

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 34, No. 38

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, JANUARY 5, 1956

Whole Number 1754

COUNTLESS BLESSINGS

IN THE midst of every circumstance of life, it is well to pause and contemplate the good hand of God. How seldom do we stop to remember His blessings upon us. In the hour of rejoicing or triumph we are too occupied with jubilation to stop and recall the merciful dealing of God. Then in the routine of life with neither an excess of sorrow nor of joy we tend to feel that there is little for which we can thank Him and so save our praise for imagined better days. Finally, in the hour of sorrow and disappointment, we are so much occupied with our own lot that we cannot think of the Lord except to inquire why such calamities should befall us.

The writer of the book of Lamentations found himself in a sad state and in the midst of his despondency he was brought so low that he came near to blaming the Lord for these calamities. Sounder judgment and more serious contemplation, however, brought him to his senses so that he was led to declare:

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (Lam. 3:22-24).

I.

Truly with this Biblical writer we can first of all thank God for His gracious dealings in keeping us from danger and harm — *"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."* Even in the midst of the most dire circumstance and the most critical illness, we do well to contemplate what He has kept from us and is still keeping from us. Only when we cross to the better land will we fully comprehend the numberless dangers that would have consumed us if the Lord had not staved them off.

This is obviously true even with regard to physical preservation. Daily we experience close deliverances although we may be only occasionally aware of the proximity of disaster. Just during the past few weeks the writer had one such experience which he passes on to his readers in order to cause them to pause and meditate upon similar happenings in their own lives. As I walked along Gerrard Street by the church I heard a dull roar and beheld a sheet of ice and snow crash upon the side-

walk not more than eight yards in front of me. In thinking of this seemingly trivial occurrence, I realized that there was sufficient weight in that mass of snow to critically injure the one upon whom it fell. How often do similar dangers, known and unknown, hover around all of us! If we are in the hand of God, He graciously staves them off until that hour when we are called to be with Him.

Then, too, in the spiritual realm we have so much cause to thank Him because He preserves us from the many dangers that seek to destroy the soul. Some of the more apparent of these are the scores of cults which seek to pervert the Word of God, dishonour the Lord Jesus Christ and damn men's souls. Whenever we see men enmeshed in the snares of Russellism, Romanism or Christian Science, we cannot but thank God that He has preserved us from being consumed by such that would devour the unwary.

Yea, when we behold some fellow man overtaken in a crime that blackens his own character and disgraces his family, we must pause to thank the Lord that in mercy He has held off this monster from us. The grace of God will lead us not to boast of any merit in ourselves but must cause us to ascribe to Him the praise for His shielding us from the spiritual and physical dangers which lurk around us.

II.

Next the writer praises God for blessings bestowed—*"They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness."* The fact that His hand kept many perils from bothering us would be sufficient cause for eternal thanksgiving but the Word of God and experience declare that He positively showers us with blessings untold. From His hand we have received all.

Nor is there a monotony about God's dealing with us for He is not limited in the scope of His operations — *"they are NEW every morning"*. Just as there are no two snowflakes *exactly* alike so too He deals with no two persons in exactly the same way. Indeed He deals with no person in *exactly* the same way on two successive days. He is a God of wonders who, however, does continually deal faithfully.

Some object to the Christian life on the basis that it is dull and routine. It is regrettable if any Christian leaves that impression by his actions, attitude or words for truly the Christian life is an adventure of the first order with continual surprises as a faithful God provides in unlooked for ways. His mercy is unchanging but His ways are forever new.

The believer must join with the Biblical writer in declaring — "Great is thy faithfulness." Here words would fail us as we contemplate His never failing mercy. With sadness we must confess that there have been times that we have faltered in our trust but still He provides in love. The word of men may be unreliable but not so the word and faithfulness of our God.

III.

The greatest cause of our thanksgiving even in the midst of trouble is yet to be related. While we are grateful to God for His hand which holds off danger and faithfully provides for our needs, our greatest cause of praise is this — "*The Lord is my portion.*"

How careful we must be that we allow *nothing* to occupy the place of God in our hearts. As surely as it is idolatry to worship another god in the place of the living and true God, so is it idolatry to place anything even the mercies of God in His stead.

Perhaps in our consideration and thanksgiving for the *things* which He has given or the dangers He has withheld, we have neglected to praise Him for Himself! How personal is this thought — "The Lord is my portion." Reader, has He dealt graciously with you? "Yes," you say, "He has and I am grateful for all His mercies." That is well; but are you grateful for Him? Do you personally know Him with an intimacy which could prompt you to describe Him as *mine*?

After all, true religion consists not in outward ceremony or even spoken thanksgiving but *inward possession of a Person*. — "The Lord is my portion." If you lack this personal knowledge of the presence of God, rest not until you have a sense of His abiding presence. No one can truly declare that the Lord is his portion unless He has looked in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. A dying Saviour on the cross in my place enables me to boldly affirm that though a sinner, still on the basis of Another's substitutionary death — "*The Lord is my portion.*"

Believers, too, must be reminded of this fact for it is easy to be misled into thinking that our spiritual life is at high ebb because we are performing outward duties when in reality these very duties have pushed Him aside. Our boast is not in duties but *in Him* who is our portion.

Even those who are sorely tried can whisper this consolation. When calamity strikes and all *seems* black, still the tried Christian rests upon this foundation truth — "The Lord is my portion."

When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

O how shall words, with equal warmth,
The gratitude declare
That glows within my ravished heart?
But Thou canst read it there.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
(Editor 1922-1956)

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.

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Nor is the least a cheerful heart
That tastes these gifts with joy.

When worn with sickness, oft hast Thou
With health renewed my face;
And, when in sins and sorrows sunk,
Revived my soul with grace.

Through every period of my life
Thy goodness I'll pursue;
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide Thy words no more,
My ever-grateful heart, O Lord,
Thy mercy shall adore.

A NEW PATRON SAINT AND A SUGGESTION.

A Reuters dispatch of January 1 from Rome informs us that "the Pope today declared the Apostle Matthew to be the patron saint of accountants and bookkeepers. Matthew was the apostle who gave up tax collecting to follow Christ."

Since "His Holiness" feels that each occupation and profession must have a patron saint, we suggest that next year he name the unrepentant thief as the patron saint of burglars, pickpockets and religious racketeers. Already a step in that general direction has been made in Kingston, Ontario, where the Roman Church near the penitentiary is called "The Church of the Good Thief"! To what lengths will Romanism go in its travesty on the gospel?

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Artificial Religion and Its Reward

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 16th, 1939
(Stenographically Reported)

"Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."—Matthew 6:2.

THE same words are repeated in the fifth verse, and again in the sixteenth. The first instance has to do with those who do their alms before men; the second, those who pray that they may be seen and heard of men; and the third, those who fast that they may appear unto men to fast. Of each of these exercises and those who perform them, our Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

You will remember that the Lord Jesus said, "I am the truth." Before Pilate He broke His silence to say, "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world; that I might bear witness to the truth." The Lord Jesus came to tell the world the truth, to strip from our human lives the cloak of seeming, and every sort of artificiality, and to reveal the heart of things. You will recall that He found that ministry most unpopular, for He said, "Now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth."

The fact is, men do not like to hear the truth. They prefer to live in a world of delusions; for life is very largely made up of shams. You see it in every walk of life. I heard of an eccentric Baptist preacher some years ago — he had gone home to glory before my time, but I knew his family. Once while preaching he was inveighing against the forms of deceit and artificiality which characterise human life; and in order to emphasize it he said, "And I declare it is even in the pulpit" — and then he took off his wig! Rather a strange way of emphasizing the truth. But how people love to appear other than they really are. What with the rouge and lip-stick and all the other "beauty aids", you do not know who you are meeting nowadays — whether the lady may be classed as a pretty maid, or properly denominated a grandmother.

But that is characteristic of life in general. I say, people do not like to hear the truth. They do not like to hear it even from their doctor. Important as it is that the patient should know the worst, he does not want the doctor to tell him, and tries to postpone the evil day. But the fact is, that sooner or later we are all compelled to face the realities of life. The counterfeit is at last discovered. The mask falls from the face, and all the disguises fail to cover up the truth.

The revelation of God in Christ was designed to strip away from life all the coverings. We used to use the word a great deal during the Great War, camouflage. I have seen it at sea. Looking through my glasses I could not tell which way the ship was going, north or south, east or west. Its funnels were so disguised that it looked as though it was going in the opposite direction.

Every sort of artificiality is used by men to disguise the truth, but I say, sooner or later, we have to face these things; and the revelation of God in Christ is designed to show us the truth, things as they really are. "Ye shall know the truth," said the Lord Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free."

The patient's relatives said to the physician, "Do not tell him the truth. We will keep it from him as long as we can." The man had secret misgivings that he was not getting the truth. At last something happened that made it necessary for him to be told. For a while he was greatly distressed; afterward he cheered up, and someone said, "You are a little more cheerful to-day?" "Yes; now I know the worst, I know what is before me, and all that misgiving is gone. I am facing the facts now, and am preparing myself for it."

Oh that we could be wise and face the facts of life! Oh that we could see things as they really are! So did our Lord design in this sermon on the mount to tell people the truth. It was in connection with this sermon that His hearers first observed that He taught them "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The truth, inherently, possesses authority, and it is well that we should hear the truth.

In the instances I have brought to your attention this evening, our Lord speaks of three forms of religious exercise, three expressions of life that are artificial: the man who does his righteousnesses before men, who gives alms to be seen of men, that he may get glory of men; the man who prays to be heard of men; the man who fasts that he may earn a reputation for sanctity. In all these things the Lord says there is an element of hypocrisy, an element of insincerity; then with biting irony He declares that such people have their reward. Let us look into these cases, and see what is involved with this mordant saying of the Master.

I.

There are forms of religion that are concerned with human estimation. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness" — as it is properly in the first verse of this chapter — "before men". There is a seeking to keep up an appearance of righteousness before men. Our Lord uses an ugly word — ugly in our understanding of it — and bids His disciples, "Be not as the hypocrites." A hypocrite is really an actor, one who plays a part, who assumes a character that is not his own, one who spends himself in certain forms of stage play for other people's observation. The admonition of our Lord is that we should not be mere players on the stage of life, that we

should not assume attitudes or characters which have no part, no relation, to our own natures, that are foreign to us. He bids us not to put on religious airs, and pretend to be what we are not. "Do not your righteousnesses before men; be not content with a religion of externals, a religion of outward form, a religion that depends for its value upon the exaltation and approval of short-sighted men."

There are forms of religion that are nothing better than that: they are forms. They do not belong to the nature of the man; they do not affect his daily conduct; they are not even skin deep — they are outward only, artificial.

There are forms of benevolence which are exercised for the sake of human approbation, the giving of alms as unto men. How much of life is lived in the fear of men! How men and women are brought into bondage in a thousand ways by their desire to keep up with some standard of values which men have set up.

In the days when motor-cars were uncommon, and few and far between, a friend picked me up one day, and as we were going along he apologized for what he called his "old bus". It was really an expensive car as cars were valued in that day. When he said that, I said, "And when did your neighbour buy a new one?" "How did you know?" "Is not that true?" He said, "Yes, but I do not see how you knew." "I did not, but I knew that was the reason for your remark. You just want to keep up with someone else."

So in a thousand ways we become slaves to circumstances, slaves to artificial standards of conduct in all realms of life; and men busy themselves playing a part. They play at religion even in their giving. — I have seen people give to the collection like that. I was asked one day by a newspaper reporter if we get very many buttons in our collection. He said, "I am told there are a great many people who use counterfeit coins and buttons at church." Why do they? (Simply that they may appear to men to be giving when they are not. I have seen men who give but little secretly to the Lord's work, who would give largely to some public charity that would be widely advertised.

I was in a man's office one day when a lady came in to solicit a contribution for something, I forget what it was. He received her quite courteously, and said, "Certainly, certainly, we shall have to give to that." He took a cheque-book from a drawer, filled one in, and handed it to her politely, and said he was pleased to make a contribution to so worthy an object. She thanked him profusely and withdrew. After she was gone he pushed the cheque-book into the drawer, slammed it shut, and said, "That is just an imposition, a sheer outrage." The man had not given a cent. He was not benefited by his act. He gave only because he was supposed to give.

There are people who, in all their seeming ministry to the poor, to charitable objects of one sort and another, are without any pure motive. They are not actuated by compassion for those who are in need, but merely that they may receive glory of men. What a poor business that is! I do not care what the form of religion is, the religion that is exploited, whose duties are observed merely for the sake of human approval, is in the class which our Lord so roundly condemned.

I have in mind now — I have been in Toronto a good while — a certain man. If he ever denounced evil, I

never heard of it. If he ever stood for principle, his stand has escaped my observation, a man of compromise, a man who has sacrificed principle to policy, and conviction to expediency. I have studied him for years, and he is a man of great prominence. He has obtained prominence — as you always will, if you live after that fashion.

Our Lord says that those who live for human approval, are likely to get it; those whose religion seeks glory of men are likely to be glorified by men, and He said in effect, "They are welcome to their reward. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

Let us not forget that there is a life that bears no relation to God. There is a life that may be lived without divine approval, without divine sanction of any sort. There is nothing reserved as a reward for such a life. Those who live for this world may "get on", you may get a fair share of it — but that is all you will get. Our Lord says there is no record of that written to that man's credit in the books in the Sky. There is no prize laid up in heaven, no "well done" awaiting a life of that sort. Such reward as such a life merits belongs to the realm of the temporal. Men receive it here; they have it now — they have no other. What sort of religion is yours? There is another way of living, in the sight of God. There is a divine approval. He measures a man's righteousness, and his alms-giving, and all that he does. He may be a man who does not appear to be of any consequence to men, but he lives his life before God Who seeth in secret; He says, "If men do not reward you, if they take no cognizance of the little things you do, if they pass you by, never mind. Your father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly."

What a multitude of people there are whom the world has never noticed, whose names are never inscribed upon any honour-roll, but who, as simple disciples doing the will of God from the heart, give the cup of cold water, ministering in one way or another as unto God — the mother with her children, the Christian wife to her husband, the employee working for an unjust master, who says, "I do not get much wages, but I am working for a Master in heaven: The divine Timekeeper will keep my time. He will appraise my services. I am living for a pay-day by and by." General Booth, the old General, General William Booth, once said, "All my officers are high-salary men", and after a moment's pause, continued, "payment deferred". Ah yes, payment deferred! If you are going to be a high-salary man, if you are going to have a heavenly reward, you will probably have to wait for your pay for a little while.

II.

There is another word here. There is a kind of sacrificial life, a religious observance, which has no relation whatever to God. There are some fasts observed that they may be seen of men. Perhaps this is not quite so common as the other manifestations of the same spirit, but said our Lord, "There are some who appear sad of countenance before men. They disfigure their faces, they make a show of their sacrificial spirit, in order that they may appear unto men to fast." In principle, it means that form of religion that prides itself in giving up things, in doing without things. There are forms of religious pride that are very obnoxious to men, and still more abominable in the sight of God. There is a legitimate place for sacrifice in the Christian religion — of

that more in a moment. But there are some people who parade their abstentions.

One summer some years ago I went away on a holiday, and a friend of mine supplied my pulpit. Before my return he wrote me a letter telling me of his experiences on the days he had been in my pulpit. He said he had generally enjoyed ministering to my people, but he said there was one brother who seemed to be a little hard of hearing, "I judged so," he said, "because he sat in the front seat. He had a very long face, and a very sad countenance. He impressed me as a man who suffered severe pains induced by his religion." He did not tell me his name: he did not need to. He always sat in church as though he wanted everyone to believe this is an awful world.

We have a brother here — although he has not been with us for some time, he is out of the Province just now. He is a good man in many ways. When praying he has a favourite phrase that he always uses; he speaks of "this dark and evil world in which our lot is cast." One day he told us he could not understand how any Christian could find anything in this "dark and evil world" at which to laugh.

I have told you of another lugubrious brother of whom I heard. He is not with us now, has gone to glory. I heard Deacon Greenway and someone else in the room next to my vestry. They were laughing most heartily. This young octogenarian whom we recognize and love as Deacon Greenway said to the other man, "Oh well, when I am forbidden to laugh, I want to go to heaven; I want to be through." I did not know what they were talking about, but I called in and said, "Amen! What is all this about?" In the prayer meeting there was a brother who solemnly prayed that the Pastor might be restrained this evening from saying anything that would make the people laugh. I do not know, but I think we possibly had a little merriment that Sunday evening. Mr. Spurgeon once said, when people complained of his humour, "If only they knew how much I restrain, they would forgive me the little that escapes!" Why not? If we must forego certain things as Christians, why should we make an ado about it? Why should we pull long faces, and attempt to get some credit for the things we give up, as Christians? Why disfigure your faces, and look as though it were about the most miserable thing in the world to be a Christian? I have no sympathy with that type of religion. I believe it is dishonouring to God; it is contrary to the Word of God.

I remember some years ago I was Pastor of a little church in which was a brother who got up one evening and delivered himself of a tirade against smokers and smoking. He almost frothed at the mouth; he was bitter. He was a good man, and when the meeting was over I went to him and said, "Deacon, you know very well that I do not smoke, that I have no use for tobacco. If I had my way I would burn it" — not like some of you burn it, but in some other way. It makes people, in nine cases out of ten; utterly selfish.

Let me turn aside a minute. I was in London, England, some years ago; seated at a restaurant table. The room was crowded, and there was nothing for me to do but sit at a table that was already occupied in part by a young woman. She was partly through her meal when I began. There were places for four at the table, and a little later two other ladies came and occupied the remaining seats. I was the only man! We were at three

stages in our meal: the young lady was first, I was second, the other two were third. Naturally, she got through first. Then she took out a cigarette case, selected a cigarette, tapped it on the table in orthodox style, and, turning to the ladies, said, "Do you mind if I smoke?" What could they say? They said, "No." But she did not ask me! As a matter of fact, I did mind. I did not enjoy the rest of my dinner in clouds of smoke — but I was not asked. Ninety-nine smokers out of one hundred forget there are other people alive. I am not going to inveigh against it. We are not saved by not smoking, nor condemned and lost for smoking. The religion of Christ does not consist in these externals. However, back to my story. That is a little extra, on the side!

This good man berated everybody who smoked, and I said to him, "I have no brief for the smoker. I wish people would not smoke, but did you ever smoke?" "Yes, I tried it once." "It made you sick?" "It certainly did." "You sounded to-night as though you had not got over it yet! Let me tell you, you will never do any good with that kind of thing. Furthermore, much as I dislike it, if there must be any smoking done around here, I would rather have people smoke tobacco than their tempers as you did to-night. That sort of thing does not recommend the religion of the Lord Jesus."

If there are certain things that, as a matter of principle and conviction, that you have nothing to do with, certain things from which you refrain, do it cheerfully, but do not disfigure your faces that you may "appear unto men to fast". Do not be miserable yourself, and make everyone else miserable around you. That is not a religion that commends itself to other people. There is a place for abstinence from things that are evil. I said just now that I do not consider that a man is saved or lost by abstaining from the use of tobacco or by using it. I hate liquor, yet I would not dare to say that a man is not a Christian because he drinks, or that a man who abstains from a glass is necessarily a saved man. So far as I am concerned, I cannot touch either, as a Christian. To me, it would be a sin; because I might lead someone else astray. Therefore I will have nothing to do with it.

But I am not going to pull a long face about it. I do not see why we should disfigure our faces. I do not go to the theatre: I do not want to. But even if I did want to, I would not go; for the sake of my example — but I would be happy about it. That is the teaching of the Word of God. Let your sacrificial life be a secret one; let us live before God, and for His sake say, "I will not do this, I will not touch that; I will not go here, I will refrain from going there. But I will not make a parade of it, and say, 'Glory be to me, I do not do this or the other thing.'" Let all that be before God.

And my dear friends, if it be so that you can say, as did the Apostle Paul, "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", let it so be. By all means, let us know something of the subjective power of the cross of Christ as well as its objective value. Let it crucify us; let it put the flesh, with all its motions, to death; let us have done with these things of the world — but do not make a religion of your sacrifices. Do not parade them. When you have done it all, anoint your head, and wash your face, that you may appear not unto men to fast.

There is a way of being happy without these things, and if we know the secret of fellowship with God, if indeed Christ "be formed in us the hope of glory", if Jesus Christ is in us, some of His glory will shine in our countenances, and we shall learn how to bring gladness into other lives. The true Christian ought to be the happiest, merriest soul. Let us live our lives before Him, and "thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." But there is no reward for those who thus set their course to win human approval.

III.

There is a distinctively religious life, a life of prayer and of praise, that may be but a sham and humbug. Prayers that are prayed, not to God, but to men. Therefore our Lord said, "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

How much religious pomp there is! How much of show in much of religious profession to-day! I saw some photographs last week of certain people of prominence arriving at church — going to church on Easter Day. These people may have had no responsibility for it — I hope they had not — but the mere fact that the photograph was taken showed the estimation of religion made by some people, a great show on Easter day, praying before men to be seen of them. That sort of religion has its reward here and now, but our Lord Jesus says such prayers do not get to Heaven; there is no heavenly connection.

When Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, he said, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive." But Jesus Christ specifically said that those who pray for the sake of earning a religious name, the people who go to church just to be respectable, the people who observe certain religious forms that they may be accounted religious, have a religion that has only a temporal value. Said he, "They have their reward." It may be of use to them here: it will be of no use to them hereafter. Prayers of that sort are not heard in Heaven.

I have known some people who were very orthodox, make a boast of their spirituality. I do not know whether you have seen it or not. I like to see a man carry a Bible if he is not ashamed of it, but I do not like the sort who takes a Bible as big as himself, as though he would say to all the world, "I am a very religious man." Some of you students — let me admonish you. Do not come to me, telling me you have prayed. I do not want you to boast of your prayers. If you really pray, the Lord knows it, and it is not important whether anyone else should know it. If He knows it, your praying will not be in vain.

But what is it, after all, really to pray? To read from a prayer-book? Yes, you may read from a prayer-book, and really pray. I read from a Prayer-Book to-night: the fifty-first Psalm is a prayer, an inspired prayer. It will do us good to take these prayers, and make them the vehicle of our soul's desire. Multitudes of people who read from a prayer-book, sincerely pray. I have heard the service of the English Church read on many occasions when I felt that I was in heaven itself. I was able to say, Amen, and worship with those who worshipped. I have heard it read when I should just as soon listen to a magpie or a parrot. I have heard it

read at sea when there was nothing religious about it — just read to be heard of men.

Not so much depends upon the form, after all. What our Lord said was, "Remember that when you pray, pray to Him Who seeth in secret. That is the all-important thing. See that your prayer gets to Heaven."

It is possible for us to become mechanical in our religious duties; weary at night, to go through a form of prayer, and never pray at all; to read a chapter from the Word of God, and not really to read. It is possible for us to become mechanical and superficial. My exhortation to you this evening — and to my own soul — is to this effect, that everything depends upon our conscious relation to God, that when we pray, we should pray to Him Who seeth in secret.

Do you so pray? Do you know what it is to enter into the closet, and shut the door; and when no one is there, and no one knows who are praying, and no one will praise you for praying, a secret between your soul and the God of heaven — do you know what it is to pray after that fashion, really to talk with God? Remember this is what He says, that when you pray like that, when you pray after that fashion, "thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." Ah yes! How many of us are praying like that this evening? You remember Montgomery's hymn? —

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the burden of a sign,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer is the sublimest strain
That reach the Majesty on high.

"Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, 'Behold! he prays.'

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of Death,
He enters heaven by prayer.

"O Thou by Whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod,
Lord, teach us how to pray."

Let us ask Him:

O Lord our God, we would bare our souls before Thee, and remember that from Thee no secrets are hid. We thank Thee for the mercys seat where the blood is sprinkled. We thank Thee for a place to which we may come with the assurance that there Thou wilt meet with us. And that place is the person of Him Who died on the cross, Who rose again, and Who ascended into heaven, Who is now on the right hand of God, making intercession for us. O Lord, we would fain reach Thee here this evening. We are poor sinners, all of us. We have failed in ten thousand ways; we have lived too much for the approval of men; we have not always lived as in Thy sight. Oh, help us this evening, even in this hall, ere we leave, to enter into the secret place of the Most High, and from this forward to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Forgive our sins; wash us in the blood; give us Thy Holy Spirit, and the assurance of Thy Holy Word that we have passed from death unto life. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Looking Ahead to 1956

HOW prone we are to overlook the obvious! While we seek in far distant fields for some desired object, it is finally found in our own backyard. The story is told of a man who had acquired considerable riches and because of this new-found wealth, he decided that he would leave his home and travel across the world to discover the most beautiful scenery on the face of the globe. As he journeyed, he beheld the beauty spots of the six continents and still there was an inner dissatisfaction. One day in his travels he met another who had viewed all the famous scenic spots of earth. Our friend asked this fellow traveller which place appealed to him as the most beautiful. The stranger replied that there was a mount in a certain country which transcended all other places in its beauty. The traveller stood in amazement for the mount which was named stood behind his own house! He returned to his old dwelling where he lived the remainder of his life, having learned that right at hand was that for which he had spent valuable time in searching.

This little story illustrates a common tendency in the work of the Lord. Much of the time of modern religious leaders, both modernist and evangelical, is spent in search of some new, attractive method by which to reach men with their particular message. All the while that this search is in progress the answer is at hand in the pages of the Word of God.

The Modernist's Search

Those who have cast off the Word of God as the final authority naturally become anarchists in religious matters. Since the Bible is no longer the guide as to the message or the method of religious work, modern clergymen spend much of their time in dreaming up some new message and some new method of operation. We are especially warned that some new message is needed for "the modern mind".

Liberalism has failed. The crude utterances of a man such as Harry Emerson Fosdick who openly denied the gospel are thought to be in bad taste. Modern churchmen therefore employ a new technique whereby they can express Fosdick's infidelity in a pious, orthodox language. Instead of openly denying the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or the Virgin Birth, or the fact of creation or any of hundreds of other Biblical truths, they declare that these things occurred on a *supra-historical* level! (a polite and inoffensive way of declaring that they never happened at all). Indeed the believer has more to fear from the modern variety of pious infidelity than he has to fear from any number of opponents of the gospel. How many churches there are in which Christians sit for Sunday after Sunday and hear no outright denials of Biblical truth but at the same time feel the lack of a note of authority and the conspicuous absence of the power of God upon the message. No! clerical unbelievers have not yet found the message which will satisfy "the modern mind" and create a peace of soul.

In the search for some *method* that will fill the churches which their *message* has emptied, these present day leaders have certainly tried a great variety. That firm which boasts of fifty-seven varieties must take a poor second place to these clerical entertainers. The modernist churches have resorted to every conceivable

trick in order to attract people. Every day brings forth news of some new one which charity forbade us to think would ever be employed in a church designated as "Christian". Socialists, communists, Jews, Romanists and every other conceivable kind of speaker is imported in the name of "charity". Entertainment is employed in the stead of the sermon; book reviews are given for the edification of the "enlightened modern mind"; debate and forums are becoming a regular feature.

Still those searchers-after-truth seem to be dissatisfied and cast about for some new plan to attract men to a church that has forgotten its lofty, divine mission.

What of Evangelicals?

We are evangelicals! We much prefer the old-fashioned designation of *Christian* or the honoured-name of Baptists. Some may be ashamed to be called fundamentalists but we do not despise that name. Let men call us what they will so long as they understand by their designation that we stand unreservedly upon that sure foundation of the Word of God, seeking to declare to all men the whole counsel of God.

While we are evangelicals, and more particularly Baptists, we are not blind to some of the present faults of our cause. We rejoice to hear the gospel clearly presented by our brethren and to that end pray that they may be blessed. It does seem, however, that the great lack of evangelicals lies not so much in the realm of *message* as that of the *method* of preaching the gospel. One could hardly raise the voice of accusation against many evangelicals as to their lack of adherence to the great fundamental truths of the faith but what of their methods of propagating that truth?

We are not numbered among those who dismiss this question as being of no practical concern. On the contrary, we conceive it to be of the utmost importance that God's work be done in God's way. We desire to know with assurance the message of the Lord but we desire with equal assurance to know how He desires that message to be taken to men. In the pages of His Word we are persuaded that He has given us this divine blueprint so that believers need not search through a maze of methods and thus try by trial and error to find a "successful" one.

The present evangelical trend toward "entertaining evangelism" is a regrettable and unscriptural one. It may attract crowds but the truth is not determined by counting heads. It may even yield a plausible number of "converts" but those who have had contact with such persons soon find either that other factors led to the conversion or that the "convert" desired a continual diet of entertainment and desired to assume no responsibilities in the work of the Lord. "Smart Alec" song leaders, performing horses, and the celebrities of the world will be found to mock us in the great day of judgment.

Can someone tell us what is the difference between the entertainment in the modernist churches which we rightly deplore and the entertainment in the evangelical churches which has assumed such proportions even in the regular services and especially at "youth meetings"? Frankly we can see little difference save this — evangelicals who look to the Word of God for their message should with equal confidence look there for the method by which that message is to be presented.

The Biblical Program

The coming year need bring no fresh and frenzied search for novel and appealing tricks with which to win men and to extend the work of the Lord. Let us turn afresh to the pure atmosphere of the Word of God and there find the mind of God upon these matters. Let us view the victorious onward march of the apostolic churches as they went forth conquering and to conquer. The weapons that were used in that day are the ones that we should use today; the principles that were applicable in that hour are eternal and are applicable in all times in the warfare of the churches.

One factor that is often overlooked today is that of the important position of the *local church*. To this institution has been committed the work of evangelism and teaching. All other interdenominational agencies and "larger fellowships" are unknown in the Word of God. We dare to say that if all the money, time and prayers expended in some of the sensational and large extra-church agencies were directed toward the establishment of local churches, the present spiritual condition of the world would be more promising. Let any unprejudiced believer read the Word of God and note carefully the nature and work of the church and he must conclude that the church is a local assembly and that to it has been committed the work of the gospel.

With this profound conviction, The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada approaches the work of the coming year. We are committed to the work of establishing vigorous, evangelistic, New Testament (Baptist) churches in the large centres of population. Just as Paul beheld the need of Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Colossae and the other great cities, so we must catch a vision of the large cities of our land. As vigorous churches are there established; these will in turn reach out to surrounding areas to do the work of evangelization.

The year 1955 saw some progress in this direction. The greatest development perhaps was the establishment of the Dollar-A-Month Club. This simple means of finance will make available a large sum of money to assist the new churches to erect suitable buildings. Members who join the club pledge only one dollar per month which is put in a central fund and loaned to deserving causes. The motto of the club explains its nature and emphasizes the far-reaching effects of your small donation — "*Your Dollar Erects Churches!*" Every reader of THE GOSPEL WITNESS would be well-advised to join the club.

The program of our pioneer churches is an apostolic one — prayer, preaching, visitation and pleading with

men to be reconciled to God. It is our desire to see such testimonies multiplied by the hundreds not that men may receive the glory but that God may be glorified and many souls saved. Reader, pause and ask yourself — "Is this not the program of the Word of God?" If it is the divine program, then what part do you have in it?

A RADICAL CHANGE

"Ye must be born again."—John 3:7.

There must be an infinite and radical change in every man's heart, or he cannot come within ten thousand miles of heaven. There must be an earthquake in his soul, shaking down his sins, and there must be the trumpet-blast of Christ's resurrection bringing him up from the depths of sin and darkness into the glorious life of the Gospel. Do you know why more men do not come to Christ? It is because men are not invited that they do not come. You get a general invitation from your friend: "Come round some time to my house and dine with me." You don't go. But he says, "Come around to-day at four o'clock, and bring your family, and we'll dine together." And you say, "I don't know that I have any engagement: I will come." "I expect you at four o'clock." And you go. The world feels it is a general invitation to come around some time and sit at the great Gospel feast, and brother, come to Christ; come now — come now!" How was it that in the days of Daniel Baker and Truman Osborne, and Nettleton, so many thousands came to Jesus? Because those men did nothing else but invite them to come. They spent their lifetime uttering invitations, and they did not mince matters either. Where did John Bunyan's pilgrim start from? Did he start from some easy, quiet, cozy place? No; if you have read John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", you know where he started from, and that was the *City of Destruction*, where every sinner starts from. Do you know what Livingstone, the Scotch-minister, was preaching about in Scotland when three hundred souls, under one sermon, came to Christ? He was preaching about the human heart as unclean, and hard, and stony. Do you know what George Whitfield was preaching about in his first sermon, when fifteen souls saw the salvation of God? It was this: "Ye must be born again." Do you know what is the last subject he ever preached upon? "Flee the wrath to come." Oh! that the Lord God would come into our pulpits, and prayer-meetings, and Christian circles, and bring us from our fine rhetoric and profound metaphysics, and our elegant hair-splitting, to the old-fashioned well of Gospel Invitation.

—TALMAGE

MY COVENANT

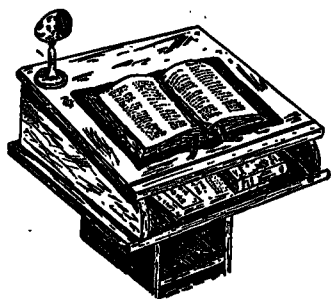
DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB

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

Note: Please forward one dollar promptly the first of each month. Such consideration will save extra office work.



English Bible Course

TWELFTH LECTURE
in the
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

By Dr. C. D. Cole

December 15th, 1955

PAUL'S PLEA FOR UNITY
Philippians 1:27-2:11

THE scripture for our present consideration is an appeal for unity. It consists of a twofold admonition expressed in a series of exhortations. Paul is not sure about the outcome of his trial but, whether he gets to see them or not, he wants the Philippians to present a solid front in the defense of the gospel against the adversaries. Strange as it is, the glad tidings will always have its enemies. The offence of the cross will never cease. There will ever be need of contending earnestly for the once-delivered faith. A little later in writing to Timothy, Paul will urge upon him the willingness to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

The Possibility of Division

Paul is pleading for a united church. He is not finding fault but he does recognize the possibility of inward strife and contention even at Philippi. I do not care how strongly a church may be united division is always possible. Unity is something that has to be kept and this requires effort. In writing to the Ephesians Paul exhorts them to live worthy of their heavenly calling "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". So the apostle wants the Philippians to stand firm against their foes and to be right minded toward one another. A united church is a blessed thing. The psalmist exclaims, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." On the other hand, it is a wicked and dangerous thing to disrupt the peace and corrupt the purity of a church of Jesus Christ. Paul was thinking about this when he wrote the Corinthians and said, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

I.

The First Admonition (1:27-30)

Now in verses twenty-seven to thirty of this first chapter, we have the first admonition. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit,

with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." The word for conversation in this epistle means citizenship. Paul wants the Philippians to live as citizens of heaven worthy of the gospel. He wants their conduct to match their creed. As Christians we are on earth but we are registered in heaven. Earth is the place of our sojourn and labour. But heaven is our commonwealth. Like our soldiers on foreign soil we have a work to do here and then go home. During the last world war one of the boys from my home town wrote me from an island in the Pacific saying that he wouldn't have the whole island if it were offered to him. He had no love for that place. He had no interest there. He was there to do a piece of work and then come home. He was thinking about home and family. Our soldiers furnish us with good illustrations about how we ought to feel concerning this present evil world and our homeland in the skies. Our soldiers while in Europe and Asia and the islands of the sea kept a connection with the homeland and kept up communications with home. They sent letters and telegrams. They talked by telephone and radio. And we ought to be as true to our Fatherland as the soldiers are to their earthly homeland. We talk about the future life in heaven but we have a present connection with heaven and the Christian has even better means of communication with heaven than our soldiers had with the earthly homeland. We have the two-way wireless of prayer and the Word. If the static is bad our sins have caused it. If we cannot get through at times it is because our sins have closed the way. Confession will clear the atmosphere and enable us to reach the throne of grace.

The Law of Our Commonwealth

Now let us consider the laws of our commonwealth. We live on earth but the Christian is not governed by earthly laws. To be sure, we are to be subject to the powers that be but human laws do not regulate our lives as Christians. We are to live by the laws of heaven, our commonwealth. Human laws say nothing about the duty of prayer; nothing about reading the Bible, nothing about giving our means for the furtherance of the gospel, nothing about witnessing for Christ, nothing about loving our enemies. As citizens of heaven we are to be governed by the Word of God. Here is our law in a nutshell: "Live worthy of the gospel of Christ". We are not to be governed by public opinion or by the customs of time and place. We need the mind of Paul when he wrote the Corinthians, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment . . . he that judgeth me is the Lord." When the believer is misunderstood and misrepresented and harshly treated he can always lift his eyes to the lofty seat where his Emperor sits and His smile will dry the tears and vanish the frowns of men.

The Adversaries at Philippi

Now as Christians we must strive together for the faith of the gospel. Faith is here used objectively and means the contents of the gospel. The gospel has its adversaries and they must be faced by a united church. The adversaries at Philippi could hardly have been Jews for there were not many Jews in that city. The adversaries at Philippi must have been the same kind that Paul had to face, heathen adversaries who influenced the government against the apostles. And the foes of the gospel must be faced in one spirit and with one soul. This is unity — where there is one spirit and one soul.

Organic union without spiritual unity leads only to confusion and compromise. One church in one world is a good thing if there is striving together for the faith of the gospel. But if one church in one world means emptying the gospel of its saving truths, then it is bad and should be shunned and opposed.

Moral Courage

"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries." The word terrified is used of frightened horses. The Christian is not to be like a scared animal. Moral courage is needed always and everywhere. Dr. Shields would emphasize the importance of the backbone and he would not think a string would do for a backbone. True Christian courage when there is no visible means of protection, the apostle says, is a token of the perdition of the opposition and of the salvation of the Christian.

The Twin Gifts

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Faith in Christ and suffering for Christ are divine gifts. Saving faith is the gift of God and a fruit of the Spirit. No sinner left to himself would ever in this world believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And with faith comes suffering. Faith and suffering are twin gifts from God. Real faith is not disturbed by the bombastic oratory of a Bob Ingersoll or by the subtle reasonings of a Tom Paine. True faith can go along with Paul when he says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The faith that lets go of the gospel in the day of adversity and time of trial is not real faith. It is not the faith of God's elect. Suffering for Christ is a precious gift but there are not many hands reaching out for it. To be a martyr for Jesus Christ is a precious privilege but it is not appreciated by very many.

II.

The Second Admonition (2:1-5)

Now the second admonition is found in the second chapter verses one to four. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." This admonition is closely connected with what has gone before and gets its colouring from what has been said about standing united against the adversaries. The Philippians who have to suffer from the outside, for the sake of the gospel, will need from their brethren all the things here mentioned — consolation or encouragement, solace or comfort, true spiritual fellowship, and all that pity and compassion can give. These mutual blessings are needed at all times but especially in times of persecution.

The Christian Virtues

Before making his appeal Paul probes their hearts. He questions their motives. He appeals to their Christian experience. He uses the hypothetical *if* to enforce positive affirmation. If there is any encouragement in Christ, let it be known. If there is any comfort in love, let it be given. And of course there is comfort in love. Love is not hard and heartless. Love does not turn a deaf ear to the cry of the needy. Love does not turn the cold shoulder to the weeping. Love is compassionate and

tender. If there is any fellowship of the Spirit, let it be manifested. All believers have been born of the Holy Spirit and have been made to drink into one Spirit. This makes Christians yokefellows and comrades. The Holy Spirit does not divide the church of Christ. When the early church was filled with the Spirit they had all things common and were of one mind and of one soul. If there are any bowels and mercies, that is, if a Christian experience carries with it any pity and compassion, these are the things needed by suffering saints, so bestow these blessings upon them. To sum up, Paul is saying something like this: "Can you be a true Christian and turn down my appeal? Can you have these Christian virtues and refuse to do what I ask?" He wants these Christian virtues to be in full and healthful exercise towards one another and especially in view of their present distress when the enemy is about to come in like a flood.

The Appeal

He now makes his appeal. "Fulfil ye my joy, by being of the same mind, showing mutual love, being of one accord, and of one soul." He wants the Philippians to be knit together, like Jonathan and David, as one soul. In Acts four thirty two we read, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." The poet paraphrases it thus:

"The saints were of one heart and soul
And love to Christ inspired the whole."

We talk about the ties of flesh and blood but the tie of the blood of Jesus Christ ought to be stronger than any fleshly and earthly tie.

It is a serious thing for Christians to be divided and to have different views about the Bible and its external truths. The Bible says the same thing to everybody and everybody ought to agree on what it says. The Word of God is objective truth not some subjective opinion. The present divided condition of Christendom is shocking and shows that Christianity in its popular sense is not Christ. All church members are not born of the Holy Spirit for there is fellowship in the Spirit. Paul says to the Philippians, My joy will be full, my cup will run over if you Philippians will be joined together in mutual love and defense of the gospel.

Hindrances to Unity

Now in verses three and four he gives some hindrances to unity and follows with some helps to unity. There are hindrances to unity on the one hand and there are helps to unity on the other hand. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." This means to avoid party spirit and pride, ugly twins of selfishness. It is selfishness that leads men to contend with one another. It is strife that causes one to want to put another down. It is pride that wants to put self on top. It is pride that brings self into prominence. Let nothing be done with strife and vainglory. Strife and pride will wreck any church where they get a foothold. There can be no teamwork where these two evils exist. Vainglory is what the self-seeker gets when he succeeds. He gets glory but it is empty and hollow and disappointing. For these two diseases the apostle brings forth one remedy, humility or lowliness of mind.

Helps to Unity

After warning against hindrances to unity he now gives helps to unity. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves," or as the Greek has it, above themselves. Verses three and four should

not be separated by a period. Reading them together the meaning is that in humility each one should consider other above themselves, these each one not watching out for their own things alone but also for the things of others. The pagans had no word for humility as an ethical concept. Christianity had to coin this word humility as an ethical virtue. The pagan idea of manhood — and that is the world's idea of manhood today — is self-assertiveness, imposing one's will on another. Humility is a plant that can only grow in spiritual soil and the ethical idea of humility could not be grasped by the pagan world nor can it be grasped by the modern world of our times. The Christian idea is for each one to consider the good of others first. In a community where everybody looks up to everybody nobody would be looked down on by anybody. Would that not be a wonderful community to live in? This is New Testament ethics but it is hard to find in the twentieth century, even in our churches. Two students once sat on opposite sides of the dining table and on the table before them and between them was a dish with two pieces of chicken on it, a neck and a thigh. And when one of them took the thigh the other exclaimed, "You selfish thing! I was going to take that piece!" Now Paul is urging a reversal of that sort of thing. The reversal of that is Christian ethics. He wants us to urge the other to take the thigh. Paul is not talking about brains, talents and ability. He is not saying to us as Christians to consider every other person just because he is a Christian as having more brains or more ability than we have. That is not the idea in the passage before us. The idea is that we are not to consider our own interests but put ourselves at the bottom of the list and others above us.

The Supreme Example of Humility (2:5-11)

Now in verses five to eleven he gives us Christ as the supreme example of humility. It is said that one example is worth a dozen rules. Christ is the supreme example of what the apostle is exhorting unto. He came not to consider Himself but others. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Humility is voluntary self descent, self abasement. Christ was no conscript. He voluntarily descended from the highest heights of glory to the lowest depths of woe out of consideration for us in our desperate need of salvation. From where He was to where He went was the distance from heaven to hell. He gave up sovereignty with all its attendant glory to become a Servant with all its hardships and shame. His voluntary descent was from Sovereign to Slave.

The True Kenosis Doctrine

Now these verses before us have been the subject of much debate and bitter contention. In becoming human in order to redeem men just what did Christ give up, of what did He empty Himself? He emptied Himself of something. There is a true kenosis doctrine. Now we can be sure of one thing. He did not divest Himself of deity. He did not empty Himself of Himself. He did not empty Himself of the divine essence. We can be sure of that. In essence of being He remained Himself. Nor did He surrender any or all of the divine attributes. He remained the eternal God in the divine essence and in the divine attributes, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. The Lord Jesus Christ was as truly God while on earth as He was when He made the worlds. The Scriptures tell us that He was God manifest in the flesh.

The scriptures tell us that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. He Himself said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The doctrine of the immutability of God is sufficient to refute all the arguments that He ceased to be God or that He gave up any of His attributes. The eternal logos was of the divine essence and as such is indivisible and indestructible. If Christ had surrendered His deity then God would have ceased to be God for He was the second person in the divine essence, second member of the Godhead. If He had surrendered any single attribute, God would have been destroyed for it requires all the attributes of God for Him to be God. Looking over some old notes that I prepared years ago I found, this statement: "Christ gave up the independent and unlimited exercises of the divine attributes." He retained all the attributes of deity but He exercised them in a limited way and under the will of God. As a perfect Man He had no will of His own, He had no word of His own, He had no work of His own. As the perfect Man He did the Father's will and He spoke the Father's word and performed the work that the Father committed unto Him to do. As the perfect Man He was absolutely obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Christ had all the power of God but He never used it independently and without limitations. Christ retained all the powers of deity but He surrendered the prerogatives of deity for our sakes. He had all the power of God but He never used it for Himself. He went hungry but fed the multitudes. He became poor to make others rich. Christ laid aside His heavenly glory. He retained it but He rarely manifested it. In John seventeen five He prays for the restoration of the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. On rare occasions He manifested the divine glory. John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory)." Again at Cana of Galilee He manifested forth His glory and His disciples believed on Him. Luke speaking of the transfiguration scene said that He appeared in glory, and spoke of His death. Again there was a flash of His deity when the soldiers came to the garden to arrest Him. At a word from His lips these supposedly courageous men fell to the ground in fright. But most of the time of His earthly sojourn He was made a spectacle of shame. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Self-Renunciation for the Sake of Others

The key passage in understanding these verses is the verse that says "Not looking each of you to his own things but each of you also to the things of others". (R.V.). This self-renunciation for the sake of others finds its supreme exemplification in Christ. While existing in the form of God with all the attributes of deity He came to this world not to frighten sinners with the flash of His glory but to give Himself up for us in a shameful death. Yes, He considered not Himself but He considered us.

Christ Suffered as a Person

In the incarnation Christ did not empty Himself of His divine nature but assumed a human nature. He became what He was not before but lost nothing of what He had been. He became the God-Man, not two persons, but two natures in the one person. Now Christ suffered as a person, not as a nature. Here is another disputed point in theology. Did the divine nature suffer on Calvary or did only the human-nature of Christ suffer? That misses

the point by thinking of the suffering of a nature instead of the suffering of a person. His person consisted of the nature of God and the nature of man and the God-Man suffered. His deity was needed in making atonement. He did not make atonement only as a man but as the God-Man. I agree with Luther who said, "If I permit myself to be persuaded that only the human nature has suffered for me, then Christ is to me a poor saviour." It was not the Lord Jesus Christ as a man who saved us. It was the Lord Jesus Christ as the God-Man. It took His deity to make atonement for sinners. Those who have only the human Christ on the cross do away with the efficacy of the cross. Christ suffered as a person and His person must not be divided at Calvary. It was by virtue of His being made God manifest in the flesh that He could make atonement for us.

What Christ Left Behind in His Exaltation

Now we will have to hurry to a conclusion with just another word or so. What was dropped in His exaltation? What did He leave behind when He left earth for glory. It was not His human nature. He is still the God-Man and will never be anything else but the God-Man. He left the Slave's form when He left earth to go back home to glory. When the Slave's work was done His human nature entered upon the full and unlimited use of the divine attributes. His sufferings are over and His glory follows:

"Man of sorrows, What a name
For the Son of God, Who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

AMONG THE CHURCHES

NEWS OF OUR SECRETARY

The Secretary of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada is Rev. B. R. Oatley-Willis. Although he has been in this position for only two months, he has entered the work with great zest and consecration. Just one week before Christmas, he received word that he had to enter Weston Sanitorium immediately for chest examination and treatment. This news came as a great surprise for him, his family and his many friends.

Word has been received that all reports indicate that the disease has been detected in its earliest stage and hence his confinement should not be for too long. We ask that our readers join in prayer that he may be quickly restored to carry on this important phase of the Lord's work.

TIDINGS FROM MITCHELL SQUARE

"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and did let none of his words fall to the ground!

"And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (1 Sam. 3:19, 20).

December 8th, 1955

It is our endeavour at Mitchell Square Baptist Church to make known the wonderful works of the Lord so that "from Orillia to Barrie, Ontario, people will know that God has established His work at Mitchell Square."

During the past summer months every Friday evening we gathered approximately 25-30 children for Happy Hour. During these meetings several children responded to the call of the Lord. One boy about 8 years of age came to the front of the church at the conclusion of one of the services and said very seriously, "I would like to take Jesus as my Saviour" — truly a soul winner's unspeakably precious reward. One of our young girls had the heavenly privilege of leading another girl to Christ.

I just wish you could be present at our prayer meetings and hear the young ones talking to God in prayer with the older people.

An elderly man was "accepted in the Beloved". Truly the Lord is longsuffering to usward. Praise Him.

During evangelistic and revival services last June which were conducted by Evangelist Dr. Luther A. Horn, a Southern Baptist, at least five responded to the call of surrendering all to their Saviour. Three precious young people have indicated their desire to join with us in His holy service at Mitchell Square Baptist Church.

Our praise is to God which always causeth us to

WITH THE SECRETARY

triumph in Christ over the strategems of Satan.

As we look back through the months of the past year we can only acknowledge that we are more unprofitable servants. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure and therefore purpose to make our lives truly count for the Lord Jesus.

"For by strength shall no man prevail." (1 Sam. 2:9).
"But by my Spirit saith the Lord." (Zech. 4:6). Amen.

NORMAN DIAMOND
Mitchell Square Baptist Church.

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, HARRISTON

It is with praise in our hearts that we take this opportunity to make known the grace of God toward our Church in recent months.

Led, as we believe by the Holy Spirit, the Bethany Baptist Church continues to be a separated testimony, and rejoices that He has given us opportunity to distribute a copy of the tract "Whither Bound?" to every home in our town. Far from having the harmful effect upon our Church which some persons predicted, we rejoice to report to the glory of God that:

(1) Our Bible School has more than doubled the number of attendants.

(2) Seven persons have been added to our local Church, four by letter, one by experience, and two by baptism.

(3) One person has been baptized who has not yet been added to the Church.

(4) One man is to be baptized next Lord's Day.

(5) In addition to the above, seven persons have professed to receive Christ as Saviour, apart from fifteen other professions in the Bible School.

(6) Congregations have increased, and while this increase is more noticeable in the morning service, we are encouraged to believe that the evening meeting will soon be well attended.

Joyfully we declare that "God hath done it, and not we ourselves." The instructions are written in His Word, and, as always, He is faithful Who promised. We preached the Gospel and He was with us. Praise Him Who is the Fount of every blessing! We begin the New Year believing that what we have witnessed is the beginning of a mighty movement of the Blessed Holy Spirit, and more determined than ever to

"Preach and pray and plug away!"

To this end we have instituted a visitation program, extra prayer, and the public ascription of praise and thanks to God at the meetings of the Church.

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Sincerely, in the Lord Jesus,
B. W. ROWLANDSON, Pastor

The Editor's Corner

The Gospel Witness Sermon

The sermons which appear weekly in THE GOSPEL WITNESS have never before appeared in print. Some seem to be under the impression that we are simply repeating sermons that Dr. Shields preached and used in this paper in the past. This is not the case, for we have in our files enough of the hitherto unprinted sermons of the late Editor to print one per week for many more years.

A Sermon by Dr. Slade

Numbers of readers have written to ask that we print some of the sermons of the present Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade. After considerable persuasion, Dr. Slade has consented to have some printed occasionally. The first one will appear in next week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Readers will detect that the same great truths which were expounded by Dr. Shields are emphasized in the present ministry.

The Editor's Annual Letter

It is hard to believe that another GOSPEL WITNESS year is nearly finished. March 31st will mark the completion of the thirty-fourth year of publication. During the past thirty-three years the Founder, Dr. Shields, also served as Editor, and each year he sent out a letter to the family. It is now the task of the present Editor to address the host of readers in this way, and to present the needs and challenge of the paper. Let all our readers be in prayer that the Annual Letter may be greatly blessed of the Lord.

"The Doctrines of Grace"

The first volume in THE DR. T. T. SHIELDS' MEMORIAL LIBRARY would not be described as a "popular" book in the sense that it is light and frothy. It has, however, appealed to that part of the Christian public which is interested in learning more of the doctrines of grace. The sale is consistently good, and numbers of books have been sold through other Christian retail outlets. Favourable and commendatory reviews have appeared in other periodicals. We look to a large sale through the years as more Christians learn of this reliable, scriptural, exposition of the fundamental truths of the Word of God. If you do not have one, order it to-day. Include an order for your Pastor. The cost is \$2.50 per volume.

Sunday School Lesson Topics for 1956

These lesson topics have been printed on a small neat card to fit into one's Bible. The cost of these cards is sixty cents per hundred. They may be obtained from THE GOSPEL WITNESS office.

ARE YOU THINKING OF FULL-TIME GOSPEL WORK?

Among the thousands of readers who scan the pages of this issue, there are probably some who have heard the call of the Lord to full-time service. Others, perhaps, know young people who are contemplating training for the ministry, the mission field, or other Christian work. It is surely a great decision that one is called upon to make in thinking of a suitable place of training. Such decision should be made in the light of the Word of God.

There are many schools and institutions that make attractive appeals through colorful advertising, and detailed description of the admirable facilities at their disposal. Not for one moment would we seek to disparage all such schools or the work they are doing. One institution, however, that makes an appeal on the basis of its adherence to the Word of God, is Toronto Baptist Seminary. Unhesitatingly we commend this school of the prophets to any young person, for surely the great consideration of any aspiring servant of God is the attitude of his prospective place of training to the revealed counsel of the Lord.

Is it too early in the year to be considering a place of training? No; we invite your early inquiry, and will send you the desired information by return mail.

Send all communications to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Ontario.

THE PAST WEEK IN JARVIS STREET

The week which falls between Christmas Day and New Year's Day was a busy one for the people of Jarvis Street Baptist Church. Without exception, the regular meetings were held as usual. On Tuesday night the Sunday School teachers and officers met for their weekly session. On Thursday there was another family carol service with a good number in attendance. Then on Saturday evening the weekly prayer meeting was held.

On Sunday the pastor preached at both services. In the evening his sermon was "The Unchangeable Christ". (This sermon will be printed in next week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS). The Lord blessed His Word during the day and one scholar publicly acknowledged faith in Christ.

On Monday, January 2, the great New Year's morning prayer and praise meeting was held. A large assembly gathered in Greenway Chapel at 10.30 a.m. and remained there for three hours. There was very little singing for most of the time was spent in prayer and testimony. The presence of the Lord was a reality as His people gathered to commit themselves afresh to Him. Dr. Slade announced that the motto for the year would be: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13).

All were impressed by the testimony of Mrs. C. J. Holman who spoke of her conversion 77 years ago and of the fact that she had not missed a New Year's Meeting at Jarvis Street for 62 years. Her testimony was one of praise to God for all His benefits during her pilgrimage. Others, too, spoke of His faithfulness and His hand of blessing during 1955.

Greetings were received from Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, England, and its pastor, Dr. John Wilmot. From Nîmes, France, came the hearty greeting of Dr. Robert Dubarry and the church there.

Trial of Godless Worldlyman

By C. A. Davis

I CHANGED one day to enter the Court of Conscience, where I witnessed the trial of a notorious prisoner, Godless Worldlyman. The court was occupied in every corner with a crowd of thoughts and memories, who looked on and approved or condemned as the trial proceeded. (Rom. 11:15). The judge was there seated on the bench; at the table before him sat the recorder and the pleader Emmanuel; on either side were ranged the officers of the court. Conviction had charge of the prisoner, and the executioner Justice stood sword in hand.

Worldlyman being placed at the bar the clerk read the indictment, to the effect that the prisoner had broken the laws of the king, had withdrawn himself from his service, entertained the king's enemies, and had induced others to do the like. The prisoner pleaded not guilty; and the judge ordered that the witnesses should be called.

First came those on the prisoner's side. Lightheart stepped into the box and said the prisoner was an excellent and harmless man, had committed neither theft nor murder, had never done harm to anyone, and was acknowledged to wear a respectable character; that his motto had been a short life and a merry one, that every one must sow his wild oats, and no sensible man would condemn a little harmless mirth.

Lightheart stepped down and the next witness was called. His name was Neverprofess. He said, as to the charge against the prisoner of having thrown off his allegiance to the king, it was beside the mark, for he had never made any profession of allegiance; he did not see how he could be blamed for not doing what he never professed to do. The judge remarked that this only made the prisoner's guilt the greater.

The next witness was Longface, whose evidence was to the effect that the prisoner lived in Hypocrite Alley, not many doors from himself: that he was a good man, never known to smile; had always been grave, demure, solemn; and the man who could pick a hole in his character must be of a thankless disposition indeed. The judge said this witness and Lightheart did not agree, and that a gloomy manner did not make a good man.

Formalist was the next witness. The prisoner was well known to him; he had always been regular in church-going, he went through the mud, he closed his eyes during prayer. He read a chapter every day, he never went to bed without first kneeling, and when he rose he knelt again unless he had overslept himself. A man so religious he was sure could never be proved guilty of the charges laid against him. The judge said, "They draw near to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

The next witness was named Charity. He testified that Worldlyman had been known to give his old boots and cast-off clothes to the poor, that his name might be seen in large letters in many subscription lists, and he believed that though he had acted imprudently in a few trifling matters, as they said, the judge would in consideration of his charitable disposition, and remembering that charity covers a multitude of sins, acquit him. To which the judge said, "Charity hides from a man the faults of his friend, but almsgiving does not conceal a man's sins from God."

The witnesses on the other side were then called. The first Homepiety who had nothing good to say of the prisoner. Formalist, said he, had described him as a demure and saintly man, but this was the mask he wore abroad; at home the mask was laid aside. It was said of him that he was a saint abroad and a devil at home, and this was true. He had constantly broken the fifth commandment.

Honest came next. He said the prisoner was accustomed to charge more than the true value for his goods, that he was always ready to take an unjust advantage, that his weights and measures were false, so that though he might never have picked pockets and prowled as a robber, he was guilty of breaking the eighth law of the king.

Next Hatent was called. He said the prisoner had indulged in hatred and malevolent passions, that he had wished those who displeased him dead and lying in the grave, and this came under sentence of the law book. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

Holyday next appeared and said, that the choicest means of grace had been misused by the prisoner, that he had considered God's worship a weariness and had snuffed at it, that he had abused the gospel, had made holy things an occasion of more sin, and had broken thus the fourth commandment.

Purespeech bore witness that the prisoner had indulged in blasphemy, in cursing and swearing, and in taking God's name in vain, for all which he would not be held guiltless.

Cleanheart said he had fostered impure imaginations, and though he ventured not upon the sins themselves, yet the delighting in this impurity of heart was the breach of the seventh commandment.

Last came Love-God. He said, "My Lord, had the prisoner been innocent of these things he could not be acquitted; for the first and great commandment has never been fulfilled by him. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul and with all thy strength.'"

The prisoner was asked if he had anything to say. He blushed and wept, and when he could control his grief he cried with sighs: "My Lord, I am guilty. Every word of the accusation is true, and more. I have broken the laws and rebelled against God. I am undone and deserve to die; but, O my Lord, mercy! I cry mercy."

The judge assumed the black cap, and said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Justice, take the prisoner."

When Justice laid hold of the prisoner, the pleader Emmanuel rose, and said, "Stay thy sword." He turned to the judge, and said, "Pity the prisoner and spare him." The judge replied, "The law knows no pity." Emmanuel spoke again: "My Father, the prisoner is thy creature, made in thine image, my heart yearns towards him. I cannot see him die. Let the sword of Justice enter into my soul. I will die for the sinner; my life shall go for his."

The Court was struck with deep silence. The prisoner stood amazed, his eyes riveted on the prince, for he could see no one else. The rest looked at the judge, wondering what course things would now take.

The judge rose and addressed the prisoner. "Since thou art tried and found guilty, sentence is passed on thee: but the Son has offered his life for thine. Be it so. I accept the substitute. Die, O Emmanuel, and thou, O sinner, live."

A burst of emotion sounded through the Court. The divine prince rose and delivered himself to the executioner, and was led to death.

As for the prisoner, I have since heard that he is a new man, that he can think of none but Emmanuel, that he often weeps in secret at the memory of him, and that there is not a man on earth who has so great a love as he for the prince who bled and died on his behalf. And I am not surprised.

—*The Sword and Trowel*

For Younger Readers

DON FINDS A NEW BOOK

By Martha Inez Johnson

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Don watched Jerry as he took from his desk a big black leather-bound book. Don had never before seen a book like that. He wondered what Jerry was doing with it. He was sure Jerry hadn't taken it from the library. He was very curious. Jerry was reading very intently. He read a little while and then he looked up and stared ahead of him. Then he bent his head to read again.

At recess time Don walked over to Jerry, and talked to him. "Say, what was the book you were reading this morning when you finished your arithmetic?"

"That was my Bible. We are learning four verses each week for Sunday school, and when Miss Kent said we could read anything we liked when our work was finished, I thought I'd memorize my verses."

Don was puzzled. He never went to Sunday school. He didn't even know what it was. Mother and Daddy were circus people and they never stayed very long in one town. He had never seen a Bible before.

"What kind of book is it?" he asked Jerry.

Jerry opened his eyes wide. "You mean you don't know what's in the Bible?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, I've heard kids say you swear on a stack of Bibles, and I know a Bible is the Book a minister reads from, but I've never been to church. My folks don't go. They never have time. I didn't know just anyone could have a Bible. What's it about?"

Jerry replied, "Oh, it's all about God and how He created the world and what happened to His people. That's in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it tells mostly about Jesus. It tells how He was born and what He did when He grew up. And of course it tells how He died for us and rose again from the dead. Then it tells about Paul and his missionary journeys. It tells you how you ought to live."

Don listened eagerly. "It does?" he asked. "It does? And no one told me about it? No one told Dad and Mother? Well, tell me more. You said, 'Jesus died for us.' He didn't die for me, did He?"

"Of course He did! He died so you could be God's child and go to heaven when you die. One of the verses I am learning is John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world' that means you, Don 'that whosoever' you again, Don 'believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"Well, I know that I've done things that are wrong. People in the circus like Dad swear, you know? Can Jesus help me?"

"Of course he can!" Jerry answered.

Don suddenly felt very happy and he said eagerly to Jerry, "Oh, Jerry, where can I get a Book like that? I want to read it so I can believe on Him too."

"Come to my house after school, Don. Mother can tell you more about the Bible than I can. Believing in the Bible and belonging to the Lord Jesus really makes a fellow happy, Don. I'm glad I brought my Bible to school today."

Don nodded happily. "So am I!"

—*Christian Youth*

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 20 First Quarter Lesson 3 January 15, 1956

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

JESUS REJECTED IN THE NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE

Lesson Text: Luke 4:16-30.

Golden Text: "And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."—Luke 4:24.

I. The Gracious Words of Christ: verses 16-22.

The village of Nazareth was chosen by the Lord to be the home of the Saviour; here He spent His early days (Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39, 51). Later, Capernaum became the centre of His activities (Matt. 4:13). Two visits to Nazareth are recorded as having taken place after Christ commenced His public ministry; this one and a subsequent one (Matt. 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6). On both occasions He was rejected because of the unbelief of the people.

Christ went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, "as his custom was". We are not to forsake the public assembly of the saints, "as the manner of some is" (Acts 16:13; Heb. 10:25). The Lord's Day is to be observed as a holy day of worship, rest and meditation.

It was the custom in the synagogues to permit visitors to read from the sacred scrolls of the Scripture and to speak to the congregation. On this occasion the scroll containing the Book of Isaiah was handed to the Saviour. How many passages in that wonderful book of prophecy the Saviour might have cited as referring to Himself! He chose a passage (Isa. 61:1, 2) which should have convinced the people that He was indeed the Messiah for whose coming they had waited.

The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Him in a mighty way (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 14). He was Himself the Anointed One, the Messiah, sent by the Father to preach the Gospel; and not merely to preach the good tidings of salvation, but also through His spotless life as Son of Man and His vicarious death as the Son of God to make salvation from sin possible. His ministry was to be one of relief and mercy to all mankind; He came to bring spiritual healing, deliverance and light, as illustrated by the miracles He performed in the physical realm. On that very day the Scriptures read in their hearing were being fulfilled.

Christ was indeed proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord," the era of grace during which time all who will believe may come and be accepted on the ground of the redemptive work of Christ (2 Cor. 6:2). Our Saviour did not quote the second portion of the passage in Isaiah (Isa. 61:2), "the day of vengeance of our God", since that part of the prophecy refers not to the day of grace but to the day of wrath and judgment, not to the Lord's first advent, but to

His second advent, when all who have not received Him as Saviour must meet Him as Judge.

Doubtless the synagogue in Nazareth was crowded on that day (verse 14), and it is not surprising that every eye should be fastened upon Him as He read the Scriptures concerning Himself (Luke 24:27, 32, 44, 45). What an opportunity the worshippers in Nazareth were afforded that day! And yet, since the Word of God is living and powerful, and since the Holy Spirit, the Author of the Word, is ever ready to illuminate the sacred page and to inspire our hearts, we, too, may listen to the Gospel message as it comes to us directly from the Lord (Neh. 8:8; Acts 10:33; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:25).

The people wondered at the gracious words, or the words of grace, which Christ was uttering. But they looked upon Him with natural eyes, and saw no beauty in Him (Isa. 53:2; Matt. 13:55-58). Their minds and hearts were prejudiced against Him. They were looking for the Messiah to come in glorious power and majesty, while He was reading of Himself as the lowly servant of Jehovah.

II. The Evil Actions of the People: verses 23-30.

The objections of the people to the reading and to the application were two-fold. First, they implied that He Himself was in need, hence without power to act as a prophet. He seemed to be as a physician who is himself ill. Moreover, He was to them none other than the Jesus of Nazareth whom they knew and who had lived in their midst (Matt. 13:55; John 1:45, 46). Secondly, they said that He was offering no proof of His claims. Let Him demonstrate His power, if He had any, as He was reported to have done in Capernaum (verse 14; Matt. 12:38, 39; John 2:18).

The very persons who should have been the first to believe upon Christ were among the first to reject His message and to repudiate His Divine claims; "He came unto his own, but his own received him not" (John 1:11). A prophet of the Lord was in their midst, but their eyes were blinded by their unbelief (Matt. 13:14, 15).

As the people of Nazareth were failing to profit by the

ministry of the Saviour, so did the majority in Israel pass up the opportunity of blessing in the days of Elijah the Prophet, when just the one widow who recognized him as the man of God cared for him and received her only son restored to life, after he had died (1 Kings 17:8-24). In like manner the many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the Prophet remained in their hopeless condition, whereas only one had faith to believe the Word of God as conveyed to them through the prophet (2 Kings 5:1-14).

In anger because Christ numbered Himself among the prophets and His hearers among the prophet-rejectors, the audience rose up out of the synagogue and drove Him through the streets to the brow of the cliff to cast Him down. But His hour had not yet come, and He escaped from their hands (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20).

Let the tragedy of Nazareth be a warning to all in our day who refuse to accept the Saviour. How solemn and serious it is to reject the message of God (Heb. 2:1-3)! The Lord in mercy offers pardon and peace to sinful men, but so few will hearken to His gracious offer. Urge the scholars to accept with humility and gratitude the loving call of the Saviour (Isa. 55:1-3; Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 3:20; 22:17).

Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 9—Boyhood of Christ at Nazareth	Luke 2:39-52
Dec. 10—Philip and Jesus of Nazareth	John 1:43-51
Dec. 11—A Second Visit to Nazareth	Matt. 13:54-58
Dec. 12—Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By	Luke 18:35-43
Dec. 13—Christ Rejected by His Own	John 1:9-14
Dec. 14—Christ Rejected by His Brethren	John 7:1-13
Dec. 15—Christ the Prophet Received	Matt. 10:32-42

Suggested Hymns

What mean this eager, anxious throng?
Sweet is the work.
Sinners Jesus will receive.
Pleasant are Thy courts above.
How pleased and blest was I!
Almost persuaded.

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