

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 35, No. 39

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, JANUARY 10, 1957

Whole Number 1807

Jarvis Street Church Motto for 1957

"Go Forward"

(Substance of message delivered by the Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade,
at the New Year's morning service, January 1, 1957)

"The Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."—Exodus 14:15.

"GO FORWARD." The children of Israel were in extreme danger. They had come out of Egypt and had reached the Red Sea, which was to the east of them. To the north and to the south were the hills; behind them the advancing hordes of the pursuing Egyptians. They were in grave peril. We sometimes get into straits like that, with seemingly nowhere to go. Under such circumstances the Lord said unto Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Whenever we are in difficulty let us remember that we have a God Who can open up the Red Sea before us.

"GO FORWARD." The children of Israel had been given grace in the wilderness. They had been fed with manna, and they had been led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The Lord's presence was with them, as symbolized by the Mercy Seat. As it was with them, so it is with us, as we face this New Year. The Lord's command is still, "Go forward".

"GO FORWARD" — how? "Go forward" — gratefully. Oh, reflect upon the mercies of God:

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

"Thy mercies (have been) new every morning"; so will they be: "Great is Thy faithfulness". How marvelously we have been preserved! How wonderfully God has ordered our lives!

"GO FORWARD" — humbly. Humbleness of mind becomes us; there is no place for pride. Let us ask ourselves the question, "During the past year have I always acted faithfully, worthily, unblameably?" Ah, no. "God

be merciful to me a sinner" must be the cry of each one of us. Let us be clothed with humility; let us walk humbly before our God.

"GO FORWARD" — confidently.

"His love in time past,
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure
To help me quite through."

Just as with the children of Israel, it is by the help of God that we have continued unto this day. He will say to us, as He did to them, "I the Lord will fight for you." "Yea, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." So, trusting in His promises, let us go forward with confidence. "Have faith in God." Trust in the Lord, and He will never fail you, never let you down.

"GO FORWARD" — prayerfully. Do you wish to prosper in this New Year? You cannot prosper without prayer. "Your heart shall live that seek God." In ourselves we are destitute, but "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Let us go to the Throne of Grace daily.

"GO FORWARD" — seriously, solemnly. My journey has an end; so has yours. Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "This year thou shalt die." We do not know who may go to be with the Lord this year. During the past year we have been called, sadly, to lay away a number of our members. It is a good thing for us to have the end of the journey in view.

"GO FORWARD" — where? First, right here in every department of our great work. In the Bible School let us expand and reach the multitudes in this city, to which come people from all over the world. "Go forward" to foreign fields. The whole world is our field. It will be difficult: the children of Israel had to fight for every inch of land they possessed. But God still says, "Go forward". "Be strong and of a good courage." — but "GO FORWARD". God help us so to do!

MADE OF A WOMAN ...

The Christ of God hath come
 Long promised, long delayed!
 True God, from Heaven He cometh down;
 True man, of woman made.
 The Son of God is here:
 O fair and welcome morn;
 God manifest in flesh hath come,
 To us a Child is born!
 In lowliness He lies,
 That blessed Babe of heaven;
 Our God for us becometh man,
 To us a Son is given!

He cometh in His love,
 For us on earth to live;
 Bearing the burden of our guilt,
 For us His love to give.
 O many-sided love,
 So boundless and so free!
 Love of the cradle and the cross,
 What joy we find in thee!
 He cometh in His grace,
 The guilty to forgive;
 He cometh in His glorious power,
 That maketh dead men live.

The Christ of God we sing,
 The Babe of Bethlehem!
 And on His infant head we place
 The royal diadem:
 The crown of thorns is His,
 That child of poverty,
 Who on this earth of ours can find
 No place His head to lay.
 The crown of heaven is His,
 And angels own Him there.
 The crown of earth shall yet be His
 And we that crown shall share.

HORATIUS BONAR

MR. HUTCHINSON EXPRESSES THANKS

Mr. W. J. Hutchinson desires to offer sincere and grateful thanks to all friends at Jarvis St. Baptist Church for the many congratulatory cards and messages received, together with personal gifts to both himself and Mrs. Hutchinson on the occasion of his 80th Birthday and the 35th Anniversary of his coming to Jarvis Street Church as General Superintendent of the Bible School, 1922 - 1948, and Choir leader, 1924 - 1957.

As it is impossible to acknowledge all the foregoing individually, I trust friends will kindly accept this expression of appreciation and thanks.

122 Roosevelt Road,
 Toronto 6, Ont.

(Phil. 1:3-6).

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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

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

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

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

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JARVIS STREET CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY

- 9.45 Bible School for everybody, from grandfather to the baby.
- 11.00 Morning Service.
- 4.30 Afternoon Class.
- 6.55 Young People's Bible Fellowship Hour.
- 6.00 Prayer Service in Greenway Chapel.
- 7.00 Regular evening service.

TUESDAY

- 8.00 Departmental Conferences of the Bible School, followed by the teaching of the lesson at 8.45.

THURSDAY

- 2.30 Senior Dorcas Sewing Meeting.
- 5.30 Junior Dorcas Sewing Meeting.
- 8.00 Bible Lecture by Dr. H. C. Slade.

FRIDAY

- 7.00 and 8.15—Junior and Senior choir practices.
- 7.00 Friday Night Round-Up for boys and girls.

SATURDAY

- 8.00 Great Weekly Prayer Service in Greenway Hall.

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU

Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast
 Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost;
 In Thee shall I conquer by flood and by field.
 My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Our Solemn Obligation

A Sermon By Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, December 17, 1922

(Stenographically Reported)

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."—Romans 1:14, 15.

ERE our Lord departed to be with the Father, He made a promise to His disciples that they should receive a gift of power: "Ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost coming upon you." The purpose of that spiritual endowment was to enable those who knew Him to be witnesses unto Him; and that, in a word, is the business of every individual believer, and of the Church collectively. We are not here to devise new schemes for human betterment: we are here to bear a simple personal witness to the power of Jesus Christ to make men new creatures in Him. That is the simple task of the Church, — nothing more, and nothing less than that, — just to be witnesses to Jesus Christ; to tell what we know about Him. It is a thousand pities that we should insist upon complicating a duty which God has made so simple; and it were well if every believer could come clearly to understand that that is what he is saved for; that is why he is left here in this world, — not to make money, not to enjoy the good things of life primarily; but to be a living witness for Jesus Christ. That is our business every day we live. There is no other reason for our existence as Christians than that. For when that work is fully done, and our life's task of witness-bearing is completed, the Lord will call us hence.

I shall speak to you this morning of one who was in his day an outstanding witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. In all the history of the Christian Church, there has never been a more fruitful preacher than the Apostle Paul. He laboured more abundantly than all his contemporaries. From the beginning of his Christian life to the end, he did nothing but bear witness to the power of divine grace. "Straightway" — after his conversion — he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." And he kept on preaching Christ until, as Paul the aged, he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

And I ask you this morning to try to get at the springs of this active life; to discover what were the motives which lay behind this lifelong testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I.

To begin with, Paul describes himself as a "DEBTOR". Consider how this man got into debt. Saul of Tarsus was as truly a missionary as Paul the Apostle. From what we know of the life of Saul of Tarsus, it is

clear that he was dominated by one purpose, mastered by one idea, carried forward day after day by a great zeal for the accomplishment of that purpose: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." This man Saul, the proud Pharisee, who boasted that he owed the law nothing at all, was consumed with a great passion. That is a striking phrase which describes the intensity of his zeal: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus: "like the hot breath of some beast of prey, determined to possess that which it was pursuing, Saul breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." His mission was the very breath of life. His passion for the law, for the honour of the religion of his fathers, consumed him. It was one thing for which he lived. Then a voice from heaven spoke; and this proud man, who believed that he was free before God and men, that he owed nothing, — a voice from heaven spoke, and he suddenly discovered that he was hopelessly insolvent; that he was utterly bankrupt; that he was in debt, — hopelessly in debt to the law of God. And when he expected the doors of the eternal prison to swing open to receive him, and the hand of the divine jailer to make him a prisoner forever; behold, he discovered that his debt was paid; that his obligations were cancelled; that Another had stood in his room and stead: he learned what later he wrote, that in Him "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins:" it was revealed to him that God's books were balanced; and that he, who had richly deserved to be in chains, had been delivered "into the glorious liberty of the children of God," and was no longer in debt to the law. He discovered, however, that by that deliverance he had been placed under an overwhelming obligation to his great Redeemer; and that he was more deeply in debt than ever.

Somewhere I have heard of a coloured man coming with his bride to a certain parsonage to be married. After the ceremony he turned in simple fashion to the minister, and asked him the amount of his fee. The minister smiled, and said, "You may pay me what you think the bride is worth." The groom's eyes shone, and he said, "O marsa, you done broke me forever." He never expected to get out of debt!

And when Paul discovered that Jesus had become the bridegroom of his soul, he discovered that he was "broke forever"; that there was no possibility of his ever get-

ting out of debt to redeeming love. But it was a blessed obligation, a happy bondage, a glorious bankruptcy; for his chief Creditor was none other than the Lover of his soul. And when he began to inquire how this debt was to be liquidated, when he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And the Lord said to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." He discovered that his whole future was mortgaged; that he had become the bond-slave of Jesus Christ; that he was not his own, — he was bought with a price; and that he must spend the rest of his life, and all eternity, in trying to make some return to Him Who had redeemed him at such tremendous cost. And he learned that the only way by which it could be done was to render service to those whom the Lord loved. The Lord said to him in effect, "Saul, if you would pay me; if you would show how much you love me; if you would endeavour to discharge your obligation; then from this forward be my witness: tell other people, who are in debt to the law, as you are; tell other people, who are bound with the chains of sin, as you were, of One Who is able to set them free."

And that is true of every one of us, *we are bankrupt before God*. There is no possibility of our paying what we owe; but

"Jesus paid it all;
All to Him I owe:
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed us white as snow."

Therefore, we are henceforth debtors. There rests upon every one of us a solemn obligation to make Jesus Christ known, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Paul recognized that what Jesus had done for him had made him a debtor to all men. He said, "I owe it to the Greek, — to the man of culture, to the man who seeks after wisdom, to the man who is proud of his intellectual attainments, to the man who thinks that by his own reason he can fathom the mysteries of life — I owe it to the Greek to tell him that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: I owe it to him to preach the everlasting gospel."

Do not pass by the wise man; do not forget your obligation to those who think they have no need of Christ. Let us not confine our efforts to the man in rags, to the simple man who knows but little. Remember, that we are charged to bear a message from Him, — "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge . . . in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" that we are charged to endeavour to bring every man into vital personal relationship to Him, Who is the source of all wisdom, the very fountain of knowledge.

It is our obligation, I say, to preach Jesus to the Greek; but also to the barbarian, — to the unlettered, to the simple, to the ignorant, to the savage, to the man who dwells in the regions beyond: it is our obligation to make Jesus known to the unwise, as well as to the wise. And I would like to press that for a moment simply. We shall meet them to-morrow, — the Greek and the barbarian, the wise and the unwise. We shall meet them in our business; we shall meet them on the street-cars; we shall talk with them as they come to our doors; we shall meet them socially; we shall find them in our own fam-

ilies; we shall be touching men and women to-morrow — tomorrow? No, to-day: to-day as you leave this building — before you leave this building: there is a man sitting beside you, a woman sitting beside you; you owe it to God to find out if that man is a stranger, whether he knows Jesus Christ: you are his debtor. We owe it to every man we meet; wherever, whenever, we meet him; in whatsoever relationship we meet him; we owe it to him for Christ's sake to preach the everlasting gospel.

If you and I will but dedicate ourselves to this service; if every blood-bought soul here this morning would accept the simple teaching of that text: I am in debt to every man who does not know my Lord Jesus; I am under bond to make Jesus known, — if we would dedicate ourselves to that service, and resolve that we will go forward preaching the Word, set on fire by the Holy Ghost, in the power of the divine Spirit, bearing witness for Jesus, we should have a revival at once: I am positive we should. It is well that we should pray; and we cannot pray too much. It is well that we should invoke Heaven's blessing upon those whom we love; but we must ourselves recognize that God uses human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His work. We are bound before God "To tell to all around, What a dear Saviour we have found."

We shall never do this, unless we recognize that *we are under a personal obligation to Jesus Christ*. There are some Greeks who are not particularly lovable; there are some barbarians that are by no means winsome; there are some wise men who are about as hospitable as an iceberg; and there are unwise people who are just about as attractive as the slums. As a matter of fact, we are not particularly lovable, any of us. Oh, we are occasionally, perhaps; but I am speaking of what we really are seven days in the week. And if you are going to be directed merely by something without, by your love of men and women who are themselves lovable and attractive, you will not preach the gospel to very many people. But you see Paul was not spurred on by the attractiveness of those to whom he preached the gospel; he was driven forward by his sense of obligation to One Who died for him.

Thus, we must remember that it is *a debt of honour*, so far as we are concerned. We are in honour bound to do for our Lord Jesus, in obedience to His command, what He requires. And so it comes to this, that by no resolution to do our duty shall we ever become effective witnesses for the Lord Jesus. I know-it would be useless to ask men and women here this morning to resolve to speak to somebody about Jesus to-day, and to-morrow, and keep on doing it. Perhaps it would be better for you not to do it; for it depends upon what you know about Jesus. But if His work is so real to us, and of such inestimable value that He never fades from our vision; that He is always the altogether lovely One; that He is the One with Whom we live, and with Whom we converse; the One of whose grace we are daily receiving; the One with Whom we walk; the One Who is more real to us than any of our friends; the One whose redeeming work is so precious to us, that it is the most natural thing in the world to tell other people about it, — then from a sense of obligation to Him, we shall be able to tell others what Jesus has done.

I will tell you why we do not do it more often. It is because we lose the bloom of our first experience, the first joy of redemption. There are a great many people whose Christian experience is a thing of the past. There

was a day in the long and distant past when they dealt with Jesus very much as they dealt with an insurance agent. They got the policy, and put it away in a drawer, and they said, "Some day when I die, my wife will get something;" or, "Some day when the policy matures, there will be a payment." But they do not take it out and look at it every day. It is not something that is helping them every minute they live. And there are multitudes of people who have no vital relationship to Christ; who are not living in daily fellowship with Him; who are not spurred on by a present experience of His grace, to tell other people what Jesus has done for their souls. It is only as we abide in Him, and as He abides in us; as we live in the joy of His presence, that we shall be able to bear witness to His abounding grace.

Thus, I call this morning, every one, as I call my own spirit to a review of our experiences; that we may estimate again the measure of our indebtedness to Jesus Christ; that so we may discharge this debt of honour to Him Who died for us.

You remember when Peter returned to his Lord, and Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" he said, "Thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. If you love Me, then let it be proven by your unfailing testimony for Me." And if that be so, is there a mountain so steep, or a valley so dark, or a storm so wild, or a night so starless, or a lion so fierce, that you will be unwilling to face it?

II.

WHAT THEN IS OUR SHARE? How are we to do this? I am debtor to tell everybody about Jesus. And as I have been speaking to you in this simple fashion this morning, some of you have said, "Well sir, I would gladly do it if I could." During the days of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, they used to talk about "our share". What is our share of the obligation? I want to ask every man and woman here this morning, who professes faith in the Lord Jesus, and who is indebted to Him, — I want to ask you, What is your share of that debt? How much do you owe? Well, you cannot estimate that; but how much can you pay? What can you do? What return can you possibly make for the infinite sacrifice of the cross? You say, "If I were like Saul; if only I had his splendid endowments; if only I had his master-mind; if only I had his spiritual discernment; if I had but his eloquent pen; if I could write as Paul wrote; I should count it a great honour to give myself to the service of the Lord." But I want to tell you, my friends, that every one of us here can give just as much as Paul gave. We can do exactly what Paul the Apostle did; and this was his share: "As much as in me is" — I a murderer: he looked at the cross; there was no measure to it.

If I were to try to estimate the love of the Lord Jesus, I do not know by what standard I could measure it. If I could bring before you the great mountain ranges, jostling each other, crowding each other for space, upon God's earth; if I could describe to you the great rivers rising yonder and increasing in volume as they flow onward into the oceans, or broadening out into these great inland seas, and at last rushing down to the mighty deep; if I could bring before you all the oceans that belt the world; and then ask you to estimate the depth of them, and the height of the mountains, or to project your mind into the ethereal spaces, and try to count the num-

ber of the starry world, until mathematics all fail; if you pile all these standards together, you have not, even then, a standard that can measure the Infinite, or estimate the length and breadth and depth and height of "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

And my brother, in face of that, we are to go forward preaching Christ. Did you ever see, what I remember reading somewhere, called, "The cross in the skies"? "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." The height of heaven, the measure of the east from the west, — that is the measure of the love of God.

"As much as in me is, I am ready." Are you ready to yield yourself to the matchless, measureless, love of Christ? What is in you?

It means, of course, *the dedication of all natural powers*. You say you cannot speak. Who says so? There are some Christians, — and we have all been like that: I know I was the first two years of my Christian experience, — who are like some shy little girl who comes into the parlor in the presence of visitors. She comes up, and the visitor says, "And what is your name?" But she has not anything to say. "And how old are you?" And then the visitor playfully says, "Well, have you lost your tongue?" Nothing to say. Her mother says, "She is not always as quiet as that." O no, we are not always as quiet as that. Somebody says, "I could not speak for the Lord Jesus." Now, you think that is true. We all have thought that is true; but He maketh the dumb to speak: "As much as in me is." No, you have not the eloquence of an Apollos. Perhaps he was not eloquent when he began.

But I call upon you this morning not only to give your heart wholly to the Lord Jesus, but to *give your tongue to Him*. And my brethren and sisters, if our mouths were continually filled with His praise; it would save us a lot of trouble. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing . . . These things ought not so to be." You keep your tongue busy speaking about Jesus, praising Him: let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt, always, everywhere; just as if your great Creditor were present, as He is; and as if He were listening, as He is; and as if He were inquiring, as He does, "Are you paying your debt to-day? You are a debtor: Are you trying to liquidate that debt? are you letting your tongue speak for Me to-day?"

I charge you in the name of the Lord to remember that the silence of Jesus before Pilate was designed to teach you sometimes to be silent; but His speech before Pilate, when He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," should teach us that these tongues belong to Him, to be used wholly for His glory. "As much as in me is:" Are you ready?

It also means *the development of our latent powers*. Nobody knows how much there is within. We do not become perfect all at once, in any profession, in any art. We have to learn how to do things, and we have to learn to do well. We have to learn to speak for Jesus. We have to learn what to speak. Are you young people ready this morning to say, "O Lord, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach thy gospel"? I have heard people quote in the prayer-meeting, sometimes, a text which I think is much bigger than some of us imagine. We have said, "Bless

the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." "All that is within me;" but there is far more within you, my friend, than you have any idea of. There are latent powers there, which may be developed to the glory of God. You may acquire fluency of speech; you may acquire a great knowledge of the Word of God. There is a student who comes to our prayer-meetings sometimes, — he is just a student in one of the colleges: but I would go a long way at any time to hear him pray. Many of you will instantly recognize him; though you do not know his name, perhaps. He is just saturated with the Word of God. He just prays in the very language of Scripture, — a veritable Niagara of divine thought, poured out before God.

"As much as in me is." Mr. Moody used to say, "The Lord cannot use a man who does not know his Bible." We have been praying for a revival; and supposing God were to send it to-day, what part could you and I take? what equipment have we for leading men and women and boys and girls into the light? have we studied the Word? have we learned how to use the sword of the Spirit? have we learned how to use this as a lamp to light up the dark places? are we getting ready for that great sphere of service to which God may be calling some of us? "As much as in me is, I am ready."

I read the story once of Mr. Moody who, at the close of one of his great meetings, came down from the platform and putting his hand on somebody, said, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "No sir." "Then," he said, "sit down there until I get somebody to talk with you." He put his hand on another brother, and he said, "Are you a Christian?" and he said, "Yes." "Well, come and talk to this man." "But," he said, "I never did anything like that Mr. Moody." "Then sit down there and I will get somebody to talk to you." That was a bit of his practical common sense, you know. If we are not ready to talk to somebody else; we are badly in need of having somebody to talk to us.

But shall we this morning say, "As much as in me is, I am ready"? It may be there is some one here who has been doing that for a long time, without having had any results. You say, "I have been just doing the best I can; and I do not know that any souls have been saved. And I have come to the conclusion that my talents are so small, my ability is so insignificant, that the Lord could well dispense with me." This text means, All there is of you, — of body, of mind, and of spirit: heart opened to the Spirit of God, the mind just given up to the Spirit of God, that it may be flooded with His light, that all its powers may be brought in subjection to the Holy Ghost. It means all that; and when you have it all together, some modest soul here this morning, says, "Even with all that, sir, it does not amount to very much; because I am just a little man. As much as in me is: that is not very much." Well, I hope you feel like that. I wish we could all feel like that, and keep feeling like that. You know there is no danger of our ever becoming too small for God to use us: there is great danger of our becoming too big.

I want to remind you that this means, — "As much as in me is" — your little powers, whatever they may be, plus Deity, plus Omnipotence: that is what it means. "I cannot go with these," said David to Saul, son of Kish; and he put off the splendid armour, and the great sword, and the helmet — all the military equipment: and he took his sling, and went to the brook and gathered five smooth stones. And you say, "David, are you going to battle like

that, without a sword?" because there was no sword in David's hand. "Yes, I am going to do the best I can to-day." "Well, how are you going to do it?" "As much as in me is, I have dedicated it to the service of the Lord. I am going out against that giant in the name of the Lord of hosts, — the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." "As much as in me is," — just his little ability; and you know the result. Just one smooth stone in David's sling, in the sling in the hand of this trained man of the wilderness! O no, one smooth stone in the sling in the hand of Omnipotence; and the giant licked the dust; and there was a great victory in Israel.

"As much as in me is." Will you let Him have it? — little or much, whatever it may be. Can we say this morning, "Lord, we are ready — ready"?

I wish I were just beginning instead of closing; and I think I would take as a text, "I am ready." *Are you ready — not by and by, but now?* All there is of you, is it at God's disposal? Are you ready to preach the gospel to anybody, everybody, to whom God shall send you? "But Paul, aren't you just a little extravagant?" "No, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God, to me: it saved me." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation", — yes, you Greeks, you accept it; you wise men of the earth, you accept it — "worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." That is what made Paul unashamed of the gospel: it was what the gospel had done for him; and he was ready. Let us ask Him to make us ready.

HENCEFORTH UNTO HIM

(2 Cor. 5:15)

Lord, to myself I cannot live,
For passions are fierce and strong,
Doubt and despair the will enchain,
The conflict rages long.

Lord, to myself I should not live,
My heart is blind with sin.
No wisdom have I that life to guide,
Darkness would reign within.

Lord, to myself I would not live.
To come at the close of day,
With shame my empty hands to show,
No tributes Thy love to repay.

Lord, to myself I may not live,
This life is not mine own,
Purchased and sealed on Calvary's cross,
'Tis a gift by blood atoned.

Lord, to myself I will not live.
That self is weak and vain.
But unto Him who died for me,
Who died and lives again!

Lord, to myself I shall not live,
From henceforth — Thou the way, the goal!
Thy perfect wisdom the path shall show,
Thy grace shall make me whole.

—O.L.C.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH SERVICES

THE Christmas services at Jarvis Street Church commenced on Thursday evening, December 20th, when the Senior and Junior Choirs under the direction of Mr. W. J. Hutchinson, presented the Annual Carol Service. Mr. C. L. Penney accompanied the choirs on the organ, and Miss Jean Ibbotson presided at the piano. Greenway Chapel had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. The singing was most inspiring, and the large audience listened with keen delight to the various hymns, carols, carol hymns and carol songs, in which the fresh and clear younger voices blended so well with the more mature and stronger tones of the adults. The duets and solos were also most enjoyable. It was well to be reminded by Mr. Hutchinson of the deep significance of the Incarnation of Christ, for He came to earth that He might die for the sins of men.

All the services were well attended during the holiday season, and the Lord's presence was manifest in our midst. as His Word was preached in power and in the demonstration of the Spirit. Prayer is being answered on behalf of parents and families of our Bible School scholars; as a number of them have recently commenced attending the services, and it is a great joy to see some of them openly confessing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's hand of blessing in the Bible School itself has resulted in the salvation of many of the scholars.

On Sunday morning, December 23rd, six persons, four adults and two scholars responded to the invitation. Dr. H. C. Slade preached that morning on the subject, "A Visit to Bethlehem" (Luke 2:9, 11, 15), emphasizing the fact that the shepherds went with haste to see the Christ, then returned with rejoicing, setting an example for all who would earnestly seek the Saviour. On Sunday evening of that day Dr. Slade expounded with clarity and power the great doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ (Gal. 4: 4, 5).

On Sunday morning, December 30th, Dr. Slade preached convincingly on the theme "A Pastor's Joy" (Col. 2: 6-10). The true pastor finds his joy in seeing the believers strengthened in faith, grounded in the Word of God, rejoicing in Christ and becoming fruitful in every good work. At the close of the service two more scholars from the Bible School openly confessed their faith in Christ. One of the highlights of this service was the lovely message, sung by the large Junior Choir:

"Who came down from heaven to earth?

Jesus Christ our Saviour!

Came a child of lowly birth?

Jesus Christ our Saviour.

"Who was lifted on the tree?

Jesus Christ our Saviour!

There to ransom you and me?

Jesus Christ our Saviour!"

At the evening service three believers were baptized. The pastor preached an appropriate New Year's message on "A New Creation", taking as his text 2 Cor. 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

For over one hundred years the Jarvis Street family have gathered for a solemn, yet joyful service of prayer and dedication each New Year's morning. This service is unique, and year after year the Lord has met with His people to bestow peculiar blessing, as in unhurried manner they have waited upon Him. One after another, many of the saints, young, middle-aged and older ones, took

part in prayer and testimony, praising the Lord for His goodness in the past and imploring His blessing for the future upon the church as a whole, the individual members, the leaders, the families and upon all those near and far who are associated with us in the work of the Lord. The foreign fields were not forgotten. Grateful acknowledgement was made of our debt to the stalwart saints of old who laid the foundations of the church and left us such a godly heritage in trust.

Dr. Slade continued the custom of the former pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields, in suggesting a church motto for the New Year. It was this: "Go forward" (Exod 14:15). He commented most helpfully on the truth of this text, and the substance of his brief message will be found on the front page of this issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Thus, as a body of God's believing people, Jarvis Street Church in all its departments and through its various avenues of service has passed another milestone, and before the Lord has consecrated herself to "go forward" in His name, gratefully, confidently, prayerfully and solemnly.

The first Saturday Night Prayer Meeting of the year was truly a great meeting, and thus the outpouring of God's blessing on Sunday was not unexpected. At the morning service on January 6th, Dr. Slade preached earnestly and strongly on the theme, "Treasures in Heaven" (Matt. 6:19-21). We have great riches in Christ (2 Cor. 8:9), and we must put divine things first in our lives (Matt. 6:33). There is danger in laying up treasures on earth, but the Lord counsels us to lay up treasures in heaven by setting our affections on things above, by faithfully giving forth the message of the Gospel, by being faithful stewards of what we possess and by redeeming the time, laying hold of our opportunities. In closing his message Dr. Slade urged all present to place their treasures in heaven, where they can enjoy them for ever. Six persons responded to the invitation. It was a touching sight when a little girl left her seat in the gallery to come and confess Christ; as she did so, her father came from his seat on the main floor and met her at the front.

The evening message on "Christ Our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7, 8) was a fine preparation for the Monthly Communion Service which followed. The Paschal Lamb was typical of Christ, the Lamb of God, Who was sacrificed for our redemption and salvation. The ordinance of the Passover, established at the time of the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12:1-14), was typical of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

"When God of old the way of life
Would teach to all His own,
He placed them safe beyond the reach
Of death, by blood alone.

"It is His word, God's precious word,
It stands for ever true:

'When I the Lord shall see the blood,
I will pass over you.'

"By Christ, the sinless Lamb of God,
The precious blood was shed,
When He fulfilled God's holy Word,
And suffered in our stead.

"The wrath of God that was our due
Upon the Lamb was laid;
And by the shedding of His blood
The debt for us was paid."

Assisting the Chief Shepherd

Rev. Gerald B. Griffiths, B.A., B.D.

(A Sunday morning Sermon on the occasion of the Induction of Elders and Deacons at Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh)

"The elders which are among you I exhort . . . Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 Peter 5:14.

I DO NOT propose to limit this Charge to our newly-elected elders. I have read this paragraph as a text for one reason only — to focus attention upon the figure that runs through it, that of the shepherd and the flock. Our Lord is here described as the Chief Shepherd and elders as His under-shepherds.

The Shepherd is one of the most familiar and cherished figures of Scripture. It is used of God: "The Lord is my shepherd." It was used of Old Testament kings and prophets. It became one of the symbols of the Messiah: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd and gently lead those that are with young." Jesus saw the harassed multitudes of His day as sheep without a shepherd. He addressed His disciples as His "little flock" and saw in His arrest in Gethsemane the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy: "I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered."

The figure of shepherding is used, too, of Christian leadership. Our Lord commissioned Simon Peter to feed His sheep. When we Baptists think of a shepherd we tend to think most readily of the Minister or Pastor as the man set apart to the pastoral charge of a church. And of course we are not altogether wrong in this, for the word translated "pastor" in Ephesians 4:11 ("And he gave some . . . *pastors*") means literally "shepherd". But the New Testament uses this figure of shepherding quite equally of church elders. Paul's charge to the elders at Ephesus was in these terms: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:28-29.) And Peter uses the same language to the elders of the Dispersion in our text.

But this figure of shepherding is capable of a still wider interpretation. For as Dr. Temple has finely said: "The pastoral office, like all other offices in the Church, is a focalisation, so to speak, of a function of the whole Church and all its members." We are *all* called to witness and to exercise a Christian influence. The Shepherd heart and mind is not to be confined to pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday School teachers, and the like. Every Christian mother is ordained in a very real sense to exercise a pastoral office among her children. We all have a place of Christian influence somewhere, and there is no true Christian influence anywhere which cannot be regarded as under-shepherding under the Chief Shepherd.

So in speaking of the task of under-shepherding I am enlarging its merely official boundaries to include all who are ready to take their Christian influence seriously. This is an hour of dedication for us *all* as a church. It is

the first day of a new year, when the mood of dedication is specially proper to us all. It is also an important landmark in our church life as we set apart our Elders' and Deacons' Courts for a period of five years. It would then be wrong for any of us to sit here this morning in the role of a spectator. We must all share in this dedication and offer ourselves to the Great Shepherd of the sheep as His assistants and helpers in our church and home and business, and wherever else His sheep may be found.

But what does it mean for a Christian to be an under-shepherd of the flock? The answer is given in our Lord's self-portrait of Himself as the *Good Shepherd* in John 10. Let us then consider our Chief Shepherd that we may all learn what it means to have our Shepherd's heart and mind.

1. The Good Shepherd

This beautiful 10th chapter of John paints no less than five distinct pictures of the Good Shepherd.

(i) HIS VOICE (1-5).

It is a winter scene. The sheep were brought down from the plateau through the narrow ravines to the shelter of their winter fold. This might be a courtyard attached to a house. The walls would be strong and high, the door would be stout and bolted, guarded from the inside by an all-night porter. There would be several flocks of neighbouring shepherds in this communal shelter. Each morning the shepherd would knock upon the door, announce his identity, and the porter would draw back the bolts and open the doors. But how was the shepherd to sort out his own sheep?

The Judaeen shepherd had not our use for dogs. Where the Highland shepherd to-day uses his dog, the Eastern used his voice. The Eastern shepherd really knew his sheep one by one. The fact that his sheep were kept more for their wool than for their meat meant that he kept them much longer than a British or New Zealand shepherd, where the question of choice lamb rules the day. Three or four years gave him time to find a name for every sheep in his flock. I can think of a dozen names for sheep like brownie, blackie, long-ears, black-leg, etc., but a hundred names, well . . . ! The Eastern shepherd really knew his sheep, and they knew when he called.

Permit me a boyhood memory here. Nothing gave me more pleasure in my early teens than to spend holidays on a mountain farm. I learned a little about sheep and perhaps a little more about cows. One of the things that amazed me was the way in which cows were called home at milking time. Some afternoons there would be no sign of a cow anywhere, they would be grazing in a woodland clearance. Then the farmer would give his magic call and, sure enough, out they would come and walk up to

his stance almost like human beings. Well, I became so intrigued that one afternoon I tried it myself — and all the cows simply stood and stared! They knew their master's voice but not this strange schoolboy's.

The true shepherd, says Jesus, does not need to climb up some other way to gather his flock. He does not need to descend to the stratagems of a thief nor to the violence of a robber. He *speaks* — and his sheep hear, come forth and follow him wherever He leads. The application is, of course, obvious. Not all in the fold of Israel were His sheep — alas, there were two flocks owning two shepherds. But whilst the false shepherd might employ a thousand arts of deceit and violence, the Good Shepherd only calls in love, and His own hear and heed His voice.

Everywhere about us to-day there are sheep waiting to be called into Christ's flock and it is the task of the Church to call them forth. But we cannot resort to graft or violence, we cannot bribe or bludgeon. But we can do something better: *speaking* in His name so that His sheep may hear their Shepherd's voice and follow.

We mourn our ineffectiveness to-day. So few follow. And why? Is our failure altogether due to the hardness of men's hearts? May not some of the fault lie with us — with our poor presentation of the Truth, our false tones and accents? Perhaps the sheep do not rise and follow because our voice is not the Shepherd's? Perhaps we speak more like thieves, robbers and hirelings? This Scripture declares plainly that they know not the voice of strangers. Only when our speech becomes the call of the Good Shepherd to their needy hearts will men rise up and follow.

Lord, speak to me that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone,
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children, lost and lone.

(ii) HIS VIGIL (7-10)

I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be *safe*, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The scene now changes from winter to summer. The sheep no longer sleep in the valley courtyards, but remain on the plateau in their pens, a simple affair of four sides and a blank for entrance and exit. There is no door: the shepherd himself is the door. He lies across the open gap so that no wild beast can enter and no sheep can leave save over his body. The sheep are safe because he guards the door with his own body.

No doubt this picture implies the deepest truth of the atonement. "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The new and living way into the holiest of all, as Hebrews declares, was opened for us through His flesh. As each Communion Service reminds us, it is only through His Body broken for us that we can ever enter into the Church of the redeemed. But the point I wish to underscore now is the security and sufficiency of the shepherd's care.

He keeps watch over his flock day and night. The dangers which threatened a Judæan flock were many. The sheep might wander over the escarpment and be lost in the wilderness, they might fall headlong to their death over a precipice, the wolf was never far away. But whilst the shepherd keeps his sleepless vigil they go in and out and find pasture.

To "go in and out" was the Jewish way of describing a life of absolute security. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and

for evermore." It is this sense of absolute safety that the sheep know when the Good Shepherd keeps constant watch over them. Whilst they sleep, His presence stands between them and the foe, whilst they graze, His keen eye scans the scattered flock; and when they move on to fresh supplies, He goes before to ward off each lurking peril, and to lead them to green grass and cooling streams. All of which proclaims that there is security and sufficiency for all in Christ. "I am come that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Christ calls His sheep by His voice, He keeps them in safety and plenty by His tireless vigil.

(iii) HIS VICARIOUSNESS (11-15)

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Shepherding in Palestine was serious business. The shepherd had to account for every sheep in his flock. At all costs the flock must be protected, and should the inescapable happen and a sheep was torn and devoured by a wild beast, the law laid it down that the shepherd should prove his devotion to his hapless sheep by producing some rescued part or limb. It was the natural and expected thing for a devoted shepherd to fight to the death any attacker of his flock, be it wild beast or bandit.

And our Lord belongs to this order of shepherds. "I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." "Having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Not so the hireling, however, who only looks after sheep for a living. He may withstand an occasional storm or snow-fall, but when it becomes a matter of life and death he takes to his heels. He has never taken the sheep to his heart: he does not nourish and protect them as *his own*. His interest in them is merely professional.

(iv) HIS VISION (16)

Our Lord is no small-man shepherd. His sheep cannot be put into one pen, they are upon *every* mountain and slope. So He must go from fold to fold, calling out His own flock.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *flock* (not "one fold") and one shepherd.

This is His great missionary passion: one Shepherd, one Flock. And finally:

(v) HIS VICTORY (27-28)

My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

His sheep are safe against the soul's final foe, His love is proof against death. We do not perish *unto eternity*. We die, but the sting of death is no more: there is no paralysing fear of judgment to come. The poison of death remains only for the unregenerate. "Christ (to quote Marcus Dods) has tasted death for every man, and out of each man's cup has sucked the poison, so that now, as we in turn drink it, it is but a sleeping draught. There was a chemistry in His love and perfect obedience which drew the poison to His lips, and absorbing into His own system all the virulence of it, by the immortal vigour of His own constitution, He overcame its effects, and rose again triumphing over its lethargic potency."

Nothing can pluck His sheep out of His hand! Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. His Under-Shepherds

These five pictures of the Good Shepherd have something to say to us this morning as minister, elders, deacons, Mission workers, Sunday School teachers and parents — in fact, to all who will take their Christian witness seriously.

His Voice. We have no other weapon in our armory. We may win people to ourselves by our diligence, warm their hearts with our humour, awe them with our high intelligence, thrill them with our singing, and so on and so forth, *but* no real work of grace will be done in their hearts until they somehow catch in our speech the accents of the Master's Voice. This is our first priority. Of course deacons must be men of integrity, capable of courteous stewarding and wise and faithful oversight of a church's fabric and finances. Elders should be supremely men of God, competent to share in the pastoral oversight of their church, ready to offer companionship, counsel and guidance to those who need their ministries, jealous of Christ's honour, solicitous of His people's well-being, men of vision who sense, and respond to, the spiritual needs and opportunities of their hour. But when we have listed all our official duties, this is the final measure of us all. Can the magnetic power of Christ's love be felt in and through us? Do we make it easier for men to hear the Shepherd calling? All around us there are hearts to be loved and won for Christ, but only as we speak in living echoes of His *tone*. And is there anywhere a more tell-tale test of our true spirituality than our tone? Sound doctrine and a show of zeal we can "put on". But a tone of voice cannot be imitated, because it rises from the imponderable depths of our souls. It is an expression of our whole nature. "In it heart speaks to heart and draws out a heart's response." And how can we hope to speak in living echoes of *His* tone unless our inner life is constantly "hid with Christ in God"?

His Vigil. It is not enough to call men forth. We must go before them, and keep watch over their souls as those who must give account . . . Every Christian should have a shepherd love for lambs and straying sheep. Many of us fail lamentably at this point. There may well be needy hearts waiting specially for *your* care. Don't wait then to be called to any official office, but begin now to win and love those nearest you. We are none of us to be shepherds because we carry some special badge or title: the

love of Christ in our hearts is the only required ordination.

His Vicariousness. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." "Good shepherd" means literally "Beautiful shepherd." "And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Isaiah was right. The Carpenter of the seamless robe had no vain glamour of worldly pomp and show. But the beauty of His sacrificial love! Kings may wear robes of gold and velvet, but what are they to compare with the robe He wore on Calvary? The only beauty that comes for us Christians is spiritual: our capacity to suffer with Christ in gathering His flock. We are to be marked by our spiritual pangs, not our selfish pleasures.

Nothing less than *His Vision* should be ours. Of course our missionary interest can never be confined to these four walls! "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Of course our Christian fellowship must overflow our own church and denomination. We must covet the fullest possible fellowship and co-operation with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Our Lord longs that there should be *one flock* and one Shepherd. Not "one fold". The unity of which He speaks is not that of ecclesiastical uniformity but of obedience to one Shepherd's voice. To this glorious vision our faith commits us to labour and love and pray that every creature should hear the Gospel and all His flock be drawn together in obedience to His voice.

And what shall we say of *His Victory*? We proclaim to men a Shepherd who has vanquished Death and Hell, and whose arm is ever strong to keep the feeblest of His flock. His love will never wear out. Time, exclaims an old preacher, "crumbles the mountains, dims the sunshine, loosens the machinery of the universe," but it cannot touch or impair the love of Christ!

And as we try to measure up to our colossal privilege as His under-shepherds, this is our inexpressible conclusion. His love cannot fail us, nothing can pluck us out of His hand.

We are all unprofitable servants, and in this hour of dedication some of us are keenly aware of our limitations. "Who am I to assist the Chief Shepherd? I am only a poor sheep myself." True, but let us never forget that we have a very gracious Shepherd! And if we take time to hear and heed His voice, not going before Him and not lagging behind, He will lead us to pastures sufficient for ourselves *and* for all whom we must call and nourish in His name.

—Charlotte Chapel Record

Circular Letter of the French Bible Mission

December 6th, 1956.

"When a multitude of thoughts move within me, thy comforts delight my soul."—Psalm 94:19.
My very dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ:

As I meditate, before writing this Circular Letter, a multitude of thoughts are moving within me. In fact, so many happenings and events have crowded our life since last spring! Yet, we can say with gratitude: "Thy comforts, O Lord, delight my soul." Surely this is, also

your own experience, for, to know the Lord is a wonderful privilege. However, over 30 millions in France ignore Him, unaware of His love, of His cross, of His power to save! Nevertheless, we have had the privilege of leading many to a saving knowledge of Him, and each time we have been thrilled with the joy of Heaven.

THIRTY YEARS IN THE SAME CHURCH. While celebrating our Church Anniversary last October, mention was made of the fact that this one marked also my

own 30th anniversary as Pastor in this beloved church of Jesus Christ which is at Colombes, Paris. So, we rejoiced together, exalting the One who can use us, giving seed to the sower, songs to the singer and bread to the hungry soul. During that same long ministry we had the privilege of opening a new church in Paris, Rue de Sevres. We thank God for His wonderful mercy: Hitherto has the Lord helped us! That anniversary day was fraught with special blessing. We heard some dear ones testifying to the matchless grace of the God who saved them, and later, three of them, coming from Roman Catholicism, followed the Lord in baptism. A most helpful time was enjoyed at the close of the day when some 50 raised their voices in a season of prayer and thanksgiving. We are amazed at the thought of all that our God has graciously done during this long ministry in the same Church, supplying all our spiritual and other needs, coming to our rescue each time we raised our cry to Him. Surely, great is His faithfulness.

HOULGATE. This is a holiday resort by the seaside between Caen and Havre, where we have The Evangelical Church. I went there in August for only ten days, conducting 18 meetings, preaching the Word of God to thirsty souls. Two Roman Catholics received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. Quite a number went away musing upon their wonderful discovery.

NIMES. This is a famous historical Roman city in the south of France. There we met for our Pastoral Conference, in the Church of the President of the French Bible Mission, Dr. Robert Dubarry. Some 35 of our workers came together for a week of spiritual fellowship. A flood of news items and ideas had to be faced, leaving no room for one dull moment. Of course we had a public rally every night, and God used His various servants, drawing souls to Himself. I came home refreshed and grateful for such a tonic, received through fellowship with my dear colleagues in the Gospel ministry, and I was encouraged in the good fight.

MULHOUSE. You will be interested to hear that our Alsatian Church in Mulhouse is being much blessed in the constant increase of their numbers because of souls being conquered for the Lord, these being tokens of the success of their various Gospel enterprises, including a printing department. This has led them to decide to build a new church with a seating capacity of 250 persons. The digging of the foundations was done by voluntary helpers. The whole structure should be roofed over by the end of the year. The pastor, Rev. F. Buhler, writes as follows: "Above all, we most earnestly covet your prayers, for unless the Lord build the House, they labour in vain that build it. May His hand of blessing be upon every detail of this undertaking. May He also cause to grow the spiritual edifice, which is by far the more important." This very dear church will welcome our Biennial Conference next summer, and they hope to have some of our smaller gatherings held in their new church-building. Of course, all this means financial responsibility, and we shall be glad to give them a little help in that direction.

OUR OWN WEDDING. "We will serve the Lord, for He is our God." This was the verse that appeared on the card announcing our marriage. A number of you may have heard that the Divine Providence, full of wisdom and goodness, has guided our circumstances for the bene-

fit of His service and also for the gratitude of our hearts. So, Mademoiselle Denise Challand, who for over 16 years served the Master in a missionary institution, has become my helpmeet. We both have the certitude that this rebuilt home is under the approval and blessing of God. Many tokens of an improved usefulness have confirmed us in our happy conviction.

SWITZERLAND. My wife and I are about to leave home for a ministry of six weeks in our Swiss churches, especially the one at Tramelan, now without a pastor. May I ask you to remember us in prayer on behalf of a fruitful ministry there, and thank you for your hearty co-operation?

OUR MOTTO FOR 1957. "God is faithful." How good it is to trust Him, whose faithfulness is our rock and refuge in a world that is trembling under the threats of war! May we all feel secure as we remember this repeated affirmation of the word of God. Whatever be our tomorrow, we can keep on believing in the faithfulness of the One whose word shall never pass away. "Great is thy faithfulness."

MY NEXT VISIT TO BRITAIN. It will take place (God willing) first in Ulster from April 24th to May 16th, then in England from May 17th to 30th. Any interested church which wishes a date in the program should write immediately either to our Irish Honorary Secretary, Mr. H. A. Johnston, 13 Ann Street, Belfast, or to Rev. T. H. Bendor-Samuel, 51 Chestnut Road, West Norwood, London, S.E. 27.

We do covet the help of your prayers on behalf of this busy tour, that the Name of the Lord may be glorified, both in the edification of saints and in the salvation of lost souls.

You know, of course, how great is my gladness at the prospect and anticipation of our meeting together, sharing the joy of the Lord.

"Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine!

Constantly abiding, rapture divine.

He never leaves me lonely, whispers, oh so kind:

'I'll never leave thee.' Jesus is mine."

In such a time as this, by the grace of God I wish you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Yours most cordially and gratefully,

EMILE GUEDJ, General Secretary.

(Information concerning the recordings of the singing of Mr. Guedj may be obtained from Evangelical Recordings Company, Limited, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W. 1).

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The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Grace Abounding

By Dr. T. T. Shields

Radio Message on the Blue Network, April, 1944

FROM the day
*Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
 Brought death into the world, and all our woe,"*

even until now, Satan's chief occupation has been the slandering of God. Turning the truth of God into a lie, he has destroyed man's faith in God. It is thus "the god of this world," as Satan is called, "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. The supreme function of the Christian revelation is to convince men that Jesus Christ is the image of God; and, by proving that the infinite God, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the Universe, and Jesus Christ are the one and the same Person thus to dispel the Satanically-produced fog of unbelief, enabling men to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Therefore the Scripture reasons with us, and exhorts, and persuades, and importunes, and commands us to believe God as He reveals Himself in Christ.

How then shall we define what the Bible calls faith — without which, we are told, it is impossible to please God? Faith is more than the yielding of a mental assent to a form of words as a religious creed; more even than believing the Bible itself — although the truth which is the substance of faith is revealed in that infallible Book. Faith is the response of the divinely-enlightened soul to God's disclosure of Himself in Christ.

That involves believing God as God, as Abraham believed Him, and such faith transports the soul from the narrow limitations of what we call the sphere of the natural, and swings wide the door opening upon the realm of the supernatural, where the power of God does what mere human or even superhuman but still natural power can never accomplish. Abraham — or, as he then was called, Abram — believed in the possibility of miracle. That is, he believed that God could give him a son when his wife was long past the age of childbearing.

Is such faith in supernaturalism essential to salvation? Nothing less than that could be faith, for a refusal to believe in the supernatural involves a refusal to recognize God as God. The supernatural is easily believable if only we believe God, for the reason that with God "all things are possible." But the question arises, Does God condition the soul's salvation upon one's believing the truth of a historical record of the supernatural? If I answer affirmatively, I mean only when the implications of such an attitude toward historical supernaturalism are understood. For instance, Are such miracles as Isaac's birth, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and the real resurrection of Christ important only as intellectual concepts? By no means! They are important as factual records of what God has done; and they are imperatively important as factual revelations of what God is, and must always be; and, therefore, of what He is able and willing still to do.

Salvation necessitates the remission of human sin, made possible on the moral ground of the infinite explanatory value of the atonement effected by the vicarious life, and death, and complementary resurrection of Christ, the Son of God. But equally, it necessitates the availability for the recreation of human nature of a regenerative power competent to remake ruined human nature in the image and likeness of God. We are staggered by the contemplation of the unprecedented human might which must be assembled to break the hold of the enemy upon the enslaved millions of Europe and Asia to set those people free. But unless we can conceive of the power of the United Nations as being equal to that task faith in the survival of human freedom must be impossible.

Similarly, the deliverance of the human soul from the chains of sin which bind it and from the tyranny of Satanic power involves the exercise of a supernatural power as great as was exercised in Isaac's birth, in the virgin — and hence supernatural — birth of Jesus, and in His supernatural resurrection. Therefore the cumulative truth of these supernatural events climaxed in the resurrection of Christ constitutes a disclosure of divine grace, and makes faith in all the supernatural implications and promises of the Christian Gospel the most rational exercise and reasonable attitude of the human mind. Because with God "all things are possible", all things are possible to him who believeth in God.

Such faith cannot be induced by any mere logical process, though logic is of its very essence. There must be the objective illumination of the Gospel as it shines in the face of Christ, and the subjective opening of the human understanding; the engagement of the affections, and the enfranchisement of the human will, by the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus, when all the faculties of the mind are made the subjects of the regenerating grace of God, it appears that true faith is not reason in its infancy, much less is faith in any sense, contrary to pure reason; but rather, faith is reason matured in perception and judgment, intensified in penetration, and with a wider and longer vision, sublimely exercised in the appraisal and appropriation and enjoyment of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Thus faith is found to be, as the Scripture saith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Therefore, however black the record of our past may be, the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse it; however corrupt our nature, His power can recreate it; however impotent in ourselves to resist sin, the power of His indwelling Spirit will cause us to triumph over it; and however hopeless life's present earthly prospect is, faith will keep us looking for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," as we give this testimony to the world:

I heard the voice of Jesus say;
 "I am this dark world's light;
 Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
 And all thy days be bright."

The Christian's Attitude to the Past

By Dr. J. Stuart Holden

"Ask now of the days that are past" (Deut. 4:32)

THESE words are part of the injunction of the man of God to the people of Israel not to forget all the way by which God had led them, not to lose sight of the great lessons which the past held for them, and not to fail in their faith, and hope, and in their devotion to God, by imagining that the present had removed them from the great and glorious power which God had exerted on their behalf in former days.

We all need from time to time to take stock of our lives. We all need to make as careful, and as full a retrospect as is possible of that measured stretch of the pilgrim journey which now lies behind us. Behind us, a measured stretch of certainty — its actions, its joys, its sorrows, its sins, its victories — all irrevocable, never to meet us again, save in the power of their influence, until that day when we stand before God. And before us an unmeasured stretch of uncertainty. We know not what a day will bring forth, and we cannot even begin to conjecture what a year will mean for us. We stand, as it were, upon a great ridge, looking backward, and forward, and upward. We do well to lay to heart this old prophetic injunction, and to "ask now of the days that are past". What is their lesson? What have they to teach us? What lanterns do they put into our hands to guide us along the dark pathway upon which we now enter? What word of guidance have they to give us concerning the untried and unknown future?

"Ask now of the days that are past." There is a testimony which assures us that men may forget the things that are behind: and that, surely, is part of the gospel of Christ, for such a forgetfulness is the assurance of fruitfulness. We could not bring forth fruit unto holiness, unless we did forget much of that which is past. Yet, at the same time, there is a danger of our forgetting too much, and losing immeasurably by forgetting the meaning and the purpose of all the days that are past, and of God's dealings with us therein. While there are some who may lose much by not looking forward sufficiently far, many more may lose immeasurably by not looking backward sufficiently, and with intent, to find out what God Himself would use as a spur to faith, and energy, and hope.

"Ask now of the days that are past." Now of all the wonderful powers with which God has invested us, memory is, perhaps, the most wonderful. Memory, with its sovereignty over time, and space, and circumstances: memory, with its power to penetrate the strongest mental armour with which we can gird and defend ourselves: memory, with its strange capacity for utilizing the forces of the past either for good, or for ill. Christ our Master lays claiming hands upon memory, as He does on all other parts of man's being. He offers to control it, and to sanctify it. He offers Himself to be its Lord and Keeper, so that memory shall become, indeed, one of the greatest assets of our lives unto holiness, so that it shall be consecrated to the highest concerns of the soul, and of the Kingdom of God. Christ lays claiming hands upon memory, for He recognizes that the past is not dead, but living and reproductive that

*"Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
And what we have been makes us what we are."*

"Ask now of the days that are past," says Christ. "Fear not to face the past: look with Me upon it: link your life to Mine as you examine it: see it through My eyes: let the lens of My grace make it clear to you, bringing out, and putting into bold relief, all the greatness of the love, and power, and mercy of which the past days are full." We all know that it is much easier to discern the true features of a picture when we stand away back from the canvas. As we look back upon the past we see how one thing has been knit up with another: that there has been no chaos, no tangle, no complexity in the past: but that it has all been one great, grand ordering of God.

"Ask now of the days that are past." It is difficult rightly to estimate a long stretch of time: and here the injunction is to single out "days". Each day of our lives so strikingly different. Days of light and days of shadow: days of gladness and days of gloom: days of joy and days of chilling loss: days of strength, with life flowing vigorously, when tasks have been easy in the undertaking of them: and days of weakness, when we have been lethargic and indifferent when confronted with duty and responsibility. "Ask now of the days that are past." Bring them before your mind in review: seek to learn their lesson, and to receive their message; for a right appreciation of the past, a right attitude towards the past, is the foundation of all progress and of all true Christian living.

In days gone by there used to be seen those old calendars in which the days of the year were distinguished in three different ways. There were, for instance, *the black letter days* — days which were set apart by ordinance and law for abstinence and fasting. Then there were *the plain letter days* — days of no special significance, just ordinary routine days. And there were *the red letter days* — days of commemoration, and feasting and festivity.

There are for every one of us what I may call *the black letter days*; and we shall always think of them as such. It is true that in the lives of us all there are these black letter days, when our outstanding consciousness is that of sin, and failure, and shortcoming. There are those black letter days when pride rose in its heat and strength, when we were positively wilful in the face of God's commands, when we failed to live up to our own ideals. Those black letter days have got a message for us. This exhortation to "ask of the days that are past", is, surely, a challenge to the easy tolerance with which we too often look back upon our own shortcomings, the complacency with which we excuse ourselves when we have thus failed, the ease with which sin loses for us its ignominiousness, and our apathy with regard to our need for self discipline. The man or woman who is in earnest about the things of the soul, will ask, even of these black letter days, what is their message of warning, of judgment and, perchance, it may be also of grace. Our sensibilities with regard to our own sins are apt to become warped, and untrustworthy, by worldliness and selfishness and, unless we are really in earnest about the things of the soul, we shall let this message pass unheeded. But if we are in earnest,

then we shall face the message of these black letter days, the thought of which may bring tears of shame to our eyes. It is well for us that some of the things that are behind God's back should be before our faces, and that some of those things that God has promised to forget, we should never forget.

We all know something about the black letter days of sorrow, of loneliness, of calamity, and we have reaped the harvest of those days, we have learned how to get honey out of the stoney rock, and to make the vale of misery as a well. But it is the dark days of folly and sin that we need to recall from time to time. Ask of those days, and they will say this to you: "Be distrustful of yourself. Your enthusiasms, your loyalties, have all been discredited, therefore walk warily and go softly all your days. Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for yesterday contradicts your boasting." This is part of the message of the black letter days. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But even in the darkest of days, "At eventide there shall be light", for sin was never so black but the blood of Jesus can cleanse its stain when we call upon Him in penitence. Behind the darkest of these clouds there is not only a silver, but a golden lining—love unspeakable, grace immeasurable. "He took me out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon the rock. And he hath put a new song in my mouth." Blessed be God, even for the black letter days if they bring to us such a message as this.

What about *the plain letter days* of which life is full? Just days of ordinary routine: nothing very exciting about them, nothing much to show for them. No fortunes made, and, on the other hand, no fortunes lost. What is the message of the plain letter days? They hold for every one of us a whole heaven of often unrecognized mercy. Every morning brought its manna—strength sufficient for the day. Every evening brought its faithfulness, the peace of God in the heart. Every hour brought its gifts of health, and work, and food, and friendship, and those things which we are so apt to take as mere matters of course. Put those common mercies under the microscope of faith, and you will find that in their very littleness God's greatness was expressing itself. Yet these plain letter days are the days of greatest peril, days when prayer does not seem to be of such insistent necessity as in the black letter days. There is the peril that lurks in the commonplace of life becoming entirely secular. Yet as we look back we realize that all round about us in those days was the protective presence of the Lord of glory: we were kept safe in His love. The message which the plain letter days bring to us, and the praise which they evoke from our hearts is just this: "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

What of *the red letter days*—the days of special gladness and blessing? Those days when God seemed specially near: days of answered prayer: days that were marked by a glorious Ebenezer: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me." Sabbath days, when the music of the Gospel charmed all the ill-humour away, when the peace of God came in to soothe and to strengthen for the conflict. Perhaps the greatest day of all has come to you in the past year when you slipped your hand into the hand of Christ, and consecrated your life to Him: Get back to those early experiences. Get back to those days, and dwell in thought upon God's tenderness, and mercy, and power. Have you ever noticed that whenever Paul had the op-

portunity he always told about the Damascus road? There was not a place on earth that was so dear to him as that place where he was blinded, and in his blindness beheld the Lord. There is a power which we all know in revisiting old scenes. It brings a new tenderness to life: a new sense of the fleeting of time, and the certainty of heaven. In getting back to these red letter days, old lamps of joy are rekindled, old fires of zeal are relighted, old hopes of glory are re-born, and old desires of holiness are renewed.

"Ask now of the days that are past." In the days that are past, think of God's gifts to us, so rich and lavish. What have we given to Him? He has answered our prayers; how have we responded to His claims upon us? He has fulfilled His promises; how have we kept His precepts? Let the days that are past form a new inspiration for the future. Let us take home this message to our hearts, and we shall go forth singing, and it shall be the music of the Gospel that shall lead men home to God.

—*The Evangelical Christian*

For Younger Readers

A CHRISTMAS DEBT

It was Christmas Eve many years ago in England, and the rain, driven by a bitter wind, was beating against the window of the matron's room at a Children's Home. She was busy writing at a table, but looked up now and again at the dreary scene outside the window. She was not young; indeed her grey hair and lined face made her look more than her years; and she was troubled.

A new child had been brought to the Home the night before; his was a particularly sad and destitute case but the Home was full and he had been put to sleep in a cot at the end of the boys' ward. The matron wondered how they were going to feed and clothe him. Funds were short, food prices high and the needs of her big family of waifs and strays were many. She sighed, but, raising her eyes, her attention was held by a text on a calendar hanging on the wall: "My God shall supply all your need." She must pray and trust, then, for this new burden. God was all-sufficient.

Just then, a knock came at the door, and a young nurse entered: "A gentleman would like to see over the Home, matron." She rose with alacrity; was this an answer to her prayer, already? She found the gentleman, very tall and grave, evidently a traveller, as he mentioned having been abroad, and said he was passing through the town that afternoon, on his way to London. She took him over the Home, talking of the children in a way which showed that she loved them.

Last of all they came to the play-room, and fifty pairs of wondering little eyes were turned upon them as they entered.

"I have a few toys," the gentleman said; "have I your permission to distribute them?" Permission being given he brought a bag from the hall and produced a stock of lovely balls and trains, toy horses, dolls and games—and there was one for every child! How they shouted with joy and forgot their shyness as they danced round this unexpected Father Christmas! Then, sitting down, with the little ones around him, he spoke a few words reminding them of the Babe of Bethlehem and the gift of God's Son to the world on that first Christmas morning. It was

all so simple and earnest that the children listened spell-bound. Then the matron had a happy inspiration. "Would one of you sing this gentleman a carol?" she said.

There was a pause. Then a very little boy, with sweet blue eyes and fair curls, trotted forward.

"I will, matron," he said; and he sang a quaint little carol that spoke of the Christ-child. Who had no pillow on which to lay His head. It was sweet and appealing, and the matron saw tears in the eyes of the stranger as he turned away, the children's thanks ringing in his ears.

"I have one more request to make," he said, "May I see the little boys' dormitory; it was the girls' you showed me."

Wondering, she took him up to the small room, where twenty-five little beds were placed.

"Who sleeps here?" the stranger asked, and her heart jumped, for he had pointed to the cot where the newest orphan slept.

"The little boy who sang the carol," she said simply. "He's very lonely and unwanted, and we had to take him, although we were really full."

The gentleman took out his cheque book, filled in a cheque and handed it to her; it was for so large an amount that, when she saw it she knew that it would provide for the little boy for years to come!

"Will you let me give this as my Christmas gift?" he said; and beyond grateful thanks, there was something in his manner that prevented the matron saying more. He picked up his empty bag, and at the front door shook hands with her, but just as he was stepping out, he suddenly turned back.

"You see, I was a friendless, homeless, unwanted boy thirty years ago, and that was my cot," he said; "so I felt I'd like to give another boy a chance, such as, thank God, you gave me!"

—Forward

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 21 First Quarter Lesson 3 January 20, 1957

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

THE CULMINATION OF THE APOSTASY

Lesson Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Golden Text: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."—2 Thess. 2:8.

The Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians seems to have been written from Corinth, since Timothy and Silas were still with him (Acts 19:22; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), probably within six months of the First Epistle. The early portion of this Epistle suggests that Paul has recently received news of the progress in faith and love on the part of the Christians at Thessalonica (2 Thess. 1:3, 4), and of their constancy in spite of persecution. At the same time, an error needing correction had sprung up among them. Influenced by fanatics, extremists and by a spurious letter said to have been written by the Apostle, many were leaving their duties to wait in idleness for the Lord to come (2 Thess. 3:7-12). Paul exhorts them to wait patiently for Christ, and to be diligent, as well as watchful (Lk. 19:13; 2 Thess. 3:5).

We all know more of the truth than we are prepared to obey. Thus, frequently the Apostle found it necessary to stir up the minds and hearts of his hearers to heed and practise

the things which he had formerly taught them (v. 15; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:12, 13; 3:1; Jude 5, 17). In correcting error among the Thessalonians he first reminded them of his past teaching on the subject of the return of Christ (vv. 1, 5; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-9).

The believers were not to be agitated or disturbed by any one claiming to have the spirit of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:8-10; 1 John 4:1-3), or by any argument or by any letter purporting to be from Paul, that the day of Christ's appearing was instantly coming, that it was already or all but present, so that they would be justified in neglecting their ordinary duties of life.

They must not be deceived (Matt. 24:4). Before the coming of the Lord there would be a general falling away, an apostasy, a definite, willful and wide-spread turning away from God and from the truth (Matt. 24:12; Lk. 18:8; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-7, 13; 4:3, 4; 2 Pet. 2:1, 2; Jude 10-19). The principle of evil, existing in the world and mysteriously making headway, would finally come to a head under a person or a system which would embody all the forces which were opposed to God (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3). At that time there would be a full revelation of the rebellion against God and against Christ (Psa. 2).

The language of the chapter suggests a powerful person. He is called "a man of sin", a man characterized by sin, and also he is "a son of perdition", one who is destined to be destroyed (John 17:12). He is a Wicked One (v. 8) or a Lawless One. Like Satan, his chief sin is pride, for he exalts himself above God (Isa. 14:12-15; Dan. 11:36), demands worship which is due to Jehovah alone (Matt. 4:10; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6) and would have all men consider that he is really God (Matt. 24:5, 25). Inspired by the spirit of Satan, he even performs miracles, so as to deceive many (v. 9; Matt. 24:24; Rev. 14:14).

This evil person and the antichristian system which is controlled by Satan (Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19) had thus far been hindered from coming out into the open. The devilish work was still a "mystery", a sacred secret, not commonly understood and not openly manifest. A restraining power, not clearly defined by the Apostle, hindered the evil from coming to a climax until God's time should arrive. The English words "let" and "leteth" (v. 7) do not mean "allow" but rather "hinder" or "restrain". In God's appointed time Christ will return, and this Wicked Lawless One will be fully known for what he is, and will be destroyed for ever (Dan. 8:25-27; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 19:11-21).

Who are they who are deceived by the specious words and apparent miracles of such a person (vv. 10-12)? Not the children of light, but the children of darkness (1 Thess. 5:1-5). There are only two things; truth and error (1 John 2:21; 4:6). God gives men their choice, but urges them to choose the truth. But if men, notwithstanding the grace of God and His constant appeals to them, deliberately reject the truth, they expose themselves to error. They not merely will not receive the truth, but they will not receive the love of the truth; that is, they despise and hate the truth (Rom. 1:32; 2:8, 9; 1 Cor. 16:22). Therefore, in the process of time, God ceases His pleadings (Gen. 6:3), and when He withdraws His restraining hand and lets men have their own way (Psa. 106:15), they become hardened against the truth, and are finally unable to distinguish between truth and error (Exod. 8:32; 9:7; 10:20; Rom. 1:25). They are deceived and readily accept error, because of their blindness to spiritual realities. In stern judgment God allows them to be deceived, and they go on in their own way, which is the way leading to death and destruction (Rom. 1:28-31; 9:14-22; 1 Pet. 2:6-8).

For Younger Scholars:

Point out how sin may be hidden for a time from others, but never from God (Gen. 16:13; Num. 32:23; Josh. 7). Sin is powerful, and it spreads. Illustrate by reference to a basket in which there is one spoiled apple. One sin will lead to another (Gen. 27:1-25; 1 Sam. 15:1-23); often people try to cover up one lie with another. Also, we must keep away from evil companions.

Tell the scholars what we must do about sin — acknowledge that we are sinners, confess our sin, and trust in the Saviour to take away from us the guilt of our sin and also the desire to sin (1 John 1:9). Sin disappears before God, just as insects which live in the dark scamper away when the sun shines upon them. When Christ comes, all sin will be put away.

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