in us. How much larger conception of salvation that is than that which prevails to-day—as though the tacking up to the wall of a set of rules, and striving after them, makes a man a Christian. Something vastly more than that is involved in Salvation. It means to be inseparately, indissolubly, one with Him Who is one with the Father.

"In Christ." Paul says it is a mystery, speaking of the marriage relation: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." It is a mystery how poor sinful men can be so cleansed of their sin, and brought into vital union with God, that they can be *in Christ* in the same sense as Christ is one with the Father.

Have you that kind of salvation for this new year? Are you *in Christ*? That is my question.

II.

How is SUCH RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST EFFECTED? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

That excludes all self-effort. The very idea of creation postulates God. No one but God can create. All our efforts at self-improvement are vain. To be *in Christ* means that we have ceased from our own works, and have entered into the rest which remaineth for the people of God. It excludes all boasting. I think it is a fair test as to whether a man is really *in Christ* or not. For myself, I cannot endure the kind of testimony which is a perpetual magnifying of self, the telling of what "I" have done, and what some other man has done.

That young lady whose friends say she is very beautiful, if she is really beautiful of soul, will be the humblest person in the world. If her beauty is real and God-given, she has nothing to boast of; but much to be thankful for. Of course if it is a beauty that is external, that is

put on, if there is anything to be proud of, you are welcome to it! But if it is a beauty that is more than skin deep, a beauty of the soul, then the very fact that it comes from God should forever exclude boasting. If the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, if He has changed our ugliness into some measure of resemblance to the perfect image of Jesus Christ, if there be but one line of godliness in us, one suggestion of resemblance to Him Who is altogether lovely, then that ought to lead us humbly to praise God forevermore.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith"—"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." If you are a Christian, you have nothing to praise your minister for. You may be grateful if God has been pleased to use him as His humble instrument, but you have no thanks to give to him. You may be thankful for a Christian fellowship, but I wish some people would not talk so much about the Group—the Group—the Group. Salvation is never found in any group: it is in Christ. And if it is all of Christ, then let Him have the glory; and be done with your boasting forevermore.

Dispeace and despair are equally excluded. If salvation consists in a new creation there is hope for every one of us. Some man may say, "You uttered a very discouraging word just now. You said salvation was not in the church, and I had begun to hope I had made myself worthy of membership in a church, and had some chance of getting to heaven. But you say that something more is necessary." Certainly. You must become a member of the body of Christ. You must become vitally and inseparably united to Him if you would be a Christian.

You say, "But I am so utterly unworthy, such a poor human wreck, such a derelict, that I have no hope that I could ever be worthy to partake of the life and fellowship of Jesus Christ." I am glad that you have so argued, for that which seems to us to be despair may really be hope in a trance, hope with her eyes shut, the beginnings of faith; for the beginnings of faith are always to be found in a consciousness of utter human impotence, and absolute moral and spiritual destitution. It is only when we can say,

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

that we enter into salvation. We must be made new creatures.

Everything is based upon the infinitely meritorious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is another subject, and if I live long enough—how shall I put it? and come to know enough—I should like to endeavour to show you that the vicarious principle, the principle of expiation, of substitution, of atonement, is wrought into the very fabric of the universe; and that the work of our crucified Lord was anticipated before the worlds were made: "In hope of eternal life, Which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

A new creation were not possible apart from the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This new creation includes the operation of the will of the Father. I love to read the seventeenth chapter of John, our Lord's high priestly prayer on the other side of the cross, as He was about to take His own blood and enter through the veil of His own flesh into the presence of God for us.

Have you written any resolutions this year? Have you put into them these words, "I will"! "I will"! "I will"! You did it last year. A brother said to me at our watch-night service in the early hours of the morning, "Pastor, I wish you a happy New Year—but I said the same thing last year, and see what sorrow came to you." Quite so. We wish each other happiness, and resolve that we will do so-and-so; but read that seventeenth chapter of John. Read what our Lord said: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." Read through the chapter, and see how Jesus Christ lays the emphasis upon the will of God.

It is by that will of His—not by ours—that we are sanctified and made meet for the Master's use: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Just as God in the beginning created so will He create a new life in you by the same power; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

It means that you become *the subject of the operation of the Holy Ghost*. The Spirit of God brooded upon the water when the earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep. Take the first chapter of Genesis and say, "This is Chapter One in my spiritual biography. I will take this chapter and bring it up-to-date. Here I am without form and void. Life is chaotic, full of darkness, without order or beauty, without life or light or fruitfulness." Yet see what God did when He created the worlds from naught. What He did then, He will do again. The Spirit of God will brood upon these darkened natures of ours, and make us to be new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The instrumentality used is ever the same. In the story of creation you will find this saying again and again. "And God said"! "And God said"! "And God said"! "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." "God said—and it was so"! "And it was so"! "And it was so"! Do you know what "Amen" means? It means, "So let it be." It is the acquiescence of the soul in the decree of the Infinite. God said, and my soul responded, Amen.

God says, "Thy sins which were many are all forgiven", and my soul cries out with a loud, "Amen; so let it be." And it is so! My sins are rolled away, and the light from Heaven that never was upon sea or land breaks upon this benighted soul, and I am made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Every promise of God is an emanation, a radiation, of the light, and life, and power, of Jesus Christ.

The scientists in Atlantic City have been talking about cosmic rays, and discussing the question as to whether creation is a continuous process, and whether other worlds are still now in process of formation. I do not know. I am not a scientist. It is beyond me. But I know that the same power that resided in the holy Fiat in the beginning when He said, "Let there be light", "Let the earth bring forth", "Let us make man in our image; after our likeness", and it was so—all the might of Deity that breathed itself forth; uttered itself in the word of God; all there is of God has spoken to a sinful world in the Person of Him Who was the Word made flesh. To respond, to acquiesce, in the divine programme, simply to say, "So let it be, Lord; make me a new creature in Christ Jesus to-night", ensures your salvation. If you do so, the miracle shall be wrought, and you shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.

It comes to this, then, does it not, that salvation is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost speaking through His word. In other words, it is the work of God. Trust Him as He has revealed Himself in Christ, and you shall be saved for ever.

Let us pray:

We bless Thee, O Lord, for the possibility of a new life, of a new light, of a new love, of a new power, of a new world that is to be, and by and by of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. We thank Thee for Thy promise ringing down through the centuries, Behold! I make all things new. Never were we so weary of the old, O Lord. Never did it appear more clearly to human view that we have failed, miserably failed, apart from God. We come to Thee, O Lord. We have no one else to whom we may go. Receive us to-night.

Many have heard by radio. May the prayer of the publican rise from many hearts this New Year's evening. Save us from wasting another year. Help us to receive Christ, and to become new creatures, for His name's sake, Amen.

THE KERRY BOY AND THE LOST SHEEP

For Boys and Girls

ONE evening at the close of a cold February day in Kerry, there was a knock at the door. A poor man wished to see me. I had never seen him before, and he introduced himself by asking pardon for coming at such a late hour, but he had one son, and he feared the boy was dying.

I rose immediately and followed him. The cabin was perched on the mountainside, and so isolated that I could scarcely feel surprised at not having discovered it before.

We entered the miserable hovel. An old woman rose as I entered, and with the natural courtesy of the Irish poor, offered me a low chair. In one corner of the hut, on a heap of straw, lay the boy. He was about seventeen years of age, and in the last stages of consumption.

I told him as quietly as possible why I had come, and put a few questions to him as to his hope of salvation, and the eternal world to which it was evident he was fast hastening. He appeared totally unconscious of my meaning, but I discovered from a few words he uttered that he had heard something about God and future judgment, but he had never been taught to read.

The Holy Scripture was a sealed book, and he was altogether ignorant of the way of salvation. I was struck with dismay and almost with despair. Here was a soul on the verge of eternity, and in utter darkness. What was I to do? I raised my heart to God for guidance and instruction to put the way of salvation clearly before him, and then I said, "My poor boy, I fear you are very ill."

"Yes," he said.

"Have you had this cough long?"

"A long time—nearly a year."

"How did you catch it? A Kerry boy should be used to cold air."

"Ah," he answered, "so I was till that terribly cold night a year ago when one of the sheep went astray, and my father sent me to search for it. The snow lay thick upon the ground, and the cold wind pierced me through and through; but I didn't mind it much, as I was anxious to find my father's sheep."

"And did you find it?" I asked with increasing interest.

"Oh yes, I never stopped till I did."

"And how did you get it home?"

"I just laid it on my shoulders and carried it home."

"And were they not all rejoiced to see you?"

"Sure enough, and that they were—father, mother, the neighbours and all."

Wonderful! I thought. Here is the whole Gospel story. The sheep is lost. The father sends his son to seek. The son goes, seeks, suffers, finds, lays the lost sheep on his shoulders, brings it home, and rejoices over it with friends and neighbours.

I opened my Bible and read to the dying lad four verses in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. He at once saw the likeness, and followed me with deep interest, while I explained to him the meaning of the parable.

The Lord graciously opened his heart to receive the things spoken; he understood, he believed, and he accepted Christ as his Saviour. I never saw a clearer proof of the power of the divine Spirit to apply the Word of God.

He lived but a few days, and died peacefully, with the words "Jesus, my Saviour and my Shepherd" on his lips.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

(From "A Message from God")

AMONG THE CHURCHES

By Rev. H. C. Slade

Anniversary Services at Niagara Falls

TRINITY Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, recently observed its twentieth anniversary. Rev. John Byers, Pastor of Victoria Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, was the special speaker at both the Sunday services. The heart-stirring messages delivered by Mr. Byers were a means of great blessing and encouragement to both the pastor and people. Since Rev. George Stephens became the pastor of the church at Niagara about the middle of September, the congregations at all services have increased and attendance at Sunday School has greatly improved.

Jamaica

Due to the influence of labour unions of the Red variety, which at present dominate a large percentage of the laboring class on the island of Jamaica, missionary work is becoming increasingly difficult. Many of the people, who only a few years ago were kindly disposed toward the church and the preaching of God's Word, are now anti-church and very outspoken in their opposition to the ministers of the gospel. Modernism has done its deadly work here also as it has in other places. In spite of these conditions, however, Rev. John Knight writes to tell us that he still sees the gospel doing its mighty work in the salvation of souls. At a recent Sunday morning service at one of his charges a man of forty-five and a girl of seventeen were soundly converted. The dry season is now on when they are almost certain of good weather. In order to take full advantage of this opportunity, special services are being conducted and as many open air meetings as possible are held regularly on the various fields. Our readers will rejoice to learn that Rev. and Mrs. John Knight plan to be in Canada on furlough next summer and, while here, they will visit the churches of the Conservative Baptist Association in the interests of their work in Jamaica.

THE GREAT CONTENTION

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

By Dr. T. T. Shields

CONTRIBUTORY SKIRMISHES

I HAVE explained that my letter to Chancellor McCrimmon, while it was an expression of my own concern respecting the character of the University's teaching, and its effect upon the rising generation of preachers, and through them upon the Denomination, was also the result of appeals made to me by Miss Anna Murray, a foreign missionary on furlough, and Rev. Professor E. M. Keirstead, of McMaster University.

I have no means of knowing whether Miss Murray and Dr. Keirstead were known to each other, but I do know that they had had no communication with each other in relation to their respective appeals to me. Indeed, it seemed to me that, independently of each other, they had come as God's messengers. But they were not the only ones whose spirits had been divinely stirred respecting this matter. There was indeed a very general anxiety felt throughout the Denomination by all lovers of the Word of God.

My letter to Chancellor McCrimmon was dated May 3rd, 1919. In *The Canadian Baptist*, of June 26th, 1919, in a report of the Whitby-Lindsay Association, which had met at Whitby, June 10th and 11th, the following resolution, as having been passed at the Association, was included:

"That this gathering representative of the Whitby and Lindsay Association of Baptist Churches, reaffirm its adherence to the historic Baptist view with reference to the inspiration, inerrancy, and supremacy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and express itself as being unalterably opposed to the ordaining of any man to the Baptist ministry who cannot unequivocally and unreservedly subscribe to that position; and that we request the Clerk of the Association to include this resolution in his report to *The Canadian Baptist*."

I do not recall having read the resolution at the time. It appeared when week by week the reports of the meetings of the Associations were being published, and most of them reported but routine business, and did not challenge special attention.

In the issue of *The Canadian Baptist* of July 10th, 1919, there appeared a letter over the signature of Rev. Edgar Watson, of Fenelon Falls, entitled, "Reactionary, Arbitrary, Superfluous". It was by reading this letter I learned of the resolution, and that it had been framed by my brother, Rev. E. E. Shields, of Oshawa, Ont. The gist of Mr. Watson's letter is summed up in the following excerpt:

"The resolution itself, however, is reactionary, arbitrary, and superfluous. It repeats the old, old error of assuming that you can control credal statements or beliefs by resolutions, canon law, or other legislation, and fails to recognize that the strength of the Baptist position is in its untrammelled freedom of thought in such matters and not in any such repressive measures. The Baptist position is strong because of its proximity to the truth in such matters, achieved by freedom of research and never by arbitrary doctrinal statements. The 'historic Baptist view' referred to in this resolution is made up largely of negative virtues, repudiating any such resolution as this one and demanding perfect freedom of conscience, and I am satisfied that by far the larger majority of Baptists would demand this to-day."

The Canadian Baptist, in its issue of July 24th, contained two letters occupying together about a full page and a half of the paper, one from Rev. A. P. Wilson, of Stouffville, and the other from Rev. E. E. Shields, the framer of the resolution. Mr. Wilson's letter disagreed with Mr. Watson's summary of the resolution as being "reactionary, arbitrary and superfluous", and contained the following:

"It is not superfluous, because men are being passed into our ministry who deny the inspiration, inerrancy, and supremacy of the Scriptures, who deny specific and fundamental doctrines of our faith, who do not hesitate to say that the theology of the Apostle Paul has wrought 'incalculable harm', who deny the necessity of atonement by blood, and whose preaching lacks the truths vital to the souls of men. Others seek ordination who have no definite convictions about anything."

From Mr. Shields' letter in the same issue I learn that the resolution was submitted by the Resolutions Committee, of which he was a member; that it had been framed by him, and was seconded by Rev. A. P. Wilson, of Stouffville. From Mr. Shields' letter in *The Canadian Baptist* of July 24th, 1919, I print the following excerpt:

"First: The resolution neither contains nor proposes a definition of inspiration, as Mr. Watson supposes.

"Secondly: Mr. Watson's admonitions as to transferring the emphasis from theories of inspiration to the Scriptures themselves, and as to not getting nervous, are really superfluous. To transfer the emphasis from theories of inspiration to the Scriptures themselves is precisely what the resolution does.

"And nobody is getting nervous. No need to be. 'The scripture cannot be broken.'—John 10:35. 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled'.—Matt. 5:18. Not all the Higher Critics under heaven can break the Scripture—nor even alter the 'historic Baptist view'.

"Thirdly: Mr. Watson says, 'The question is not between inspiration and non-inspiration at all. It is simply a question of the nature of that inspiration.'

"Come now, and let us reason together. Consider just one or two of the things which Higher Critics have believed and taught. I have not seen the latest bulletins, so do not know exactly what they believe to-day. But there is the case of the first submarine voyage, for instance. Poor old Jonah! They used to say of Jonah that the fish did not swallow him, and that no fish could have swallowed him. (They must have thought Jonah was a Higher Critic.) The book of Jonah says the fish did swallow this disobedient prophet. Very well. Now this seems to call for strong language. Who is the liar? The Higher Critic? Certainly not! Then it must be the writer of the Book of Jonah. And he wrote a lie. And was he, then, inspired to write a lie by the 'God that cannot lie'? That could not be. Therefore the Book of Jonah is not inspired. Nothing more simple. And also the Lord Jesus was deceived, and is therefore not Divine; for He believed the Book of Jonah, fish story and all. Matt. 12:39, 40. But if the Lord Christ was Divine, and could not be deceived, then the Book of Jonah is true, and the fish really swallowed Jonah, and the man who denies it—I do not say Mr. Watson denies it; perhaps he believes it. But this certainly is a question of inspiration.

"The same is true of the denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. 'Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me', John 5:46. 'And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself', Luke 24:27.

"If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, then the Lord Him-

self was deceived, and Luke and John certainly were not inspired.

"I would like to see a Higher Critic in the witness box. Sir Robert Anderson once said that in such an event the critic would lose, not only his case, but his reputation also."

I wish it were possible to print the whole discussion of this matter appearing in the columns of *The Canadian Baptist* throughout the summer of 1919, and continuing until just before the Convention, in October. Certainly it must be admitted that the Editor of *The Canadian Baptist* of that time was eminently fair. Neither side was restricted in the use of space. One letter of Mr. Shields occupied nearly two whole pages.

I want plainly to state that I had no part whatever in the controversy. I read the letters with interest, but my opinions were neither sought nor offered. It was certainly a merry fight, and conducted, I should say, in good spirit. The discussion, which was precipitated by the Whitby-Lindsay resolution, in which my brother played so prominent a part, was conducted, on his part, so far as I am able now to recall, with absolutely no knowledge of my letter to the Chancellor of the University, or of the appeals made to me by Miss Murray and Dr. Keirstead.

Events proved that the apprehensions of Miss Murray and Dr. Keirstead were not without foundation. But what I am particularly emphasizing at the moment, is that the discussion in the columns of *The Canadian Baptist* during the summer of 1919 was carried on quite independently and without knowledge of the action I had taken in approaching the Board of Governors. In fact, I was out of the country following August 10th until the end of September.

As this story is intimately related to the whole Canadian Baptist "down grade" movement—to borrow Mr. Spurgeon's phrase in respect to the same drift in England—for its intrinsic value to a discussion of these matters, I here insert the letter by Rev. E. E. Shields appearing in *The Canadian Baptist* of August 14th, 1919, in its entirety:

DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Editor "The Canadian Baptist":—

Dear Mr. Editor,—

It must be apparent to those who have read our correspondence of the past weeks, that Mr. Watson in his letter in your issue of July 10th, page five, and that which appeared in *The Baptist* of July 31st, page three, has given us his own theory of inspiration; and this, in spite of the fact that he deprecates any "definition of inspiration," "crude theories of inspiration," "a priori notions about the Bible," and "dogmatic and threadbare theories of the nature of the Bible"; the assumption being, of course, that however men of the conservative school may have "paralyzed their minds by a crude literalism" and "stultified their reason" by holding to "crude" and "threadbare" theories, and whatever "human element with its errancy" there may be in the Scriptures themselves, Mr. Watson's views are the result of such wide research, such deep knowledge, they are built upon such broad and strong foundations and have been constructed with such cunning and such skill, that the completed edifice exhibits an "inerrancy" which suggests "inspiration" rather than the "human touch." (May the Editor forgive both of us. The writer did not intend sarcasm, but only to be logical.)

Those who have followed this pleasant little fistic encounter between pygmies (with abject apologies to Mr. Watson) will have observed that which became apparent to both Mr. Watson and myself at Whitby: that the only difference between us is all the difference in the world, that our views are diametrically opposed to each other and are as far apart as the poles.

There are two things in the letter in last week's issue of *The Baptist* with which I agree. One is the sentence: "The great need of the world is Christ, not theories about Him; its

need is for the Bible, not a priori notions about the Bible." That is why I drafted the resolution under discussion. The other thing in the letter in which I concur is Mr. Watson's statement that the term "Higher Critic" is used in an unfair sense. We all know just what the term covers; but there are so many "Destructive Critics" amongst the "Higher Critics" that we have got into the way of using the term loosely to describe them. It is in reality a delicate compliment to "Destructive Critics" to designate them as "Higher Critics," but I admit that to class them all together in this way is really unfair to other "Higher Critics," who believe in the "inspiration, inerrancy and supremacy of the Scriptures." We will, therefore, change the term, without changing the tune, and it will be understood that the term "Destructive Critic" "hereinafter" used "shall mean" one who carves up Genesis, slices Isaiah, kicks Daniel forward several centuries, accepts a theory of some German critic with regard to Jonah, rather than the plain teaching of Christ, and generally "plays German" with the whole Book of God.

Mr. Watson reiterates some of the things said in his first letter, and still insists the resolution means that I would "impose" certain things upon every man who enters the Baptist ministry, and that I mean that a man who applies for ordination and fellowship in the Baptist denomination "must" accept certain views. The resolution contains no suggestion of this sort. Mr. Watson himself says that "a Baptist candidate for the ministry should believe in inspiration" . . . "of some kind." Suppose, then, it is found in some case that a candidate does not believe in inspiration of any kind (of course this is not a probable case), and the council, of which Mr. Watson is a member, refuses, kindly of course, to ordain him? Would the Council be "imposing" some belief upon the candidate or saying that he "must" accept some particular view? So neither would a Council say "must," nor "impose" any view upon a man if it should decline to ordain him because he did not hold to "the inspiration, inerrancy and supremacy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." The Council could couple its refusal with some prayerful, kind and wise counsel, which might lead to some heart searching and some Bible searching, and might mean that the same man would be gladly ordained by the same Council, after he had thrown his erroneous views where the mariners threw Jonah. (I rather hesitate to make a statement like that when in danger of being read by Destructive Critics. I trust, however, that in view of their penchant for allegory there is no danger that they will "paralyze their minds by a crude literalism.") But suppose the candidate did not change his views? Then probably he would unite in some way with people who didn't believe just what he didn't believe, and he would doubtless find a ministry somewhere in leading yet others not to believe what he didn't believe; but he would forever remain outside the Baptist ministry, in which, if this should continue to be carried out, all would ultimately believe, as all did at one time believe, in "the inspiration, inerrancy and supremacy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." And the term, "Baptist" would be rehabilitated and would come to mean what it once meant in this country and what it now means in the Southern States, and the denomination in these Provinces would be saved from the disintegration and destruction which threaten at the present time.

In the opinion of the writer there rests upon every member of an Ordaining Council a tremendous responsibility in the sight of God. And in this connection, Mr. Editor, I beg, in all humility, to commend to the consciences of all who may be called to such service, two quotations, especially, from the letter of Rev. A. P. Wilson, of Stouffville, which appeared in *The Baptist* of July 24th, pages three and four. They are as follows: "Cases have occurred in which the Council disagreed with the candidate's views as being utterly unscriptural. Yet out of consideration for the candidate, and with the expressed hope that he would mend, they ordained him." "An Ordaining Council professes to stamp with its approval and associate itself with the teaching of the ordained. Must Baptists be compelled to recognize by ordination the false teacher because, forsooth, they stand for freedom of thought? Must they force themselves to lie before God when they say they fellowship a man on his statement of Christian doctrine when but a moment before they had deplored the candidate's views?"

In the letter last published Mr. Watson does not even attempt to show how anyone who questions Christ and the evangelists by doubting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, can at the same time believe that those evangelists were inspired; but he naively waives the question of inspira-

tion by the remark that "as we both believe in inspiration of some kind and further, that a Baptist candidate for the ministry should believe in inspiration, that general question need not be further discussed." He then proceeds to discuss the "inerrancy" part of the resolution, and gives us, incidentally, the view of some of the Destructive Critics as to the alleged errancy of the Scriptures. But it is just because the writer knows that most Destructive Critics profess to believe in inspiration "of some kind," while at the same time giving the lie to the plainest statements of Holy Writ, and because he knows the logical and inevitable results of such views, that the resolution was made to read, "The inspiration, inerrancy and supremacy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." It will be observed that as the resolution had no special reference to Mr. Watson at the time it was written, so now I am not thinking of his peculiar views alone, but of those of Destructive Critics generally.

Mr. Watson has simply chosen certain theories which happened to suit him from the great mass of the speculations of others. Being a Destructive Critic he has doubtless hewn his way through a lot of good material, but he must not ask us to think he has hewn his way to the views which he holds to-day. Some of the stereotyped terms which he uses were made in molds which he has never seen, while others are of distinctly Canadian Baptist manufacture. We concede full right to Destructive Critics to manufacture anything they please; but the goods which Mr. Watson displays are not his: they may be bought upon the open market bearing the imprimatur of other firms. "You pays your money and you takes your choice."

In Mr. Watson's contention for the errancy of the Scriptures, unless I misunderstood him altogether, he reveals that it is his opinion:—

1. That human reason should be the touchstone by which the quality and value of all Scripture should be tested.
2. That the testing should be conducted by the light from the lamp of science and by the effulgence of Destructive Criticism.
3. That the testing so conducted has shown that the Old and New Testaments have "naive conceptions of scientific questions," and that "the abundantly proved facts of science" and "the ultimate truths of science" conflict with, and are contrary to, Genesis and other parts of the Old and New Testaments.
4. That where science conflicts with the Bible, the statements of the Bible are wrong and science always right.
5. That, therefore, those who hold the traditional view of the Bible are either utterly ignorant of all science and are also obscurantists who would, perhaps, "try to stop the dawning of the day by wringing the neck of the crowing cock," or they "carry on a life-long conflict, stultifying their reason wherever they come into touch with the religious side of life."

This seems to me to be a perfectly fair setting forth of what Mr. Watson has told us in *The Baptist* of July 31st.

Now let us look into these charges against "The Book" and those who hold the traditional view with regard to the Book.

First, then, as to Mr. Watson's enthronement of the human reason. I think he is not fair when he suggests that some of us "decry the function of the human reason" in the interpretation of the Bible. That is very far from being the case. My own opinion of Mr. Watson, for instance, is, not that he uses his reason too much, but too little. But he has also put reason in the wrong place and is using it in a wrong way. Does he believe in the Divinity of King Reason? Has it ever occurred to him that his reason has anything of "the human element with its errancy" which he attributes to the Scriptures? Reason is a fair servant, but a poor master, and this "servant when he reigneth is confusion to the end." Reason has its function in the interpretation of the Scriptures. But what of the function of the Holy Spirit? What of the function of faith? Does Mr. Watson intend to go all the way down the dark road of rationalism? Does he believe this Scripture?—"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:25). And has he studied these words?—"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:13.)

Just a few words about what Mr. Watson says as to the Bible's relation to science. He says the one who holds the traditional view of the Bible "must repudiate science because it conflicts with Genesis." Does he mean that he himself repudiates Genesis because it conflicts with science? He

can mean nothing else. According to him the fact of the conflict between the two reveals the "human element with its errancy" in Genesis, but reveals no "human element with its errancy" in science! That, evidently, is Mr. Watson's view. Science and the critics are right and the Bible wrong. And this is a sample of Mr. Watson's reasoning! Did Mr. Watson ever hear of "science" being wrong? Did he ever entertain the suspicion that there may be in science any "human element with its errancy"? Science and the monuments are doing their best. They are confirming Genesis and the Bible generally just as rapidly as possible. But Mr. Watson must remember the "human element" in science and must expect it to be several thousand years behind the Bible. But in simple courtesy to the people of God, he ought not to make such statements about a book which they love, because of what it is, until at least he has shown that he is able:—

1. To take some "abundantly proved fact of science" and prove that this proved fact is an "ultimate truth" of science.
2. To show that this "ultimate truth" disproves some statement of Genesis or any other Book of the Bible.

When the critics can do that we shall begin to listen to them.

Our critic says, "Evolution to him (the one who holds the traditional view) must be rank heresy, but, as in a scientific age, the accepted and abundantly proved facts of science meet him at every turn, he must carry on a life-long conflict, stultifying his reason wherever he comes into touch with the religious side of life." And this is another sample of a Destructive Critic's reasoning! I do not think Mr. Watson claims a "divine element" for the teaching upon evolution. But even if he does make such a claim, are we stultifying our reasons if we apply to evolution the principle which he applies to the Bible, and say that in evolution there is a "human element with its errancy"; and if we decide that the "human element" in evolution shows wherever it conflicts with the Bible, and that in every such case evolution is wrong and the Bible right? I submit, Mr. Editor, that if Mr. Watson admits, or claims, inspiration "of some kind" for the Bible, and makes no such claim for evolution, freely admitting its "human errancy" and that we may have arrived at "ultimate truth" with regard to it, then, if he accepts evolution rather than the Bible, where the two seem to conflict, it must be he, rather than some of the rest of us, who is "stultifying his reason." It ought to be remembered, too, that it is the opinion of some eminent scientists that the only thing wrong with the science of evolution is that the wheels have been turning the wrong way and need to be reversed.

Mr. Watson's representation of the conservative theologian as one who "repudiates science" and "stultifies his reason" is, it seems to me, hardly borne out by the facts. Some of the most eminent of the Higher Critics (not "Destructive Critics") have held the traditional view of the Bible. The great preachers and evangelists of all time have held this view. The Baptists of the Southern States, more flourishing I suppose than any other body of Baptists in the world, stand foursquare against destructive criticism. I remember that Dr. H. C. Mabee, at the Convention in Walmer Road Church some years ago, even dared (I am not sure whether Mr. Watson was present) to preach from the whole book of Jonah and treat it as a record of fact. I remember the preacher very distinctly, and also the sermon. There was no doubt that he held the traditional view of the Bible. Now from my recollection of that massive head, I should say there was probably as much grey matter there as the average Destructive Critic possesses. He spoke like a man of ripe scholarship. And I really should not like to think with Mr. Watson, that the only way in which he could have continued to hold his views was by "stultifying his reason."

On the other hand, will Mr. Watson name us one Destructive Critic who, while holding such views, has been a successful missionary? Will he point out one Destructive Critic who as regular preacher or evangelist has been really largely used of God in reaching men for Christ? Can he tell us of one Destructive Critic who has gone down into the slums of any city, and has been used of God in reclaiming drunkards and open sinners generally?

I fear Mr. Watson will begin to surmise that I have not the veneration for Destructive Critics which he entertains. The fact is, I have not. My experience may have been unusual, but I have not yet met one who had not apparently concentrated his attention upon the covers of "the Book" to the great neglect of its text. It never seems to dawn on them that by all analogy it should be expected that the

greater part of the evidence as to the Bible will be found within the Bible itself.

This question of "inerrancy" is one of inspiration. It matters nothing that some Destructive Critics declare that they believe in inspiration "of some kind"; nor does it affect the issue one iota that they even profess to possess a fuller light than those who hold the traditional view; upon the hypothesis, for instance, that the Book of Jonah is allegory and not a record of fact, the man of sound reason will inevitably argue to the conclusion that the Gospels are not inspired, that Christ is not Divine, that the apostles were deceived, that the Epistles and Revelation are valueless, that there has been no revelation from God and that the world has no Saviour. This conclusion has the merit at least of being logical, and this is the end to which many Destructive Critics have come. Mr. Watson speaks as though he believes in Christ as a Saviour, and in regeneration. He will find that at a point farther down the rationalistic road, regeneration is not believed in, and that if he desires to keep the same company and continue the same journey, he will have to throw his belief in regeneration over the fence. Mr. Watson and others with him, their protests as to their belief in inspiration "of some kind" and as to their fidelity to Christ notwithstanding, are travelling down a road which leads to darkness and despair.

There is one paragraph in Mr. Watson's letter which I regard—as he regards the Book of Jonah—as "a gem"—and which I am compelled to quote in full, in order that I may share with others the charm of its brilliance. It is as follows:

"Crude theories of inspiration usually result, as in the case with Daniel, in concentration on the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, the beast, the false prophet, and the little horn, the construction of all sorts of grotesque and sometimes humiliating schemes of 'inverted history,' neglecting what is vital and substantial for the trivial and fanciful."

Shades of the mighty dead! Here is a Baptist preacher who thinks the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, the beast and the false prophet are to be found in Daniel! If Mr. Watson will read his Daniel he will find that none of these are mentioned, as such, in the book. The "little horn" is there, of course. It is a great thing to try to find things in the Bible—more interesting than prospecting and far more profitable. I would like to suggest a puzzle to Mr. Watson: As the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, the beast and the false prophet, are not to be found in Daniel, then where, O where, have they gone? I will just give this hint; he will not find them in Genesis. I desire now to submit a proposition, and it is this: If Mr. Watson had known enough about the Book of Daniel to know whether these twenty-three "trivial and fanciful" articles were hidden therein, would he have accepted the teaching of certain Destructive Critics that the book was written "138 B.C., or thereabouts"?

See how Mr. Watson's theory contradicts the text of Daniel, and, therefore, denies its inspiration. (This will lead Mr. Watson to read the Book of Daniel. Hallelujah!) The book seems to have been written by Daniel. (Dan. 12:4.) It is written in the first person from the eighth chapter to the end. It is "I Daniel" who writes. Mr. Watson himself will hardly deny that "Daniel the prophet," of whom Jesus speaks (Matt. 24:15) really lived. (Though some Destructive Critics have done so.) Daniel was taken captive from Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, and his life and visions are woven into the history of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. If, therefore, the book of Daniel, purporting to be written by "I Daniel," between say 607 B.C. and 534 B.C., was in reality written by some "pious Jew" in "138 B.C., or thereabouts," the book must be a forgery and cannot have been inspired. The conclusion is unescapable. The contention of Destructive Critics flatly denies the inspiration of the book.

And now, about Jonah. I know my readers have been waiting for the reappearance of that story. It has a way of coming up again, as had Jonah himself. If Mr. Watson will read my last letter with more care than he has bestowed upon Daniel, he will see that the story of the big fish was submitted, not as proof of the "historicity" of the Book of Jonah in general, but only as showing a possibility which Destructive Critics have denied, i.e., that the prepared fish really swallowed Jonah. The story which I related is true, though not inspired. I did not expect, however, that one

who denies the historicity of a book so clearly bearing the marks of inspiration as that of Jonah, would be likely to believe anything which tends to upset his "a priori notions."

Mr. Watson has made his choice amongst many different views of Destructive Critics, and calls the Book of Jonah "allegory." In another sentence he denies, by implication, its "historicity." Let me make this plain. Mr. Watson denies that the book of Jonah is a record of facts. Let the careful reader stop now, and read the Book of Jonah; it will take about five or ten minutes. Mr. Watson denies that the people of Nineveh were wicked; that the Lord spoke to Jonah, commanding him to warn the city of its impending overthrow; that Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord; that he took ship to go to Tarshish; that the Lord sent out a great wind upon the sea; that in the storm the mariners threw Jonah overboard; that a great fish swallowed him; that the Lord spoke to the fish; that the fish obeyed the Lord and vomited out Jonah upon the dry land; that Jonah repented; that he then went to Nineveh and preached; that as a result the people of Nineveh repented; and that the Lord then spared the city. Mr. Watson denies it all. According to him these things simply never happened. Yet he would profess to believe it to have inspiration "of some kind"! (Some Destructive Critics deny inspiration of any kind, and some go the length of denying that either Nineveh or Jonah ever existed.) The story contains "vital truths," Mr. Watson tells us, and the story is "a gem." Verily, it is a gem, if it is allegory and not fact! "Jesus," he tells us, "saw fit to refer to it incidentally as illustrating a great truth when the question of its historicity was not up for discussion." The "question" was not up for discussion, because at that time there was no such question. But, oh that Mr. Watson would read his Bible instead of paying attention to the vapourings of Destructive Criticism! Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 12:41): "The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Says Jesus, "Jonah preached unto the men of Nineveh." Says Mr. Watson, "Not so: Jonah was not sent; nor did he preach." "The men of Nineveh repented," says Jesus. "Not so," says Mr. Watson, "the men of Nineveh did not repent." This is the issue: Christ, or the Critics; it is a question of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the divinity of the Lord.

Let it not be thought, however, that I have presumptuously undertaken to defend either one. The Bible remains because it is inspired. The doctrine of the Lord's Divinity remains because He is Divine.

The resolution aims to defend, not the Bible, but those who ought to have the privilege of hearing the voice of the Bible, without the discordant noise of the illlogical denials and frantic asseverations and contradictory interpretations of Destructive Criticism.

I enjoyed our conversation in Whitby and was much drawn towards Mr. Watson. I have great regard for him personally. And the measure of my regard is the measure of my regret that he should have imbibed so many of the views of Destructive Criticism.

Mr. Watson has believed what he has been taught. That is the logic of my resolution, and that, Mr. Editor, is the logic of the general situation.

Bless God for a whole Book! Thank God that "the Scripture cannot be broken." "Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it."

Oshawa.

(Signed) E. E. SHIELDS.

In the next issue of the paper, Mr. Watson, utterly routed as we believe, retired from the field with a short letter which he said was his final word. Other letters followed from Mr. Shields in *The Canadian Baptist* of September 11th and October 9th, that of September 11th concluding as follows:

"Whether the tide ebbs or flows, however, my resolution is taken. I desire to express myself in a way that cannot be mistaken: I am prepared to-day, if necessary, painful and regrettable though it be, in no spirit of bitterness and with no desire but for the common weal, to vote to part company with those who lay destructive hands upon the Book of God. I suggest a 'line up' on the question, in the spirit of the Master, in the interests of the Kingdom of God and of the people who ought to have the Book entire. This thing is many years overdue. Who is on the Lord's side?"

"The foregoing is only intended to be a reply to some things in Mr. Watson's final word.

"If justification of the resolution were needed, it has been abundantly supplied by Mr. Watson's letters.

"In closing, Mr. Editor, I beg to call attention to the fact that my letter of August 14th remains unanswered."

Oshawa.

(Signed) E. E. SHIELDS.

There is no doubt that this controversial discussion throughout the summer of 1919 greatly stirred the whole Denomination, and prepared the way for all that followed.

(To Be Continued)

WHY ARE THERE NOT MORE PROSECUTIONS OF THIS SORT?

THE accompanying reprint from *The Toronto Star* reports that the officials of a church in Hamilton have been brought to book for conducting a game of chance. In these pages we have called the attention of our readers on several occasions to extensive bingos and games of chance conducted by Roman Catholic Churches that were evidently infractions of the law. So far as we are aware there have been no prosecutions in these or in any other instances in which Roman Catholic Churches were implicated. Are we to suppose that the crown attorneys and the police of this country work on the assumption that the priests of that church are above the law? We know that the Canon Law of the Church of Rome demands for its clerics immunity from the civil law and from civil courts on the grounds that they are subjects of the pope and therefore responsible to him exclusively, but we did not suppose that such pretensions were officially recognized under the British flag. Law officers, like other public men, are seemingly fearful of stirring up a hornet's nest by challenging the encroachments of Rome.

The authorities responsible for applying the law in Hamilton are to be congratulated for doing their duty, though the mere assertion of congratulations to officers of the crown for doing their duty is an indirect suggestion that others have been remiss in performing theirs. We do not know whether the church involved is Roman

Catholic or Greek Orthodox. We note that not the priest but lay officials of the church were charged. In a Roman Catholic Church, it is not local officials who hold the property, not even the local priests, but the episcopal corporation, that is, in effect, the bishop. In a bill brought before the Dominion parliament a few years ago a bishop was made a "corporation sole", that is one single man was legally recognized as the corporation to own and control vast properties and wealth in a Roman Catholic diocese. The bishops in turn are not elected by a local council of priests or of laymen, but are appointed by the Pope at Rome, who is explicitly stated by Canon Law to be the sole administrator of all the immense holdings of the church throughout the world. This being the case, the Pope is the final responsible party for the wholesale gambling that is conducted for the profit of his multi-millionaire corporation. As the actual holder of the property, in the eyes of civil law, it is the bishop who is the responsible party for gambling in Roman Churches. Perhaps this further explains why there are so few prosecutions for illegal gambling in Roman Catholic Churches when there is so much evidence that it is conducted there on a huge scale. The law, however, was made for the offender whether he be great or small, and should be applied to every church and society of whatever race or creed. "Charity" is a poor excuse for tolerating illegal games of chance, and the cloak of religion is an even baser, if a more subtle, form of hypocrisy that ought not to be countenanced by those charged with the equitable enforcement of our laws.

—W.S.W.

CLAIM \$20,000 SPENT AT BAZAAR TEST LEGALITY

From *The Toronto Star*

Hamilton, Dec. 17—Hamilton police "crackdown" on bingo games was confirmed to-day by Morality Inspector Arthur Robson, who said that one man has already been charged in connection with a bazaar held last week in which a 1953 car was offered as a prize.

Peter Sekeshon of Stoney Creek, president of the board of Holy Resurrection Romanian church, will appear in police court Friday. Inspector Robson said that a similar charge may be laid against the vice-president, Nick Kupick.

A crowd estimated by police at 5,000, spending up to \$15,000 to \$20,000, attended the bazaar at the Hamilton armories.

"They certainly stepped off their limits. It was much too big to ignore," said the inspector.

Permission to hold the game was given by Mayor Lloyd Jackson, but the permit stipulated that the prizes could not exceed \$50, and that proceeds should go to charity.

The inspector said that between \$8,000 and \$10,000 changes hands in Hamilton every week at so-called "small bazaars and bingos." He said Friday's case will be regarded as a test, and that further charges may be laid under the criminal code, for which the maximum penalty is two years imprisonment.

A SIX-MONTHS' STORY CONTINUED IN THIS ISSUE

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

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

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Bible School Lesson Outline

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THE MIRACLE AT CANA

Lesson Text: John 2:1-11.

Golden Text: "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it."—John 2:5.

I. The Marriage and the Presence of the Lord: verses 1-5. The first miracle is typical of all the miracles of Christ,

in that, performing it, He manifested forth His glory as the Son of God and His power as the Lord of creation (John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16). His disciples recognized the token of His Deity, and their faith was strengthened.

Cana in Galilee was the city of Nathanael (John 21:2). The presence of even one follower of Christ in a place is a source of blessing, and signifies that Christ has a testimony there (Acts 14:17; 18:10).

The glory of Christ is not inconsistent with true earthly joy: His presence at the marriage feast contributed to the happiness of that occasion. He would deliver us from the snare of sinful pleasure, but bestow upon us lasting, holy joy (Psa. 16:11; Prov. 10:22).

The glory of Christ may be manifested in the simple, everyday affairs of life. On this occasion He solved the domestic problem of an embarrassed host. Whatever we may do that is lawful and expedient for a Christian may be done to His glory (1 Cor. 10:23, 31; Col. 3:23). It was slaves, in the first instance, who were admonished to adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things (1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:10).

The time when Christ should manifest His glory was under His own control. His mother evidently thought that this would be a good opportunity for Him to show to the world that He was God (John 7:1-6). The Greek word for "woman" does not imply disrespect or severity, but rather tenderness. He gently reminded her that He must follow His own course (Luke 2:49), since the time for the full revelation of His glory had not yet arrived (John 17:1). He had entered upon His Divine work, and He could not allow any human being to dictate His actions. At the same time, He Himself chose to give to His disciples a glimpse of His essential Deity, and they understood His meaning.

II. The Miracle and the Power of God: verses 6-11.

Christ is sovereign, not only in the time, but also in the manner in which He manifests His glory. At one time He might perform a direct miracle; at another time He might use means (Compare John 9:6 with Mark 10:52), as on this occasion when He changed the water into wine.

The six large water-jars, with capacity varying from about

18 to 27 gallons, were probably intended for use in connection with the washing of feet and hands, as well as the utensils and vessels (Mark 7:3, 4).

The Greek word for "draw" is generally used of drawing water from a well (John 4:7, 11). If taken in the usual sense here, it would imply that Christ instructed the servants to draw from the well sufficient water to fill the jars, in order perhaps to show that this was ordinary water, and then said something to this effect: "Now draw more water from the well and carry it to the governor of the feast." Explain to the scholars that this would not be intoxicating liquor (Prov. 20:1), but one of the fruit drinks which form a necessary item of diet in Eastern countries where pure water is not always to be found. Any wine, which the Lord would make, would be perfect and wholesome.

Although possessing all power, the Saviour used the weakness of man as His instrument in performing the miracle, for He made the obedience of the servants a condition for the bestowal of blessing (1 Cor. 1:27-29). He promises to reveal Himself to those who obey Him and to give them His Holy Spirit (John 14:21; Acts 5:32), through Whom "greater works than these" may be done (John 14:12). He gives to the believer the privilege of being a co-labourer with Him in the miracle of the new birth of the soul. Wise are they who are obedient to Him. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

The glory of Christ is indissolubly connected with His suffering. The first miracle of changing the water into wine, which is the symbol of suffering (Matt. 20:22, 23) and of death (1 Cor. 11:25), suggests the bitter sorrow which Christ bore for us before entering into His glory (Luke 24:26; John 12:23, 24; Heb. 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 1:11).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Jan. 12—The water that gives life John 4:1-15.
 Jan. 13—The water that satisfies John 6:27-35.
 Jan. 14—The water that refreshes Psalm 23.
 Jan. 15—The wine that speaks of suffering Matt. 20:20-28.
 Jan. 16—The wine that speaks of death 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
 Jan. 17—The wine that speaks of fellowship 1 Cor. 10:16-21.
 Jan. 18—The wine that speaks of joy Psalm 104:10-24.

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