

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 34, No. 36

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, DECEMBER 22, 1955

Whole Number 1752

BLESSING IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE

FROM one experience in life the Christian may derive trouble and blessing. If the incident is viewed at the moment of its occurrence we are apt to see only trial and difficulty. The passage of time, however, soon reveals that the Lord has overruled and turned our trouble into joy and blessing. The wails of lament are then turned into songs of praise.

The Book of Judges contains an interesting account which illustrates this spiritual fact. Samson, the thirteenth judge of Israel, was a Nazarite and hence was specially dedicated to the Lord. In the fourteenth chapter of Judges there is the record of Samson's journey to Timnath to acquire a wife. The Bible distinctly tells us that this eminently consecrated man was in the way of the Lord as he set out upon this journey.

Trouble When Least Expected

With our faulty standards of judgment, we are apt to conclude that one who is so sanctified and obedient will encounter no setbacks. Somehow we have come to think that the Christian is immune to the usual trials that beset men. Our minds are so constituted that we are apt frequently to seek some immediate cause for any calamity and to attribute such a calamity to our own shortcoming.

There is a sense in which all our trials and troubles may be traced to sin — the first sin which brought a curse upon the race. But it is not true that all *personal* trouble, sickness or trials are the result of *personal* transgression. One may be in the will and way of the Lord and there be overtaken with trouble.

Such was the experience of Samson. He encountered trouble when it could be least expected. As he journeyed down to Timnath, "a young lion roared against him." This encounter forced him to conflict. We want to emphasize, however, the fact that this danger came *in the path of duty*.

How are we to explain similar occurrences in our own lives? In our despondency we are sometimes inclined to

despair and ask what we have done that we should have received such a blow. Our limited vision hides from our view the end result of each such incident and so conceals the rich blessing which lurks behind each cloud of trial and sorrow.

In the incident before us, Samson received divine help — "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand." Truly the Lord does intervene to help His people or else we would all be overwhelmed.

This narrative impresses upon us the need for special vigilance in those very moments when we seem to be enjoying the most of the divine favour. Frequently it is at that very time that we encounter some grievous trial. Samson was prepared but we are apt to find ourselves unarmed for the hour of triumph and blessing seems to us a most unlikely hour at which to expect any trouble. This animal, however, will attack us when and where we least expect.

Blessing Where Least Expected

After Samson had vanquished the young lion, he proceeded on his journey and accomplished his mission. Sometime later he returned by the vineyards of Timnath where he had destroyed the beast. He was prompted to turn aside and view the carcass of the animal "and behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them and they did eat..."

Out of that which had been the source of trouble he later drew food. At the moment of his fierce struggle there was no indication of this future blessing but the passage of time changed the matter so that the combatant could return and literally draw strength from what could have been viewed as a disturbing occurrence.

This precious truth speaks to all believers. Does someone read these lines with sorrow heavy upon the heart? It seems as though heaven is hid from your view. Perhaps the loss of a dear one or some heavy personal blow

has nearly bowed you to the ground. You know that the Lord will not utterly forsake you but will give you grace for the trial. Does our thought stop here? No! The passing days, weeks and years and the blazing light of eternity will reveal that out of your trial He brings forth blessings untold for your own benefit and for the benefit of those known and unknown to you.

Do we address some saint who is laid aside upon a bed of sickness or retirement? You feel that the Lord's hand is heavy upon you and in a moment of doubt you feel that you must question His reasons for thus dealing with you. We have known some super pious souls who talk as though they were above such frailty but any who have experienced such illness well know whereof we speak. Our own short view of the event and its consequences prompt us to see it as an isolated mishap but again we are wrong for subsequent history will lead us to a better judgment when we are enabled to draw blessing from the very core of our present distress.

In the work of the gospel, we are often discouraged and are overwhelmed with setbacks and disappointments. Satan would have us regard all these as being due to the disfavour of God. He would have us see each incident only in relation to the immediate consequences. Paul had a terrible experience once when he was imprisoned in Rome. The Lord gave him a correct view of the situation, however, so that he was enabled to declare, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." (Phil. 1:12). In his own trial and imprisonment he could trace the hand of God which brought forth honey.

Finally this incident in the life of Samson emphasizes the need for our appropriating the fruit of past experience. The lessons of life are not to be lightly overlooked but are to be appropriated to ourselves. The Lord seeks to teach us and speak to us in all of the occurrences of life so that we may learn. Each successive instalment causes us to love Him who sustains us in trial and brings out of that trial food for our eternal welfare.

THE CHURCH AND CO-EXISTENCE

The countries behind the Iron Curtain are stepping up their campaign to convince the West that Communists are not anti-Christian or anti-Church. If one derived his information solely from the propaganda sheets that normally flood an editor's desk he might be persuaded that the churches were never so flourishing as today in Communist countries.

From Hungary there reaches us a "Roman Catholic Review" in German, each number richly illustrated with photographs of ecclesiastical pomp. From Czechoslovakia comes "Sparks of Constance", organ of the Church of the Czech Brethren, reporting the number of its congregations has increased from 203 to 267 since "liberation". The Czechs also publish "Yesterday and Today", an enthusiastic history of The Protestant Reformation in Bohemia. Prague News Letter reports the world premiere of a new cantata "Hymn to St. Jacob" by a Czech Catholic composer as evidence of the vitality of church art.

Polish Roman Catholics circulated a weekly newspaper "Today and Tomorrow", to show how happy Roman Catholics are in a Communist state, which the Pope promptly placed on the Index. From Romania and Bulgaria come colored photographs picturing the restoration of Orthodox Churches, while from Moscow came no less than a delegation of mitred prelates.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
(Editor 1922-1955)

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

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

CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Dr. H. C. Slade, Pastor, Jarvis Street Baptist Church

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Leslie K. Tarr, B.A.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

Dr. C. D. Cole

Olive L. Clark, Ph.D. (Ter.)
S.S. Lessons and Exchanges

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

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Telephone WAlnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

Photographs of robed churchmen and swinging censers do indeed testify that something has changed across the "Curtain"—but is it anything more than the propaganda directive from Moscow?

—EDITORIAL, *Toronto Star*, December 17, 1955

The Editor's Corner

The Doctrines of Grace

The first book in the Dr. T. T. Shields' Memorial Library has met a good reception. Already friends have written to ask that we notify them as to the date of publication of subsequent volumes. Numbers have written to express their appreciation for the present volume. Copies are still available for \$2.50 each.

The New Year Campaign

During the winter months people are more inclined to devote time to reading and to the consideration of what books and magazines they should acquire. We trust that our readers will take advantage of this natural interest and press the claims of THE GOSPEL WITNESS upon friends. You are our best representative to your friends.

Thank You For Hearty Expressions

During the past year and especially at this season we have received many hearty expressions of gratitude for the paper. The editors marvel at your consideration and shall try to make it even more worthy of your high esteem.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Life of Faith

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 25th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

WHETHER we will or no, we live in the flesh. We are men and women of flesh and blood, and all that belongs to the flesh and blood is of necessity characteristic of us. But the Christian is differentiated from all others who live in the flesh by the fact that this life in the flesh is lived in faith, and that faith is defined as the faith which is in the Son of God "who loved me, and gave himself for me".

We are constantly subject to temptations. All God's children, as I heard an old man once say, must have their "ups and downs" though they do not have their "ins and outs". We are "in Christ", but the devil does not let us alone, and the fact that we are in the flesh makes us subject in large measure to the emotions of the flesh. It is not as easy to be happy when you have a headache as when your head is clear. It is not so easy to smile when you have the rheumatism, is it? I heard of a minister who, missing some member of his congregation, met that member's wife one day, and said to her: "I have not seen your husband for some time?" "No," she said, "he has not been to church for a good while now." The minister was a little anxious. He wanted to know what "ism" had afflicted the man. He was afraid that he had been turned aside from the faith; and so he enumerated all the heresies he knew. He said: "Are any of these things troubling your husband?" "Oh, no!" she said, "it is worse than all that, sir: it is not that kind of 'ism': it is rheumatism." Well, you may laugh at that. It is easy to laugh when you are well, but it is not easy when the limitations of the flesh are felt.

We are men and women who live in the flesh. We grow tired. Sometimes we reach the end of our physical strength, or we think we do. Sometimes, indeed, it is difficult for some people to control their natural dispositions. There are some people who are naturally irritable, and it is difficult sometimes of a wash morning for the housewife to be quite as agreeable as on some other occasion. I am not excusing it: I am merely stating the fact. Or, take that man in business, he is tossed about, troubled on every side, and there is great danger some times of his failing to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.

But there is this distinctive thing about the true Christian, that though in the flesh he lives in faith, and faith lifts us above the things of the flesh, and enables us to dwell in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; gives us the victory in the midst of many foes.

I.

Now to our text: This text teaches us that CHRISTIAN FAITH, SAVING FAITH, IS REPOSED IN A PERSON. It is, from

every point of view, intensely personal, personal in its contact, and personal in its exercise. One may have faith in a thing. We may lean upon some thing. We may have faith in the operation of certain principles. We may have faith in certain laws which are principles, after all. But Christian faith is something more than that: "The life which I now live in the flesh" says the apostle Paul "I live by the faith of the Son of God".

Very frequently have I reminded you of this principle, but that we may be on guard against the evils of the day, and that we may be strong in our hour of trial, we need frequently to remind ourselves of things which we already know. The faith that saves the soul is faith that is reposed in a Person, in the Person of Jesus Christ — all that constitutes personality in you reposing in all that constitutes Personality in Another! Not faith merely in a book. Faith is something more than mere opinion, more than intellectual belief, more than conviction of truth: faith involves the exercise of the whole man, of every faculty of the soul. Just as a flower responds to the rays of the sun in its roots, in its stem, in every leaf, in the unfolding petal; it lives because it lives in the sunlight, so the truly regenerate nature answers to all that God reveals of Himself in Christ, and rests in Him, a living Person.

That means that I must have faith in a competent Person. I must know something about the Person I am to trust, and that involves, of course, some objective knowledge, or knowledge of the Person Whom I am to trust. And then that involves, inevitably, intellectual exercise, intellectual belief. I must have some conception of the Person I am to trust; hence the folly of decrying creeds. Your creed is what you believe of the person you trust. If you know nothing of him, if you believe of him, then you cannot trust him! "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," and the content of our faith will depend upon the extent of our knowledge. The more we know of God the more we shall believe in Him.

But here we are told that Christian faith is faith in the Son of God. We had it in our lesson this morning: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." We can know no Helper, we can be assured of no continuous help unless we have faith in the Lord Who made heaven and earth, and we shall not be vigorous Christians unless our faith is an intelligent faith in the Son of God.

Let me ask you, very simply, if that is what your faith

is, if you believe in Jesus as verily the Son of God, Who is the living Saviour? No one else can possibly know your need. No one else can possibly have full knowledge of all your circumstances. No one else can possibly know your natures, or dispositions; Of no one else can it be said: "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust".

The physician reaches his limitation of knowledge when the patient is desperately ill, and all concerned want to know exactly what is the matter. Very frequently even the wisest must admit: "I am sorry, but as yet I cannot tell".

Now no one other than the One Who made us, from Whom we derive our being, can possibly have full knowledge of your need and mine. No one else has skill and power to deal with our particular case. No one else can possibly have authority over the realm of life in which we live. Have you ever tried to secure admission somewhere where somebody's authority is necessary to open a dark door? You have gone to one official, and he has said: "I am sorry, but that is beyond my jurisdiction." You have gone to another, and he says: "Well, I am afraid I have no authority in this case." You pass through the whole maze of the Circumlocution Office in order to find someone who has the key to unlock the door that you are to enter.

Now who has authority to enlarge life, to open doors for us, to command our enemies, to give us service, to supply our needs? We cannot live in the flesh and above the flesh unless we have a clear view of the fact that the faith which is ours is faith in the Son of God. We need to emphasize this again and again to-day. There are comparatively few who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and God the Son, comparatively few who believe in One Who is really living, to Whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth. But the faith which characterized Paul, which should characterize every Christian is a faith that is reposed in Him by Whom all things were made, Who is before all things, and in Whom all things consist. Is your faith in a Person, the living, present, Christ?

III.

Well, in the next place, OUR FAITH MUST BE IN ONE WHO LOVES US. The outstanding characteristic of the One in Whom Paul believed, was that that One loved him: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

I wonder whether, in any true sense, you and I actually believe in the love of God? Let me say some old things. Let me ask you to pull down a few books from the shelves of memory which you have read a hundred times; review your own testimonies, examine your own confessions, and answer to your own heart. Is there Anybody to Whom all power belongs, Who really, not in theory, but Who really loves you? That is the question. We quote it again and again that: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But I am afraid, dear friends, that many of us believe in the love of God in a very theoretical fashion, and do not actually rest the soul in the assurance of it. But no one else can possibly save us, but One Who loves us.

You and I need a great deal of loving. Oh, let us

frankly admit that there is not anything in us to attract the affections of another; that there are a thousand things in us to repel anyone's love. It is easy, you know, to be agreeable with each other for a little while. Sometimes I find myself almost amused at the attempts of our Oxford Group friends who convert people to their theories by means of a house party. I spoke on that question some time ago, and I received letters from all over the country from some very influential people, notably from Montreal and Ottawa. The letters said: "Please, please withhold judgment until you have attended an Oxford Group house party." Well, I have attended a great many other house parties. They were not called house parties, but I have been the guest in many homes on many occasions, and do you know I have never been entertained by one disagreeable person! Even the children have been on their best behaviour. And sometimes they have worn their best clothes; and the husband has called his wife; "dear", and she has called him "dear", and they have been the very incarnations of politeness and amiability, and if I had had less experience I should have said to myself: "What wonderful people these are!" And it may be that I seemed to be quite wonderful to them, for I try to be agreeable to them, and succeed in some measure! Here and there I have actually known people who have said that Mr. Shields was not quite so bad after all; "really quite nice when you come to know him." But after all, we do not know each other by a house party, not even if it is extended beyond two or three weeks! You have to live with people. You have been living with yourself for a long time, and you don't know yourself yet. But let me tell you that the man you see every morning when you shave, is an ugly customer, and it is hard to love him. Have sympathy with your wife when she tries. She has a hard job just loving you.

Now Paul says, "Here is One Who loves us. I have not any doubt about it. Knowing just what I am, He loves me." It is not hard to trust one whom you really love, and who really loves you.

But now, my friends, we cannot get on with God until that becomes a vital, active, principle in life, until we are able, in spite of all contrary appearances, really to believe in the love of God. Oh, we may believe in His power, in His wisdom, in His justice.

A very noted man once went to a photographer — you would know him if I mentioned his name — and as he sat in the chair he said, "Now, photographer, I hope you will try to do me justice?" The photographer was a very frank man, and leaning on his camera, as he was trying to get this man in a proper position, he said, "It is not justice you need, doctor: it is mercy." And that was true. Most of us do, and most photographers show it to us by touching us up beyond recognition.

My friends, we need more than faith in the power and justice of God. We cannot go on with God unless we are persuaded of the love of God. In no other way can we bear His judgment upon our sin. There are so many things in you and me that God has to deal with, and which He must deal with if He is going to make us ready for His holy presence. And it will be impossible for us to trust Him if we do not believe in His love.

I have a very vivid recollection of walking through one of the great military hospitals in England during the war, and a nurse behind a screen was dressing a soldier's

wounds. I did not see him, but I heard him, and I shall never forget his cries. "A big, strong, man!" Yes. "A true soldier!" Yes; but sorely wounded. And as the nurse ministered to him he cried: "Oh, sister, sister!" And then there was quietness for a moment and then he cried out again: "Oh, sister, sister, have pity on me!" There was no rebellion there at all. But the nurse went steadily on removing the bandages, cleansing the gaping wound, and ministering to him. There was no rebellion: he knew, of course he knew. That was the life of the flesh that was crying out, very much in the flesh just at that moment. But he knew it was the healing hand of love that was ministering to him. You and I could never endure the torture of divine surgery if we do not believe in the love of God. He will have to put us through such discipline, through so many trials, give us such rigorous treatment, that again and again we shall have to cry out in our pain, in our agony. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, but he knew that love permitted it, lest he be exalted above measure.

Can you stand it? Most people are having a hard time just now. Some of God's people are having a peculiarly difficult time. Let us ask Him for grace to believe the love that He has for us, in spite of all.

Nor can we believe in the continuance of the divine ministry apart from this. I asked a nurse one time how she was getting on. "Oh!" she said, "I am in love with the work." I said, "You need to be. No one else can be a nurse."

After the prayer meeting last night I was called to the Sick Children's Hospital. I went there about eleven o'clock, and I met one of our mothers. She had a little boy in there about twelve years of age, and the nurse whispered to me: "Humanly speaking there is no chance." He had no chance from the beginning. I sat down in the corridor with that little boy's mother, and she said, "I have been here a week." I said, "A week!" "Yes; day and night." I said: "Do you sleep here?" "Oh, yes; I just go down there in the waiting room, and doze for a little while, but I am afraid even to go there—it is too far away from this room. Most of the time I sit outside the door, or inside his room." There she was, sitting on a hard bench in the corridor, because that little loved frame was suffering inside. Oh, I have seen a lot of that. Nobody but a mother can do that. You could not sit there a week; you would give up. But she won't give up. As long as she lives, and that child lives, she will be there.

What a task it is to get us ready for heaven, is it not? I have wondered sometimes when I have thought of our Sunday School when we are in full flood, when the children are all home; and very often on Saturday night we pray for the mothers who have to get the children ready for service in the morning. And when there are five or six children in the house, it is a great job to get them all ready for school. However do mothers stand it anyhow! They could not except that God has implanted in them a love for their work.

Ah, but the Father in heaven has to get us ready. There is a great deal of washing to do, a lot of cleansing to do, a lot of dressing to do, a lot of teaching and training to do. We are dull scholars, and we shall be rebellious, and we shall never get through at all unless there be wrought in us by the Spirit of God a real faith in the Son of God Who loved us.

Will you go from this place this morning saying in your heart — perhaps we shall sing it presently — "I am so glad that Jesus loves me"?

• III.

Now just this word and I have finished: True faith is not only in One Who loves us, but in ONE WHO HAS ATONED FOR OUR SINS, WHO GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME. The apostle Paul was long in learning that, and very reluctant to receive it! For a long time he was filled with the intense hatred for the glorious Victim of the cross. He thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But at last he came to understand that Jesus loved him, and gave Himself up for him.

As I was meditating a little on this last night I said to myself: "I wonder why it was that Saul of Tarsus apparently never heard Jesus personally?" He lived in Jerusalem; he was a Pharisee; he was an intensely religious man, and one might have supposed that he would have made it his business to hear this new Prophet. But apparently he did not hear Him; He did not see Him; he was not there when He was crucified. It was only by a special revelation later that he saw Jesus. I am rather glad he did not see Him, because that puts him in the class with us: "whom having not seen we love". But he believed with all his heart that Jesus gave Himself up for him.

I wonder do I talk to you too often about the cross? Do you ever grow weary of hearing about the blood? Do you? Someone told me once in this church in the long ago, before our revolution — a young lady — that I talked too much about the death of Christ. She said: "You talk too much about the death of Christ. You speak too much about His blood. Why do you not tell us about His life?" I said to her: "His life has no value apart from His death, even as His death has no value apart from His life."

I will tell you why I speak about the blood — because I cannot help it. It is my only hope. It lies at the very foundation of my faith. I find it possible to believe I am saved only as I am enabled to see that Incarnate Deity took my sin upon Himself, and carried it to the cross, and with His own blood expiated my guilt. And whether you like it or not, this is my testimony:

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

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

That was Paul's experience. He never got over it. Independent of Jesus, an enemy of the great Imposter, looking back upon the cross as a triumph of the sect to which he belonged, glorying in the fact that He had been done to death, and resolved to do others to death who were called by His name, until he learned this one thing, that the Crucified One was not dead, but alive. And from the moment that Jesus spoke from heaven and called him by name, and then answered his question, "Who art thou, Lord" by saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" — the moment he heard that, with that

voice a light that never was on sea or land shone into his heart, and he saw the cross; he understood it, and exclaimed: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You see, my dear friends, Paul said, "I am believing in Him Who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Jesus withheld nothing. Never forget that. I wish I had time to speak to you on that subject. I should just like to take this for a text: "He gave himself up for us". Paul said: "I cannot help trusting Him, myself." Who was He? "In Whom dwelleth the Godhead bodily". "Why," said Paul, "this Jesus Whom I trust has placed at the command of my faith all the resources of Deity. Everything that God is Jesus Christ is. My faith is the faith in the Son of God Who loved us, and gave HIMSELF up for me, a Sin Offering, a whole Burnt Offering for me." You can say it for yourself, but I want to say it this morning for myself — for me! — Himself! for me! a poor sinner. That is what He did. And because of that, I trust Him, I ask Him every day to help me to obey Him.

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for-me."

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank Thee once again for Thy word which ever tells us the story of Jesus and His love. Give us, we pray Thee, hearts to receive the truth in the love of it. May it profit us because it shall be mixed with faith! We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

NEW THEOLOGY

A great inventor is to make bread without flour, and he is preparing the plan of a house which is to have no foundation. Wonderful! Isn't it? We are no longer to eat grapes as they come from the vines — they are so old-fashioned: we are to have them after they have been squeezed in a patent press, and have been fashioned into cakes of mathematical shape. We should not be at all surprised to hear that our steam-boats are all a mistake, and have become things of the past, being in fact superseded by electrified table-cloths, which each man withdraws from his dining-table, spreads on the top of the water, and then uses as an instantaneously-prepared raft, which he steers with his knife and fork. When this comes about, we shall still be found sticking to the unchanged and unchangeable Word of God. There will be no new God, nor a new devil, and we shall never have a new Saviour, nor a new atonement: why should we then be either attracted or alarmed by the error and nonsense which everywhere plead for a hearing because they are new? What is their newness to us; we are not children, nor frequenters of playhouses? Truly, such a new toy or a new play has immense attractions; but *men* care less about the age of a thing than about its intrinsic value. To suppose that theology can be *new* is to imagine that the Lord himself is of yesterday. A doctrine which is said to have lately become true must of necessity be a lie. Falsehood has no beard, but truth is hoary with an age immeasurable. The old gospel is the only gospel. Pity is our only feeling towards those young preachers who cry, "See my new theology," in just the same spirit as little Mary says, "See my pretty new frock."

—C. H. SPURGEON

SHIELDS' "DOCTRINES OF GRACE" RECOMMENDED AS CHRISTMAS GIFT VOLUME

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE by the late Dr. T. T. Shields is an excellent book which sets forth the great doctrines of grace as found in the Scriptures. This volume is the first of the Dr. T. T. Shields Memorial Library series which will publish the writings and lectures of this man of God, who passed on to be with the Lord last April 4. The book is composed of 17 chapters, which were originally 17 lectures given by Dr. Shields at regular Thursday evening meetings as pastor of the historic Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto, Canada.

The book would make a very worth while gift for Christians who would like to have the momentous doctrines of the grace of God in one single compact volume. It is a volume that should be in the hands of every born-again Christian, as it deals with the profound themes of the grace of God that has made the plan of salvation possible through Jesus Christ. Though the book, over 200 pages, is full of "strong meat" for Christians, yet it is presented in a simple way so that even babes in Christ will find it easy reading.

Dr. Shields systematically presents the Biblical revelation in chapter entitled: The Sovereignty of God, The Sovereignty of God in the Incarnation, The Doctrine of Election, Total Depravity, The Meaning of the New Birth, Justification, Justification by Faith Alone, The Atonement (covering three chapters), The Intercession of Christ, The Eternal Security of the Believer; Once Saved — Always Saved, The Perseverance of the Saints, The Ministry of the Holy Spirit, Sanctification, and closes with a chapter on The Second Coming of Christ.

This admirable work is enlivened and made very interesting by the many illustrations used by Dr. Shields, many of them drawn from his rich experiences in the ministry.

These lectures show that Dr. Shields was a true Calvinist and in line with the great Reformed theologians. This material, set forth in eloquent style, should also give the reader an idea of why he is called "the Canadian Spurgeon".

For believers who are often perplexed by the doctrines of God's sovereignty in relation to man's will and the doctrine of election, there is no better volume to put into their hands than this book which clearly and accurately presents what the Bible teaches on these subjects. The book should also be a great help to those who lean toward Arminianism and for any who are entangled within the false systems of modernism and Romanism, and thus, are ignorant of the true doctrines of the grace of God.

It goes without saying that *The Doctrines of Grace* by one of great leaders of the Twentieth Century Reformation will bring honor to the God of all grace, and will deepen the Christian's experience, as well as point sinners to the Lamb of God, who is the great revelation of the grace of God.

The book is well bound in maroon cloth with gold imprinting. Price, \$2.50. It may be obtained by writing to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto 2, Canada.

—*Christian Beacon*, December 15, 1955.

NEEDED: A VISION**The Challenge of Growing Cities**

THE rate at which the cities of our land are growing is so rapid that one wonders how sprawling new developments could be erected so quickly. That which was a barren tract of land one year ago is seen today as a mass of new dwellings complete with streets, sewers, lawns and schools. In this way whole new communities spring into life before our startled eyes.

This rapid growth is a challenge to gospel-preaching churches. Are such communities to have no testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we to sit idly by and allow the modernists to overrun the land? Or are we to wait until the price of land is so prohibitive that a pioneer cause has an uphill battle to raise even the price of a lot?

Surely we need as never before the same spirit of the pioneers of the cross possessed in the apostolic days. Every new community must be viewed as a place to conquer for the Lord. Instead of mourning about the prevalence of modernism and the vast financial resources that lay at the disposal of teachers of error, let us see these new areas as challenges which the Lord presents to us.

We wish we could take each of our readers on a tour of some of these new developments. You would view rows upon rows of houses; in the midst of these hundreds of homes appears a large school with a spacious playground. The presence of baby carriages along the streets indicates that the population of these new communities is largely made up of young married couples and children.

Of more importance than the physical facilities is the consideration that such areas house hundreds and thousands of persons who are on the way to eternity. The vast majority are not Christians and large numbers would openly declare that they have no church affiliation. Those that do claim some church usually have only a nominal affiliation with the religious body. Are we not under a solemn obligation to take the gospel to these souls? It is not enough to say that they can attend evangelical churches outside the immediate community if they so desire. The Bible nowhere declares that the unsaved should or will come to church; the churches are explicitly commanded to go to the unsaved with the glorious gospel.

Let us imagine that we have seen this challenge and that we have determined upon a certain area as a field of operation. How shall we begin? First of all, let us procure a meeting place. Since the area is new there is no community building, no Orange Hall, no Masonic Lodge and no library auditorium. Therefore, in most cases, we must approach the school board for permission to use the school facilities. We are told that the school is available only on Sunday morning for two and a half hours and so we must rule out the thought of an evening service. If some other body has applied for the school, this avenue is immediately closed. If, however, the school is available we may have the use of the auditorium for Sunday morning service and Bible School. The payment is *fifteen dollars per Sunday*.

Our next step is to prepare some notices of the services and to distribute these. At the same time the work-

ers may stop at each door to inquire as to the church affiliation of each household. Should the opportunity present itself there may be occasion for a spiritual conversation. The main purpose of this initial visit, however, is to determine the religious complexion of the area and to announce gospel services.

After this work of announcing the services and having committed the work to the Lord, the eager young pastor awaits with intense interest the first service. As the clock nears the appointed hour on Sunday, he wonders if there will be a great crowd or no one! He thinks of all who vaguely promised they would come and others who expressed some interest.

Perhaps he will find himself with a small band at Sunday School on that first day and with no one at church. The whole effect may cause him to wonder if he should carry on since there is so little interest even on the part of Christians. Or, again, there may have been an encouraging attendance that exceeds his fondest expectations so that he must guard against an air of self-sufficiency and a feeling of over-optimism. In either case, the hardest work lies ahead as contacts are followed up and the plodding work of visitation is continued.

With the first service behind him, the young zealot must keep up the interest of believers and must seek to enlist them into the work as Sunday School teachers and visitors. Hence a double task faces him. If he has a small group of Christians gathered about him, he must seek to teach them in the way of the Lord so that they are of one mind as to the work and nature of a New Testament church. This is no small task for so much of modern evangelicalism is given over to a new gospel of entertaining sinners that Christians are sometimes reluctant to examine the Word to find the church ideal as set forth in the pages of the New Testament. While he is thus teaching the Christians and outlining the policy and program of the work, he must do the work of reaching out to touch the unsaved. Any church, old or new, that neglects this prime phase of gospel work is doomed to a short life.

As the Lord blesses, perhaps the pastor and people feel the need of a building. First of all, a lot must be obtained and the local building regulations examined. Let us recall that in all probability the church has no finances at its disposal for the rent has been high and other items have eaten away all the Sunday collections. Inquiries soon reveal that the price of land in these new areas is exorbitant. In one new community we inquired and learned that the cost of a good lot of one hundred feet frontage was \$30,000! Is it any wonder that so many evangelical churches are forced into acquiring a lot on a back street where no one ever again hears of their existence?

If the fortunate people are blessed in the acquisition of property, the cost of a building then faces them. Shall we construct a basement church and add the superstructure as finances allow? Shall we erect the Sunday School hall and then the auditorium after a period of years? Another suggestion is that a portable building be erected and used until such time as the pioneer cause prospers

to the extent that a permanent building can be built. The portable building will then be dismantled for service elsewhere. Whatever is done, *money is required*. Banks are reluctant to lend money to a new church which is not yet known in the community. The average member of the new work is not endowed with a surplus of this world's goods. These considerations all enhance the value of the Dollar-A-Month Club which would raise money for a church edifice loan fund to assist small, struggling pioneer works.

Perhaps our readers have felt that this picture of the struggles and trials of a pioneer work is a *romantic* one. It is — *as one looks back on it*. There is little romantic about the work as you are in the midst of its problems. On the one hand there is the profound conviction of the need of such pioneer gospel work in the growing new centres and on the other there is the feeling that most Christians are actually indifferent to the problem. Perhaps there is an audible expression of interest but one must wonder if we have enough concern to capture these new strongholds for the Son of God.

"Where there is no vision the people perish!" We call upon our readers to capture a vision of the need of our own land and as this year comes to a close let us pray and give sacrificially that the growing new centres of our land may be dotted with flourishing soul-saving stations where the gospel is preached in power, where saints are instructed for the work of ministering and where souls are led to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, give us a vision!

MY COVENANT

DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB

Desiring to have a vital part in the work of the furtherance of the Gospel, I hereby pledge One Dollar per month, to be applied to the Church Extension Loan Fund of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. This money will be loaned out to deserving causes to assist in the erection of suitable places of worship. (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Name

Address

The Urgency of the Present

By W. Y. Fullerton

WE ARE great debtors to the Jews; but when our religion, like Hebrew verbs, exists only in the past and future, it were well had we learned one lesson less. For while it is blessedly true that our faith rests upon the past work of our Priest, and our hope looks to the coming glory of our King, yet the crowning joy of the gospel is its *present* blessing, and the word "HATH" is on its forefront.

We are sadly apt to think of what *has been*, or what *shall be* (especially the latter), rather than of what *is*. The Samaritan woman in this very chapter, in response to our Lord's words, said, "I know that Messiah *cometh*." Her salvation was yet future, though Christ was by her side; and in this she represents many others. Many, when urged to decide for Christ, wait still for a more convenient season; when present conformity to the example of Christ is shown as their privilege, they postpone such a transformation because they "shall be like him" by-and-by. When almost thrust as labourers into the Lord's vineyard, they hope it may be so ere long. All these reply, "Yet four months, and then—and then": but the echo is lost in the distance.

Our Lord rebukes this spirit, and urges us to immediate service; when he warns us, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?" The harvest is already waiting; and if we can sing, "Jesus saves me now," we ought also to add, "Jesus *sends* me now."

Do not some of us, in reaching forward to some great work in the future, often forget the lesser labours close at hand? Do we not, in waiting for a more congenial sphere to open, often overlook acts of service, which if not so easy would be much more fruitful? Do we not, in anticipation of larger blessings, miss enjoyments just as real, if not so ecstatic, which come to our doors day by day?

These thoughts lead us to our main point, which is to

remark how often, in regular and sustained Christian work, no immediate result is anticipated: the church settles down to a dull uniformity, and while insisting strongly that the word of the Lord shall not return void, yet expects the rich harvest only in future days. Under such circumstances something ought to be done to arouse the people to the fact that God is a *present* help, and that he *waits* to bless. Here comes in the science of special services. The Evangelist's message to such a people is, "Say not, Yet four months." Behold, it is harvest time already. Let us unite to gather home the sheaves.

It is our honest conviction that half the procrastination of unconverted men in accepting the gospel is due to the procrastination of Christians in expecting them to accept it. The most of us are spiritual sluggards, who, when the call to work arouses us, say, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to rest." What wonder, then, that the fields are unreaped, though the sun has risen high in the heavens, and the great "NOW" of the day of salvation is fast passing away? "Behold, I come quickly," saith our absent Lord.

The main reason why many are converted at the special missions, is simply that the people of God are led to believe in the possibility of their friends deciding at once; and the last day of the mission is usually the most fruitful, because then the undecided do not say, "Yet four months, or four days." There is only one day left, and, as a consequence, that is the day of decision.

An elder in one church we visited spoke to a young man who had for years been in his Bible Class, and urged him to yield to Christ. He did so. At the end of the meetings, a night was set apart for thanksgiving and testimony, and that young man rising said, "Sir, I trusted Jesus when you spoke to me about it; and oh, sir, if you had spoken to me sooner, I might have found

Jesus before"! What a rebuke! and how true! For if we all, instead of waiting for special times and seasons, would speak the word *now* that we mean to speak *then*, how many more weary hearts might come to the Rest-giver! Instead of that, we too often say, "Yet four months".

In nearly every town we have visited we have had the satisfaction of seeing whole Sunday-school classes led to Christ, and have rejoiced with the teachers in their joy at having all their scholars on the Lord's side. And how does this come to pass? I speak as a man, and being a man I can speak no otherwise: it is because the teacher expects them to decide during the special meetings, and puts forth special efforts that they may do so. The same means at any other time would probably bring similar results; but at other times the despondent heart too frequently says, "Yet four months."

There is something, however, even better than special services, and that is, to make every act of service special, taking them one at a time, and each time doing our best, expecting a daily blessing on our work, as we need daily grace to carry it on. There is nothing sadder in our life than the memory of missed opportunities, chances we allowed to escape: while we were busy here and there they were gone. Words we might have spoken to some heart at a time when by trial or other providence it was ready to receive them, which we did not speak, and now when perhaps we are willing to open our lips, the heart is closed to our appeal, or perhaps the soul has passed beyond our reach. What thou doest for thy Master do *quickly*. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with *thy might*. Son, go work *to-day* in my vineyard. "Say not, Yet four months."

A lady, stirred up to go out and invite her neighbours to come to a special meeting we arranged in a certain town, asked a woman at the door of a public-house to come. She said, "I wish you would go and see my lodger." "Where is she?" "At such a number in such a street," was the reply, and at once the willing feet of the worker were turned in that direction. It was a sad scene which presented itself when she pushed open the door, and entered; for she found it was useless to continue knocking when there was no one to answer. Upon the bare boards lay a woman, gasping for breath; not a pillow of any kind for her head, and not a rag to cover her. Kneeling by her side the Christian lady spoke to her of Jesus and his love, and then hurried home to get the poor creature some nourishment and covering. But when she returned there was no need of either; unattended and uncared for, that soul had passed into another world, and there lay the poor shattered body, on the bare floor of an empty house. Had it not been for the unusual earnestness aroused by the mission meeting, even the few words of hope whispered in that dying ear would have been unsaid, although death would have come just as surely. Around us are hundreds of such cases, and four months hence, nay, perhaps four days hence, they will be in eternity. As Deborah said to Barak, "Up, for *this is the day*." Then "Say not, Yet four months."

In four months you yourself may be gone. The branch not bearing fruit may be taken away, and the fruit you thought of bearing some day will never be put to your account. You mean perhaps to give something to the cause of Christ; give it now. You mean to urge your dear ones to yield to Christ; you intend to write a letter to a friend about this matter: do it now. No future

service can possibly compensate for present lack; what we do in time to come will only be our duty, and a great blank will be left for to-day. Go out *quickly*, and compel them to come in, and say not, "Yet four months."

Captain Allen Gardiner, on the inhospitable coast of South America, where he slowly perished with hunger, in the hope of attracting the notice of some passing vessel, wrote on the cliff in large letters "DELAY NOT, WE ARE STARVING". Years after, the words were seen; but it was too late, the bleached bones of the brave hero of the cross strewed the beach. Help had been delayed, and he had perished. The like cry of a dying world for the Bread of Life, ringing in the ears of the people of God who have enough and to spare, will surely not be much longer unheeded. A few have responded already, but what are these among so many? Oh that we would each one arise and do our utmost daily, expecting to see mighty results *now*! Do not think God's resource has been exhausted in past days, and "Say not, Yet four months." THE HOLY GHOST SAITH, "TO-DAY."

NEVER TOO SOON

Why do young people so frequently put off thoughts of religion till a future day? Do they imagine that they are too young: too young to be delivered from the guilt of sin, too young to be made happy in the love of God? Do they consider that the present time is too soon? Too soon to be doing right, and serving one's Creator and Benefactor! Whence can such an idea have arisen? Would any young man exclaim, "It is too soon for me to be honest and truthful; too soon to be loving to my parents, and kind to my friends"? How then, can it be too soon to be true to God, and grateful to our Maker? Few ever think it too soon to gain the favour of men, much less of men who can do them great service; how is it that they talk of its being too soon to be in favour with God? The hand of the enemy of young men's souls is in all this.

If a fortune were to come in a young man's way tomorrow, we do not believe that he would refuse it on the plea that it was too early for him to be rich. If he could be promoted to an honourable situation in Her Majesty's service, we do not believe that our young friend would decline it because it came to him too early in life. We have heard complaints of the slowness of promotion in the civil service, but we never yet heard any man say that he had risen too rapidly. Truly good things can hardly be obtained too soon; for the earlier they come the longer time remains in which to enjoy them. In spiritual things we may fitly use the world's old proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." True godliness is best with the dew upon it. Those who begin with God betimes shall see cause for gratitude in this matter as long as they exist.

We advise those who have long been hoping to decide at once for Christ and holiness. You have halted too long between two opinions. Decide! Decide! It is ill to stand by the hour together looking at a feast: why not sit down and enjoy it? Who wishes to postpone happiness, and put off peace? They do this who delay the seeking of pardon, and tarry long before accepting the blessings of free grace. "It is better late than never," says one: say rather that "*It is better in such matters never to be late.*"

—C. H. SPURGEON

A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. Dabarry

WE MADE A MISTAKE!

The pope claims infallibility but this elusive possession has not been vouchsafed to ordinary mortals and especially has it been denied to harassed editors. In last week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS we included another chapter in *A Devotional Study in Revelation* which we erroneously described as chapter 24 when in reality we printed the first part of chapter 25. In this issue we print the second part of chapter 25 and the whole of chapter 24.

Second Part of Chapter 25

II. Descriptive Revelation (21:9-22:5)

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues."

After fulfilling his ungrateful mission the angel has now a blessed task. His appeal: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" could by itself be the object of a most profitable meditation. John is carried away in the Spirit "to a great and high mountain." This is in contrast with the preceding visions where John had been carried into the wilderness to witness the fall of Babylon the great. But he will now behold a threefold vision presenting three essential aspects of the final bliss of the elect: A. In the New Jerusalem; B. In the midst of the new humanity; C. In the new Paradise.

A. The bliss of the elect in the New Jerusalem (21:9-21).

The holiness of the city first calls John's attention. Its name "holy", its "descending out of heaven from God", its "crystalline" appearance contrast it with the first Jerusalem. Although the city of David had been the favourite object of the divine love, it had been built on the foundations of previous cities which had been cursed of God. And it had come to be known as the Jerusalem which kills the prophets and stones them that are sent unto her. But the holiness of the new city is also brought out by the symbolic picture of the "wall great and high" which protects and separates the beloved people from all possible contact with evil. The gates, facing the different tribes of Israel whose names they bear, seem, together with the angels who keep them, to indicate that the way of entrance into the city has been opened by grace and controlled by the divine justice. The "twelve foundations" upon which are written "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" confirm the holy origin and the high destiny of the new Jerusalem.

The wisdom which is manifested in the city appears both in the dimensions and its proportions. "A reed like unto a rod" had been previously given to John that he might measure the refuge-place of the oppressed

people of God. But here, as befits the higher position of the city, the dwelling-place of the glorified people is measured by an "angel" by means of a "golden reed". That dwelling-place is minutely described both as a whole (the "city") and in the detail of its doors and its walls. Nothing therefore has been left to chance. The expected city, "whose builder and founder is God" (Heb. 11:10), cannot but be the perfect expression of the Creator's unrivalled handicraft. For its twelve thousand furlongs in length and breadth are a symbolical figure for its greatness; its square base recalls one of the most perfect geometrical figures. At first sight, it seems difficult to determine whether the equal height of the city-wall points to a cubic shape, similar to that of the Holy of holies, or merely to an even elevation of the different parts of the wall. The second hypothesis seems however the right one since the measure of the wall is specified as being 144 cubits. The phrase "the measure of man, that is, of the angel" would indicate that to the vastness of the city must correspond an adequate protection, reassuring both to angels and to men.

The magnificence of the city both in its general appearance and in its detail, also calls our attention.

In its general appearance, the city "has the glory of God". "The building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." That precious stone is generally considered as being the queen of jewels — the diamond: without the light, it would be as little noticed as coal is, to which it is related. Likewise, the "glory of God" communicates its beauty to that work of grace which the city is: for the Lord "gives grace and glory" (Ps. 84).

In its details, the splendour of the city first appears in "the foundations of its wall, garnished with all manner of precious stones". The enumeration of those stones show that they are harmoniously grouped according to their colours. Although they do not exactly coincide with those of the high priest's breast-plate which represented the twelve tribes of Israel, they correspond, by their number and their beauty, to the symbolical representation of the gospel of God, ever present before Him. But whereas the precious stones owe their full brilliance to the patient work of the lapidary, something spontaneous, the sovereign act of grace, seems to be implied in the gates made of one pearl each; for we know that the pearl finds its origin in a wound inflicted in the dark depths of the sea and that nothing could beautify it, as it immediately attains absolute perfection: "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by

the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:20).

Finally, the streets of the city are like unto "pure gold, as it were transparent glass": thus is emphasized here the absolute purity of the gold, in contrast with our earthly streets which are a natural receptacle for all impurity. Nothing "impure or defiled" will ever penetrate the holy city.

B. The Bliss of the Elect in the Midst of the New Mankind (21:22-27).

Two main features characterize the God of the renewed mankind: He is the all-powerful One, the "Lord God Almighty"; and He is the triumphant Sufferer, the Sacrificed Lamb. The blessed divine presence is universally felt, for Jehovah does not dwell any more in a distant "temple". Through the rent veil He has become accessible to all. And the radiance of His glory, reflected in the Lamb, plays, in this spiritual kingdom, the roles of the sun and of the moon. But "there will be no night there", by contrast with the case of those who will be tormented day and night while the divine peace and light will for ever give to the elect joy and safety.

The service of the new mankind is manifested in its obedience: "The nations shall walk in the light of it." Also in its consecration: "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it . . . And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." In other words, all that the redeemed will have obtained during their earthly sojourn — as regards virtues or works —, will constitute in heaven the perpetual offering of their consecration.

The consecration of the elect people will be one of its main features. For ever sheltered against all contact with anything "that defileth . . . worketh abomination or maketh a lie", it will eternally remain in the chosen company of those "which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

C. The Bliss of the Elect in the New Paradise (22:1-5).

This third aspect of the eternal beatitude of the redeemed takes us back, by contrast, to the scene in Eden which opens the history of mankind.

The river of life naturally refers to the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). It is a river of pure water, clear as crystal, and it proceeds from the very "throne of God and of the Lamb". Not only does it quench the thirst, but it can also help maintain the fecundity of the tree of life. All those figures symbolize the action of the divine Spirit.

The tree of life grows "in the midst of the street and on either side of the river": the word "tree" must therefore be here used generically for "trees". The tree bearing "twelve manner of fruit" and yielding "her fruit every month" speaks of abundance and variety. Its leaves themselves are used, not as food, but as a means to "heal" the nations. Those "nations" can only symbolize the elect people in their diversity, the company of those who shall come from every nation, to constitute the body of Christ — since all those who do not inhabit the holy city are already and for ever imprisoned in another place. If such is the case, then the healing action of the leaves can only point to the absolute and assured disappearing of the earthly ills which had affected the elect.

The service of life is man's answer to the blessings of the holy Trinity, represented here under the features of "the tree of life", creation of the Father, "the Lamb's book of life", work of the Son, and "the river of life", instrument of the Spirit. Protected from all "curse", the servants of God will, in His presence and that of the Lamb, render a "priestly service". That literal translation lays stress on the privilege of the elect, and at the same time on their complete consecration. Their encouragement will be to "see his face", and their holy pride will be to bear His name on their foreheads. Once again, we are told here that "there shall be no night there". From then on, the elect will have no need of the stars of divine providence to guide them on, or of the artificial light proceeding from man's industry. Possessing all things, their only rôle will be to "reign for ever and ever".

On this ultimate prophecy of a paradise regained does the curtain of divine revelation fall to be raised no more on this side of heaven: for we cannot reasonably expect to know more. Our sole ambition must be now to prepare ourselves for the thrones we shall occupy. For the voice of the Son of Man is already heard which says:

"COME YE, BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD!"

(Matthew 25:34)

CHAPTER 24

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

Revelation 20:11-15

THE purpose of the book of Revelation is not to give an exhaustive and systematic exposition of the doctrine of final things. It is therefore necessary that the facts which are purposely omitted in its pages — because revealed elsewhere — be understood by the reader who wants to reconstitute the true sequels of events. Such is for instance the case with certain important happenings which must precede, attend, or follow the Lord's return. Besides, let us note that this event of so great moment but of limited duration, is spoken of in the past tense, as if already fulfilled, in the passage we shall now consider.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it."

In this throne we have a manifestation of sovereignty, glory, majesty and holiness. The One sitting on the throne is the triune God whose three persons have an equal share in the acts of justice which are about to be performed.

"From his face, the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

The reference does not seem to be here to the physical commotions which must finally renew our world. We rather believe that all the things and all the circumstances among which man had thus far moved vanish away here. And so man is left alone in the solemn presence of God. He stands before His Judge no more in his earthly environment, but in his works.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

We can here generalize. Both the redeemed and the rebels stand before these solemn assizes: the former,

to hear the memorable proclamation of their acquittal; the latter, to hear their condemnation. Both appear before the divine court that their contrasted destinies might fully bring out the miracles of grace and the requirements of the law. And thus the perfect justice of God is clearly manifested, as all men receive the just reward of their works.

"And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

A book . . . the books! Just as our *Bible* was the perfect means chosen by heaven to give us a clear and final revelation of *God*, in the same way *books*, according to an expressive symbolism, will in their turn reveal *man*. On the other hand, a book of life will determine the eternal destiny of those who, through faith, will have worshipped God in spirit and in truth and thus received the privilege of having their names written therein. Deprived of such a right, the others will be left to the fate, they will have deserved by their wicked works. In any proper book-keeping, the final account-book is confirmed by auxiliary books: and so, "books" will, by the accounts they will give of men's works, conclusively confirm the statements of the book of life.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

We have here a rapid description of the magnitude of the resurrection and of the tragic character of the final divine sanctions. Death, first penalty for sin, and hell, its second penalty, are now outstepped in horror by the lake of fire. But, in some way, those instruments of perdition will accompany their victims to the place of torment, probably to give them an everlasting remembrance of the different stages of their awful downfall.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

At first glance, we have here a cause seemingly minor, followed by an effect of far-reaching consequence. And yet, that cause is a major one: "The Comforter", said Jesus, "will reprove the world of sin . . . because they believe not on me." (John 16:8-9).

The whole responsibility and the whole destiny of man are therefore inevitably linked to this one fact: his attitude toward the manifestations of grace accessible to him. Let man answer the divine call, and the book of life will make him eternally secure. Let him reject, even through his silence, the appeals of grace, and the lake of fire awaits him.

The ever present realization of death and hell, the company of the devil, the beast, the false prophet and the rebels, the unending torment of the lake of fire, — what a threatening vision, well-meant to provoke a salutary fear among those whose names do not yet appear in the book of life, and to arouse the humble thanksgiving, the watchfulness and the zeal of all those who possess the privilege of salvation!

Thus, five verses only will have sufficed to initiate the reader to the final judgment of mankind and to its all-important consequences.

As we conclude our chapter, let us observe that the second death finds its counterpart in a description which is yet more stirring than that of the book of Revelation. For the tragedy of Calvary reveals to us with even greater force our imminent peril and the perfect safety which is obtained by grace and through faith: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The preacher of last Sunday morning was Rev. J. Sidlow Baxter who, until recently, was pastor of Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh. A large congregation assembled to hear this man of God expound the Word. At the conclusion of the warm exposition, six persons responded to the invitation.

In the evening the Pastor spoke on the subject, "Does It Matter Whether Jesus Was Born Of A Virgin?" Again the presence of the Lord was felt in the service.

AS I SEE IT!

By The Devil

DEAR CHURCH MEMBER:

There is a little matter I wish to write about; I want to solicit your aid in my cause. Now, I am not in this letter trying in any way to influence you to quit attending the morning services in your church. But you can help me beyond measure, if you will skip the evening services. Many church members across the nation have already taken my suggestion along this line, and I am proud to report that hundreds of churches are dark each Sunday night, as a result of their co-operation in this matter.

It used to be that Christians all seemed to feel that they ought to be in the Sunday evening services, but gradually I have been able to get them around to my way of thinking. Once a day ought to be enough for anyone. I can recall the days when the greatest evangelistic services in the churches were held on Sunday evenings; people would bring in their unsaved friends and many were brought to Christ. Naturally, I never did approve of such things, for I was robbed of many of my followers through such activities. I need not tell you that I have changed most of this now.

So, if you really want to help me fight Jesus, see that your pew is vacant each Sunday night. I will be sure to have one of my imps in your place there, to help discourage the pastor, and throw coldness on the meeting. Perhaps, gradually, we can win the "FAITHFUL FEW" over on our side. I surely would like to have your church dark Sunday nights. I'll appreciate your help.

Hopefully, your adversary,

SATAN

—Reprinted from *The Baptist Beacon*

Temptations when we meet them at first, are as the lion that roared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them, we shall find a nest of honey within them.

—JOHN BUNYAN

A Romanist Joins the Act

IF WE were to believe much of the material that issues from the religious presses of the day, we would conclude the great task of the churches is to promote organic unity of all the varying sects of Christendom. These rabid ecumenicalists seem to believe that the sin that transcends all others in its heinous nature is that of "division". Pious Phrases, scriptural quotations and specious logic are employed in order to foist the ecumenical line upon the churches and Christians.

This whole program is so far removed from the work of the gospel that we marvel that Christians should be deceived into ever lending ear to it for one moment. The fact that men are so easily led to listen to such nonsense is surely proof that there is a great need for solid, scriptural teaching. As the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted and the Word of God expounded in all its fulness, spiritual babies will put away the toys of ecumenicity.

It is no mere coincidence that the further men wander from the pure teachings of the gospel, the more readily they embrace this mania for union and the more they decry the terrible sin of sectarianism. The further they wander in the fields of infidelity, the more they harp on the theme of "unity".

It has been pointed out on innumerable occasions that the modern love for unity and oneness should cause these prophets to return to the church of Rome. There unity has been realized at the price of truth. As that forced unity was being built up "the church" passed through its most decadent period and became a byword for corruption.

Up until the present the Pope has spurned the overtures of the Protestant advocates of the "one church" and has merely sent unofficial observers to the ecumenical gatherings. He has, however, made it abundantly clear that the way to unity is a one way street — *back to Rome!* There can be no talk of the Church's sin for the true Church (i.e. the Roman) has never sinned. Those who have left Rome are the schismatics while Rome is the indulgent mother who eagerly and devoutly awaits the return of her wayward sons.

Periodically, however, other Roman Catholic sources reveal a more sympathetic attitude toward these Protestant ecumenical "searchers-after-truth". Although these lenient expressions are not officially condoned by the papacy we have often wondered if they are encouraged by the Vatican in order to feel out the ecumenical leaders and to keep the door open for further discussion.

One such Roman Catholic expression is reported in the latest bulletin of the *Ecumenical Press Service* (an organ of the World Council of Churches). Below we reprint this despatch in whole:

SPAIN'S CRISIS IN RELIGION AND A PROPOSED SOLUTION

SPAIN:—We give below a summary of an article which appeared on October 28 on the first page of "ABC", the widely-circulated Spanish paper. The article is entitled "The Present Crisis in Religion".

The article is written by Alfredo Kindelan, one of the oldest and most famous generals in the Spanish Army, who is an ardent Catholic.

After expressing his grave concern in view of the wide-

spread de-Christianization of the masses, and the menace of universal atheism which might destroy spiritual life completely, the author suggests a grand international Christian mission, in order to bring the strength and comfort of faith to many millions of people who are practically or even in principle living in the darkness of unbelief.

There would be no question of proselytizing those who already have a religious faith, even if it is not a Christian one. The real point is to get in touch with people who used to be Christians and no longer are so, people who have never accepted any religious 'credo', or people who are hostile to religion altogether."

All the Christian denominations have made remarkable efforts in the past to evangelize the world, "but owing to the unfortunate divisions among Christians, these efforts have always remained isolated and formless, while there is an organized atheistic movement which extends all over the world."

This reveals the need for Christian unity and for "international evangelism" including the collaboration of "selected evangelists trained by zealous Christians drawn from all the Christian denominations." Each of these evangelists would preach in accordance with his own Christian faith and would be responsible for his own dogma, so to speak. But the organization and methods would be in the hands of the "World Movement of Christian Evangelism".

Since the administration of this movement would be exclusively "tactical" and not dogmatic, the author hopes that "men of good will from the other Christian religions would feel able to accept unreservedly the supreme leadership of the Pope, while remaining loyal to their own convictions." The author supports this suggestion by saying that "of all the Christian denominations, Catholicism is the only one which possesses a world-wide organization which is hierarchical and centralized, such as is essential for this international campaign of Christian evangelism."

The primary urgent objectives to be achieved (in the author's view): the religious education of young people; and Christian social justice through raising the living standards of the workers and of the poor.

Note how gently the Roman Catholic writer suggests that all men of good will should recognize the Roman pontiff as the leader of this great campaign of "evangelism". We are told first of all that each person will be free to "preach in accordance with his Christian faith." After making such a magnanimous proposal that "men of good will would feel able to accept *unreservedly* the supreme leadership of the Pope, while remaining loyal to their own convictions"!

How generous! Shall we rise to applaud? Just what sort of monster is here envisaged that it should give men the permission to preach as they desire. Is this not the right of men without the kind permission of this new religious creation?

We are certain that it would be possible for many ecumenical leaders "to accept unreservedly the supreme leadership of the Pope, while remaining loyal to their own convictions." Those who are devoid of real convictions have no difficulty in being loyal to this lack.

This Romanist article could have been written by a Protestant ecumenical leader for it betrays the same low regard for the work of the gospel, the same monotonous cry against "division" and the same emphasis upon external organization. Let this be said, however, — if the Protestant ecumenical leaders are consistent with their own expressed desires and their recorded conceptions of the task of the churches, they should not hesitate to accept this suggestion and tramp back to mother Rome.

AN OBJECTOR ANSWERED

"I don't like so much talk about religion," said a rude stranger in a city boarding-house to a lady opposite, who had been answering some questions with regard to a sermon to which she had been listening. "I don't like it. It's something that nobody likes. It's opposed to everything pleasant in the world. It ties a man up hand and foot. It takes away his liberty; and it isn't natural."

"Oh, no," answered the lady, "it isn't natural. We have the best authority for saying so. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.' True religion is rowing up stream; it is sailing against wind and tide."

A pause for a few moments followed; then the stranger began again —

"People who speak and think so much about religion are queer, anyhow. I wish they could only know how people speak about them; nobody likes them, for they are like nobody; they are so very peculiar."

"Allow me to interrupt you again, sir," said the lady; "but I am so impressed with the manner in which your language accords with Bible language that I shall have to introduce another quotation from the blessed book. 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people.'"

"Does the Bible say they are peculiar, then? That's odd. That book, somehow has got a dose for everybody. Yet, ma'am, you must allow that the commands that book lays upon us poor sinners are hard. It's thou shalt not, and thou shalt not, all the time. Why, its precepts and views of things are not only systematic tyranny, but they are narrow, very narrow."

"Yes," replied the lady, "they are narrow, for the Bible says they are. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life.' We have to struggle hard to keep in this narrow way, if we once get in it. It is too narrow for pride, worldliness, and sloth. It is too narrow for the service of two masters. It is too narrow for covetousness, envy, and all other evil passions. Hatred can find no place for so much as the sole of its foot in the narrow way. Good deeds, kind words, faith, hope, and charity, occupy all the ground, and will continue to hold it to the end."

The stranger listened surprised and annoyed, and at last arose and left the room, apparently a more thoughtful, if not a better man.—*American Messenger*.

—*The Sword and the Trowel*, 1884.

UNOFFENSIVE PREACHERS!

A local newspaper is conducting a poll to ascertain the Canadian "man of the year". Readers are asked to submit their nominations together with reasons why their candidate qualifies for this honour. One person wrote to the paper and suggested that a certain clergyman deserved the title for "... listening to him for 28 years I have never heard him say one word which would offend." We do not know anything about the gentleman who was thus described and so perhaps his admirer's observations are not true of him. We devoutly hope that it is not true that for 28 years his utterances have been so devoid of content that no one could be offended.

As we read of this unoffensive preacher, we were amused and disturbed. Amusement was aroused at the naivete of the good man who made the nomination on such a basis. On the other hand, we were disturbed at the thought that the concept of the ministry has so fallen that the one great qualification for a prophet is that he offends no one! The day that any preacher reaches the point where the avoidance of offence is his sole aim, his usefulness has ceased. The preaching and application of the gospel will always cause offence and in a measure that offence will be attributed to the faithful messenger.

For Younger Readers

PERSEVERANCE REWARDED

The wise men were persistent seekers and their perseverance was rewarded.

Some years ago, in a manufacturing town, a young lady applied to the superintendent of a Sunday School for a class. He told her he had no vacant classes; but that if she liked to go out and hunt up a class of boys for herself, he should be glad to have her help. She did so, and gathered a class of poor ragged boys. Amongst these, the worst and most unpromising boy was one named Bob. The superintendent told these boys to come to his house during the week, and he would get them each a new suit of clothes. They came and got their clothes. After two or three Sundays Bob was missing. The teacher went after him. She found that his new clothes were torn and dirty. She invited him back to school. He came. The superintendent gave him a second new suit. After attending once or twice, Bob's place was empty again. Once more the teacher sought him out. She found that the second suit of clothes had gone the same way as the first. She reported the case to the superintendent, saying she was utterly discouraged about Bob, and must give him up.

"Please don't do that," said the superintendent; "I can't but hope that there is something good in Bob. Try him once more. I'll give him a third suit of clothes if he'll promise to attend regularly." Bob did promise! He received his third suit of clothes. He did attend regularly after that. He got interested in the school. He became an earnest and persevering seeker after Jesus. He found him. He joined the church. He was made a teacher. He studied for the ministry; and the end of the story is, that the discouraging boy, that dirty, ragged, runaway Bob, became the Rev. Dr. Robert Morrison — the great missionary to China — who translated the Bible into the Chinese language, and so "opened the kingdom of heaven" to the teeming millions of that vast country.

—*The Light of the World*.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"Other Little Ships"	\$2.00
"The Plot That Failed"	2.00
Special Illustrated Number of Sept. 2825
"Russellism or Rutherfordism", 71 pages25
"The Papacy in the Light of Scripture", 26 pages25
"The Oxford Group Analyzed"05
"Does Killed in Action Mean Gone to Heaven?"05
"The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements"05
"The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 Canada

ANARCHISTS IN THEOLOGY

The story is told of a popular orator who, on one occasion, waxed so warm and eloquent over the iniquities of the Government, that losing his head, he declared at last he would abolish everything! This seems to be the vein of our modern divines. Very few of them are overdone with theology, and therefore they abuse it. The grapes are sour to these foxes. But what little they have picked up at second-hand is mostly used by them as something to find fault with. They don't believe in this vulgar view, nor in that antiquated opinion; and in general they don't agree with anything whatever that has either sense or Scripture in it. They remind us of the candidate who was asked by a Scotsman, "How about the Decalogue, Jock?" and instantly replied that he should certainly vote for its total abolition. Their cry is, "Down with all that's up!" They are just Anarchists and Nihilists who have got into a church, and who think they will play the same pranks there as in a Red Republican Club. There's no stopping these foaming spouters — they must run themselves dry; the mercy is that very soon nobody will take the slightest notice of them. Meanwhile, however, some of these destroyers, who have climbed into pulpits, are scattering the little flocks which have accepted them as shepherds; and this makes the matter serious for the time. Perhaps when they have quite finished their career of overturning, the poor people may return with renewed zest to that old-fashioned gospel which their clever young parsons could not endure.

—C. H. SPURGEON

PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Illustrations of the influence of one's personality are to be noted on every side. A pioneer Sunday-school missionary was canvassing a thinly-settled neighbourhood in the West, for the purpose of organizing a Sunday-school in the log school-house of the settlement. Going through a clearing, he met a little boy whom he had not seen before, and, greeting him pleasantly, he asked him to take a seat by him, on a fallen tree-trunk. As they sat there, the missionary gave the boy a little picture-card, and told him of his plans for a Sunday-school, and of the meeting called for that evening, for the starting of the school. "We are going to have a nice school," he said; "and he want all the boys to be in it. You'll come and join us to-night — won't you?" "No," was the abrupt and emphatic reply.

The missionary was not a man to be easily discouraged; so he took out a picture-paper from his pocket, and, putting his arm tenderly around the little fellow, he showed the paper, and explained its pictures; adding, that pictures like that would be given to the scholars of the new Sunday-school, and that attractive books would be lent to them. "You'll come and get some of those papers and books — won't you?" he said confidently. But again an emphatic "No" was the boy's only answer. That did seem a little discouraging but the missionary tried once more. He thought he would try the power of music on the boy. He sang several verse of "I have a Father in the Promised Land;" and then he looked down at the little fellow, and said heartily, "There, we're going to have such singing as that in the Sunday-school! Won't you come and hear it, and learn to sing for yourself?" "No," was, for the third time, the resolute reply.

Then the missionary *was* discouraged. He had found one inaccessible boy; so he rose from his place on the log to go his way, leaving the boy sitting there. "Say!" called out the boy, as the missionary moved off, "Are you goin' to be there?" "Yes, I expect to be there to-night," answered the missionary. "Then, I'll come," responded the boy; and the boy was there when the school was started.

Ah! there was the power of unconscious personal influence. The truth that a Sunday-school was to be started was in itself of no weight with that boy. All the efforts of that missionary to influence the boy, by kind words, by earnest invitings, by the exhibit of cards and papers, and by the charms of music, were ineffective. The boy knew little about those things, and he cared less. But he had a human heart, and that heart was touched and swayed by the personal interest in himself on the part of the man whose arm had been put around him tenderly, and who had been at the pains to sing to him. He wanted to be near that man. If that man was to be in the school-house, the boy wanted to be there also. If it had been a grog-shop to which that man were going, the boy would have been ready to follow him there. And so personal influence is influencing boys and girls, and men and women, *for* the right, or *against* it, to the Sunday-school or to the drinking-saloon.

—From "Teaching and Teachers,"
by H. Clay Trumbull, D.D.

—The Sword and the Trowel, 1885.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 20 First Quarter Lesson 1 January 1, 1956

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

THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Lesson Text: Luke 3:1-18.

Golden Text: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."—Luke 3:4.

- I. The Preacher and His Message: verses 1-6.
See also Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-6.

Luke the historian is careful to describe accurately the circumstances attending the manifestation of Christ on the earth, connecting this pivotal fact with the civil and religious history of the land. The Roman Emperor is named, also the subordinate rulers over districts in Palestine, and the high priests. That Christ lived among men, that He died, rose again and ascended into heaven cannot be denied, for the evidence is beyond contradiction.

The word of the Lord came to John in the wilderness (Luke 1:80). He was not the first prophet, or the last one, who learned to know God in the secret place (Exod. 3:1-10; Psa. 78:70, 71; Gal. 1:15-17). We must commune with God in the sanctuary, if we would serve Him in the world: we shall be tested in private before testifying in public.

John was chosen to be the messenger of the Lord, the voice of Jehovah speaking to His people (Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1). Born in miraculous guise, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he went about in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80). His message might be summed up in two words: "Repent; believe." He urged men to turn from their sins (Matt. 3:2) and to believe on Christ (John 3:36).

John was the King's forerunner and the King's herald. In Roman times when the Emperor travelled, road engineers were sent in advance to clear the way. They would cut through the mountains and fill in the valleys to make the

road as level as possible. They would straighten the curves and remove all obstacles to the Emperor's progress. John was commissioned to prepare the way of the Lord, furthering His triumphant march, that His glory and His salvation might be revealed to all men (Isa. 49:6; 52:10; Luke 2:30, 31).

It was the duty of the king's herald to go before the king, blowing his trumpet to announce the king's approach. So did John the Baptist proclaim the presence of the King of glory. The Lord would have all His children prepare the way for Him and testify to His presence with them.

II. The Results of His Preaching: verses 7-18.

See also Matthew 3:7-12; Mark 1:7, 8.

For a time John the Baptist was considered a popular preacher, and multitudes came to be baptized of him. Many, however, were insincere. It is still true that the multitude throng Christ, but few really touch Him by faith (Matt. 7:13, 14; Luke 8:45).

The scathing language used by John against the self-righteous Pharisees shows how God regards those who attempt to cover up their sins with a cloak of religion (Luke 11:39-44). These men came seeking baptism, a symbol of death to the old life and resurrection to the new life, without exhibiting any desire to turn from their sin. They would depend for their safety upon this outward rite, as they depended also upon their birth as children of Abraham. These Pharisees were not producing fruits worthy of repentance, since they had not the root of repentance in their hearts.

To the people desiring to know what works they should do to show their repentance, he counselled deeds of love and unselfishness; to the publicans — honesty; to the soldiers — mercy, justice and contentment.

As the people were "in expectation" or "in suspense" as to whether John was the Messiah, they sent Levites and priests from Jerusalem to question him (John 1:19, 20). John called attention, not to himself, but to Christ, and urged even his own disciples to turn from him and to follow Christ (John 1:35-37; 3:30). The prophecy of the baptism

of the Holy Spirit and fire was literally fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 3, 4, 17). Since that day every believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, and into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Gal. 3:26-28). The water baptism of John was introductory to the Spirit baptism unto sanctification.

Fire speaks of judgment, as well as of purity (verse 17); the same element burns the dross and purifies the gold (Psa. 21:9, 10; Mic. 4:12; Matt. 13:20; Mark 9:43-49).

Among those who came to John to be baptized was Jesus the Christ. What grace is expressed in those words, "Jesus also being baptized" (verse 21)! He had no sin of His own to confess, but He bore the sin of others (John 1:29; Heb. 7:26, 27), and He stood in the Jordan River representing us (Isa. 53:12).

Christ in His own Person instituted the ordinance of Christian baptism. John's baptism, intended for those who repented, was preparatory to Christian baptism, designed for all who believe (Acts 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:4, 5). As our Lord commanded all believers to be baptized (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 10:48), He first gave us the example, showing His grace in giving no command which He was not willing Himself to obey.

Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 26—The Voice in the Wilderness	Isa. 40:1-11
Dec. 27—The Messenger of the Covenant	Mal. 3:1-3; 4:1-6
Dec. 28—The Message of the Angel	Luke 1:5-22
Dec. 29—The Birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1:59-66
Dec. 30—The Prophecy of Zacharias	Luke 1:67-80
Dec. 31—The Man Sent from God	John 1:6-18
Jan. 1—The Witness of John	John 1:19-34

Suggested Hymns

The whole world was lost,
More about Jesus.
Tell the whole wide world of Jesus.
We have heard a joyful sound.
Ashamed of Jesus!
Just as I am.

Christmas Greetings to the Family

DURING the Christmas season many of our readers will be gathering in family groups for festivity, and worship. The great fact of which this time speaks is the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." A secondary accompaniment of the season, however, is the consideration of a family day when, in the quietness and peace of our homes, we may turn aside from a busy world and enjoy a time of fellowship and relaxation.

All across the world will be found members of our own GOSPEL WITNESS family and, although we shall be unable to meet as one company during the holiday season, our thoughts will be with each and all. We trust that your prayers, in turn, will ascend to God on our behalf.

Those who are associated with the paper have felt very keenly the loss of the guiding hand of the founder who regarded each reader as a valued member of the family. The Lord has been gracious, however, and has supplied needed grace and strength for this labour in the gospel and has added new members to our expanding family of readers.

The Board of Directors and the Editors of THE GOSPEL WITNESS send to every reader of this gospel messenger our hearty wishes for spiritual blessings and true joy. May each believer know the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto.