

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 35, No. 48

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, MARCH 14, 1957

Whole Number 1816

TAKING UP THE SLACK

WE HAVE not had a very great deal of experience with horses, but we are inclined to think, on the basis of the law of averages, that even the most finely matched team of horses could not be described as being quite equal. One would be almost sure to have a little more eager spirit, or a little more strength than the other. And the pulling power of the team, we are inclined to think, would not be exactly fifty-fifty. (We should be glad to hear from some experienced teamster on the farm, or elsewhere, as to the accuracy of our assumption).

In any event, we have had more experience with people than with horses or mules. And if human virtues of all varieties were ponderable, and could be weighed in the balances, we venture to believe it would be difficult to find any two people who would weigh exactly the same.

That is true of every human company, whether in the home, in business, in politics, or in the church. No two are alike. And even assuming that in a given company every one does his or her very best, the best of one man may fall far below the best of another.

We remember hearing Mr. Neville Chamberlain's speech when he explained to the nation, and to the world that he had sought strenuously for peace; but that when war proved inevitable, he said, "I sought to wage it with all my might." Hearing him, we said, "But your might, Mr. Chamberlain, is not sufficient." Someone had to take up the slack. His name was Churchill. In spheres of smaller dimensions, and of less importance a Chamberlain must be supplemented by a Churchill.

Unfortunately, however, it seems to be ingrained in the human nature that the observation of another's slackness too often inspires slackness in the observer. Men say, "Why should I carry one hundred pounds, when someone else is willing to carry only fifty, and others still smaller weights?" Of course, the proper answer is that the man who is able to carry the one hundred pounds is under moral obligation to do so, regardless of the weakness or unwillingness of others.

It is said of the famous Lord Chesterfield, who was supposed to be the embodiment of courtesy and politeness, and who was always immaculately attired, but whose character, unfortunately, was anything but admirable, that when walking along the street one day, dressed to the utmost as a prosperous gentleman, he was met on

the sidewalk by a ruffian, who recognized him, and who threatened a head-on collision, as he said, "I never make way for a blackguard". Lord Chesterfield raised his hat, and stepped to one side, allowing the ruffian to pass, saying as he did so, "I always do".

Should we make way for crass selfishness and inconsideration? Should our conduct be regulated by other people's defaults? We shall never find a perfect society on earth. We shall never meet in any group equality of devotion or of ability. And if our conduct is made to accord with the careless, and the slacker, we shall never do our best in anything.

What is the Christian's duty, but anywhere and everywhere to take up the slack, if slack there be? Commending Epaphroditus to the Philippian believers, having spoken of his devotion, the Apostle Paul said, "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me". Epaphroditus did a little more, because others did a little less.

To the Corinthians also Paul said, "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied." Here were two others who took up the slack.

We may well wonder whether we are as friendly as we might be. "Did you speak to such an one on such an occasion?" You answer, "No; I was not particularly in the mood to cultivate strangers. I have never felt that that man and I had very much in common, and really I did not bother to speak to him." Not a very great offence, was it? No; but "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" It is what we do more than others that proves the reality of our Christian profession.

Need we remind our readers that this whole world was in default? There was not one who had not come short of the glory of God. There was not a soul possessed of merit enough to save himself, and, of course, there was no one possessed of a surplus of merit which he could share with another to cover up his slackness. But what saith the Mighty One, prophetically? "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

The Gospel Witness

and

Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. J. 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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He took up the slack in the Garden: He went a little further. He always did. But for that we had never been saved. Let us do, everywhere, for everyone, in every work, every day, our very best, and show that we are Christians.
—DR. T. T. SHIELDS

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

On Thursday evening, March 7th, Dr. H. C. Slade gave a graphic account of the appalling need in Martinique, a neglected missionary field, and he illustrated his report with pictures, taken during his recent tour in the West Indies. Sin and darkness everywhere! But faithful soldiers of the cross, including Mr. and Mrs. Itty of Paris, are doing their utmost to reach as many as possible with the testimony of the Gospel. After the message a retiring offering was received, to serve as a nucleus of a fund for purchasing a new car for Mr. Itty. Transportation is a difficult problem in Martinique.

The Sunday services on March 10th were memorable times of blessing, and as for many weeks in succession, it was a joy to see the Lord's Spirit working in our midst. Four from the Bible School openly confessed faith in Christ. Centering his message about the truth of John 17:15, Dr. Slade preached a fine sermon in the morning on the important and practical theme "A Christian's Relationship to a Sinful World." Christ, the Divine Advocate intercedes for believers and for those who will believe (verse 20). There are two classes of people, those who walk according to the course of this world and those who are the Lord's peculiar people, set free by the Son and filled with the Spirit. The world needs the believers: it needs to hear our message, the saving message of the Gospel. The Lord's program for us in this world is to develop and become mature Christians active, zealous and fervent. But in order that our testimonies might remain

clear so that we may go forth into the world to minister effectively for the Lord, we must be kept from the evil of this world — from evil things and from the Evil One.

The evening message of Dr. Slade on "The World's Most Powerful X-Ray" (John 16:8) was a deep and searching enquiry into the unique ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is a Person, the Third Person of the Godhead with attributes of personality. He is a Divine Person, the Paraclete — the One called alongside to help. He is the indwelling Comforter, The Teacher who instructs, inspires and seals the believer unto the day of redemption.

As to the world, the Holy Spirit's ministry is connected with the preaching of the Gospel and the work of regeneration. As the Gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit is present, and only as He works does salvation come, for salvation is of the Lord.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to reprove of sin: to convince, to convict, to detect sin, and to reveal to the sinner the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Conscience may be bribed, mastered and seared as with a hot iron, but not the Holy Spirit. In particular, the Spirit reproves the sinner of unbelief, of the rejection of the Son of God. The world rejected Him, for the world knew Him not. The Spirit will also convince the unbeliever of righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, by revealing to us our own unworthiness and then imputing to us the righteousness of Christ, justifying righteousness. Finally, the Holy Spirit will convict of judgment "because the prince of this world is judged". Three times Satan is mentioned by our Saviour as the prince of this world. All judgment has been committed to the Son, and it is He, then, who has judged Satan. The Holy Spirit has come to convince the world and to bring this great truth to bear upon the minds and hearts of men, that Satan has been defeated. Those who belong to Satan were warned to flee for refuge to the Saviour, or they will surely be involved in his judgment and condemnation.

Thus, once again from the pulpit of Jarvis Street Church the word of the Lord was faithfully and powerfully proclaimed.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY

- 9.45 Bible School for everybody, from grandfather to the baby.
- 11.00 Morning Service.
- 4.30 Afternoon Class.
- 5.55 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.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE LABOURERS ARE FEW"

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, May 8th, 1932

(Stenographically Reported)

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."—Luke 10:2.

Prayer Before the Sermon

Although we do not see Thee, with the natural eye, we know that Thou art here; although we do not see Thee we are assured Thou dost see us; nor dost Thou look on the outward appearance: Thou lookest upon the heart. Thou knowest who only bows the knee and who in heart approacheth Thee. Help us just now, by the grace of Thy Spirit, that we may worship Thee with our hearts, that with our whole hearts we may seek Thee, for Thy word assures us that when thus we seek Thou wilt be found of us.

We desire that many who have come unto this place this morning without any thought of Thy presence, without any consciousness of God at all, may before they leave know that God is here. We need pray for nothing else than this, the realization of Thy presence. We have not even to ask Thee to meet with us. We have the same reason for believing Thou art here, as we have for believing we are Christians. Thou hast promised, and Thy word never fails. If we can but consciously enter into Thy presence, every one this morning will be blessed.

We thank Thee for Christian fellowships; we thank Thee for all the joys of human association; but we have not come here merely to meet with each other: we have come that we may meet with God. Oh, unveil Thy glory to the view of faith this morning. May the youngest child in this building be made to feel the presence of God! We desire that this service shall mark in the lives of all Thy people some distinct progress in the divine life. Forbid that we should leave this place just as we came in. Make us wiser than we were; make us stronger than when we entered; make our hearts readier to receive Thy truth, our wills more resolute to do Thy holy commandments.

Look upon all the boys and girls, even the little children. We covet them for Thee. We desire that the youngest shall know Christ, and that they shall know Him early. Oh, that Thou wouldest claim these young hearts for Thyself! As Thou didst speak to Samuel in the temple so that at last he was constrained to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," so speak to the youngest, to the little children, and to the young boys and young girls, as well as to all who are older in years. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to come into the lives of these young people before they shall have wasted their substance with riotous living. Teach them to number their years that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom while still in the morning of life with the best of life before them. May they be wholly given up to God, to be saved by His grace, awakened by His Spirit, sanctified by the power of Thy truth, that all their powers may be employed in the service of God.

Look upon the young men and women here this morning, some of them with no settled vocation in life, some of them Thine own children, still enquiring to what their powers shall be dedicated. O Lord, give them the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Lead them into the sphere definitely assigned them, whether it be business, some so-called secular calling, or the preaching and teaching of Thy word. Lay hold of them, we pray Thee.

Some may hear Thy voice this morning who may thereby be led to give his or her life to China or India or Africa, or South America. It may be that others will be constrained

so to yield themselves to Thee that their lives shall be spent in unremitting service at home.

Gather us all to Thy feet this morning. Let us be as a company of Thy disciples listening intently to hear what the Lord shall speak to us.

It may be some are so troubled with temporal matters that they can scarcely give thought to other interests. Help us to cast our burdens upon Thee this morning. Whatever the state of mind we may be in, help us so to stay our minds upon Thee that we may have the perfect peace which Thou hast promised to those who thus trust in Thee.

Open to us Thy word. Make it very simple, very plain; then open our hearts to receive Thy word; and do Thou energize our wills that we may be enabled to do the things we know.

Save those who are unsaved. May this be an hour of conversion of many.

So bless us for Thy name's sake, Amen.

THIS text I have chosen would be considered very appropriate for a foreign mission circle; but it is appropriate for all occasions. The truth contained therein is applicable to every one of us. Familiar as it may be, let us examine its truth once more.

I.

Our Lord employs a very familiar commonplace figure. HE LIKENS HIS WORK, His programme for the world, to the work of tilling the soil, TO THE WORK OF HARVESTING. There is not a boy nor a girl who cannot understand what it means to have a large field with abundant opportunity for labour: "The harvest truly is plenteous".

Now what is *the soil*? The soil is the human heart in which the seed is sown. Every one may have a garden; every one has an opportunity to cultivate somebody for Christ. There is no limit at all. It is useless for any one of us to complain of the want of opportunity.

I remember that during the war in England every inch of ground was carefully and thoroughly cultivated. Everyone who was too old to go to the war worked at home, and everybody had a garden of some sort. If they had not one of their own, they rented a piece of ground somewhere. It was considered unpatriotic to allow your garden to go uncultivated. You must grow something, if it was only cabbages, but you must grow something that could be eaten. It was amazing how productive that little island became, almost self-supporting in some respects, by the careful cultivation of every bit of land. It was interesting to go along in the trains to see everything cultivated beside the track in many districts, something growing that would help to feed the population of that hard pressed country.

Now we are at war, and we ought to cultivate every foot of land; we ought to make use of the soil that is at our disposal. Within the environs of Greater Toronto not far short of nine hundred thousand people live, — more than eight hundred thousand people within reach of every one of us here by travelling not more than an hour. You do not need to get on a railway train: take a motor car, take an aeroplane, or even by walking any one of us can reach literally thousands of people. What an enormous field we have to cultivate!

You remember when Paul went to Corinth the Lord said to him, "I have much people in this city." God has much people in Toronto. Many of them do not know it; many of them have never bowed the knee to Him unless it was when they were children, and did it at their mother's knee, but they never really prayed. But their hearts are open for our cultivation, so that there is no want whatever of opportunity. On the street where you live there are hundreds of people. I doubt not that within ten minutes' walk of where you live there are thousands of human hearts that can be reached with the gospel. If you have no money for street car fares, no motor car, and you are even a bit of a cripple, and you can only hobble about, you have energy enough to reach a field with more than a thousand people. And for these opportunities we shall all have to give account in the day of judgment. "The field," said our Lord, "is the world", and wherever there is a human heart to be found there is an opportunity for somebody to do something in the name of the Lord.

But in addition to that, we must have *the seed*; we must have something to sow. Usually seed is pretty cheap. You can get a package of flower seed for five cents, but you can get seed which can be sown in the human heart for even less than that, the very best, that which has the very life of God in it, that which has in it the power that spake the worlds from naught. Here it is: the word of God.

Now, do not say that you do not know how to sow it. A bird can drop a seed, even a bird that never went to school at all. What God wants is not your opinions about the Bible, but the Bible itself. What He desires to get into the hearts of men is not what someone else says about the Bible, but His own unadulterated word. Store your minds with Scripture, commit it to memory, so that you can quote Scripture. So fill your minds with the word that you do not need to argue at all: you need no comment; just answer everybody with the word. *Sow the seed*. Literally, that is what God wants us to do. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." Pray that God may make you His mouthpiece just to speak His word. Oh bear me witness, will you, the burden of my ministry is to get you to go to God's word; get the word for yourself so that you will have the word direct from God out of the Book, not from my lips, not through the lips of some other teacher. Learn to go to the Bible and then take the Bible and sow it in human hearts.

Some of you young people would like to come to the Seminary. I wish you could come, but even without com-

ing at all you can sow the seed. I know very well farmers have gang plows, and seed drills, and all the rest of it, but they grew wheat before there were gang plows and seed drills. They managed somehow to sow the seed. And if they could not sow it in straight lines, they would sow in crooked lines, but they put the seed into the ground, and when it was put into the ground it grew and bore fruit. I know a minister who has been greatly used of the Lord, in spite of the fact that he is not at all capable as a speaker. I never heard him preach that I did not want to hang my head in shame, for he says so many things that cannot be justified at all. He does not know anything about reason; he has not a logical mind at all. And yet God blesses him. I will tell you why. He sows the seed in all sorts of zig-zag ways, but he sows it. He quotes a Scripture as though it were the climax of his argument, and it may have nothing whatever to do with his argument, or bear any relation to the matter which he is discussing. But it is the word of God, and it gets into the hearts of the people, and the Lord blesses it in spite of his want of mentality.

Let us get the word, and use the word, the unadulterated word of God, and the Holy Ghost will look after it; do not worry about that. The seed is the word. Let us sow the seed; give people Scripture. That is what preachers don't do nowadays — they do anything but that. We can call on our neighbours and quote a passage of Scripture to them. We can start out in the morning with some bit of the Gospel and see into how many people's minds we can get that Scripture. I am not going to argue about it. I shall take some simple direct word from God, and I am going to give them that word. See into how many minds you can sow that text in one day. Keep on saying it. It may be you will never meet that man again, but God knows all about it: "The Lord knoweth them that are his", and every plant that the heavenly Father hath planted will grow. Do not be afraid; He will look after it. Let us go out and give the people the word of God.

Then there is another comfort in that figure. I do not have much to do with farmers now, but I used to have a good deal to do with them, and although I am not a farmer, and I am afraid I could not run a farm very well, I have learned a lot from them. I have gone visiting sometimes on a wet day, and I found Mr. Farmer just as happy as he could be. "Well how are you?" "All right. Fine day is it not." I said, "Is it?" "Oh, great growing weather," he said. The farmer was not particularly busy that day may be, but he knew Somebody Who was busy: he knew that he had plowed and harrowed and fertilized his field, and he had sown the seed, and then he knew that there were powers that were not human that were working beneath the soil, and the rain had come down, and the snow from heaven, and it watered the earth; and he knew that the seed was germinating, and that by and by he would see the green blade, and though perhaps he did not put it that way, what he really meant was, "I have done my part, and now God is working with me." Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase. "Labourers together with God." That is what we are when we sow the seed.

Now God may not be interested in your building a house. There may be a great many things that we may do that God has not pledged Himself to cooperate with us in the doing of them. But you take His word, and put that word in someone's mind, and you have all heaven on your side when you do that. You really have. *The powers of the heavens are yours to help you in your work.*

II.

Now observe another thing: the Lord says **THE LABOURERS ARE FEW**. Did you ever know of anybody who wanted a nice easy job, who was naturally a little bit lazy, choosing to be a farmer? Some people say that farmers are pretty "close" with their money — it may be so of some. But I have always said that I do not know anyone who works harder for his money than a farmer. The ground does not yield its fruits to anyone but a labourer. If you are going to get your living out of the soil, you are not going to do it by getting to work at eleven o'clock in the morning, and going out playing golf half the afternoon. You do not get rich that way, if you are getting your living out of the soil.

I met a man sometime ago who said to me — I will not tell you where — "Do you ever play golf?" I said, "No; I would like to, but I have never found time." "Why," he said, "I do not know why not. One of the members of your profession is a gentleman of the golf. I go out every afternoon, and I find him on the golf links at least three afternoons a week." He is a hard-worked minister who can afford three afternoons a week to play golf!

Did you ever hear of a farmer playing golf for exercise? I never did. There used to be a man in Chicago, by the name of P. S. Henson. He was a little man physically, but in every other way he was a big man. He was one of the great preachers of America in his time. Later he was pastor of Tremont Temple, Boston. (By the way he had only one eye. A lady came to him once and said he ought to pray for another eye. He looked at her and said, "Why should I; I see too much with one." But she said, "It is your privilege to have two sound eyes." "All right, sister, you go home and ask the Lord to give you a mouthful of new teeth, and when they begin to sprout, then I will pray for another eye." He said, "I knew her mouth was full of crockery." She had been to the dentist and had new teeth.) Someone came to Dr. Henson one time, and said, "Dr., What do you do for exercise?" "For exercise? I preach."

My point is that the figure which our Lord employs here implies that *we have to work*. Those who work in the field of the Lord must really labour; it is no easy job. I hope you students understand it is not an easy thing to be a minister. I was saying to some of the students, and to some of the faculty the other day, that there was one thing at least that Toronto Baptist Seminary did if it did nothing else; it took the conceit out of every one who came, by giving them plenty to do, downright hard work.

Now Jesus said, In this field of Mine I have not very many labourers: "The labourers are few".

Shall we accept it as axiomatic that if we are going to do real work with God, we have got to labour? Do not strip that of its literal significance. I mean that; we have got to work hard. If you are not a working man, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. We ought all to be working men, and we ought to work. The labourers, however, are few.

How many of you really labour in the Lord's service, not touch it with the end of your finger, but give yourself up to it like the farmer who is out almost at the break of dawn, and labours all day long? How many of us really labour in the Lord's work? Some do, but I do not think any of us are working over time; I do not believe a single member of Jarvis Street Church is likely

to die of hard work. I think there is a pretty safe margin between you and the danger point. I think we can all work a little harder without endangering our lives. I know some people like to be told that they work hard. The poor man who plays golf two or three afternoons a week, attends to his business for three or four hours a day, and one day he is a little bit off shade. He sends for his doctor, and if the doctor is a wise man, I mean if he wants to please his patient, he says, "Mr. So-and-So, you are run down." I do not see why some people should be run down; they never were wound up — "You are working too hard. You need the rest cure."

I went to a congregation once to preach, and the organist brought me the list of hymns. I looked it over and this was one:

"O land of rest, for Thee I sigh,
When will the moment come,
When I shall lay my armour by,
And rest in peace at home."

I said, "We won't sing that." He said, "No?" And I looked up the index, and I selected in its place, "Work for the night is coming." I could not see why they wanted to sigh for the land of rest; they were not doing anything else but rest. Let us learn that principle that in the Lord's service we must be labourers, and work.

That means that *we must labour sometimes under very unpleasant conditions*. I have driven along the road, or I have gone in a train, in the late Fall, or in the early Spring, when the temperature was low, not freezing, but cold and unpleasant, an east wind was blowing, and perhaps there was a drizzling rain. And out there in the field I saw a man trudging along in the rain and in the cold. A wise man once observed, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing." If we are going to cultivate the Lord's field, we shall need literally sometimes, to go out in the cold, and out in the wet. Why should anyone stay home on Sunday because the weather is unpleasant? It is not any wetter on Sunday than on Monday, nor does it penetrate any more deeply, unless it be that you have put on your Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Well, if you are afraid of spoiling them, wear your working clothes. Come anyhow. We may often learn, you know, from those who seek to destroy the Gospel. I remember a year or so ago there was a convention of the Russellites — one of the most pernicious of anti-Christian cults of the day. Understand, it is not Christian: it is anti-Christian from top to bottom, through and through. There is nothing Christian about it; it is the enemy of the cross of Christ. But do you know what they did? There were ten thousand of them here, and three thousand of them, like a swarm of grasshoppers spread themselves over the country, and went to every house in the cities and towns between, I think, Hamilton and Toronto, everywhere. I saw them on our street, where I was living, when it was raining torrents, not just sprinkling, but coming down heavily, and there they were, the water just dripping from their clothes — soaked, I suppose, to the skin. But they were going from door to door, doing the devil's business in the rain.

"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold" — or wet, or some other thing. Let us get above that.

And then there is sometimes another kind of cold: Did you ever make a call and get rather a cold reception? It

is almost as bad as getting a very hot one, is it not? A man may be prevented from serving either through excessive heat or excessive cold. Some people go to church like that, you know. They think it is cold, and they take out their little clinical thermometer, and say, "This church is not up to the proper temperature. I do not think I will come any more." "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold". I do not like — what is the word I want? — *thermometrical* people, I mean those who carry around thermometers in their pockets. You know some people have clinical thermometers. There ought to be a law passed restricting their use to doctors and nurses. Some mother is so upset because her child has a half degree of fever — if her husband were to put the thermometer under her tongue, sometimes he would find she had several degrees of fever. But there are people like that religiously, always testing the temperature, and if it is not just up to the mark they will not play, they will not teach, and they will not do this or that or the other thing: they think they are superior.

I wonder has it occurred to you young people that this land we now occupy was once a land of forest. As you go through this beautiful country, and see the rolling fields and the prosperous farms, you feel like saying, "Well, I think I should like to be a farmer!" Yes; but if you had seen it in the days before the trees were cut down, what would you have thought? "Talk with some of the older people, and let them tell you how they came in a sailing ship, and it took them two or three months to get here, and then they came up by boat or else tramped through the woods. Why I have heard many people say, "My father used to carry a bag of wheat on his shoulders and go twenty miles through the woods to get it ground into flour, and then bring it back again. How would you like to farm under such conditions? Look at these well cultivated fields. Do you know what they were once? First of all, forests, and they had to cut them down, then get out the roots. And yonder pile of stones, where did they come from? They were down in the earth somewhere, and the farmer with his plow got the stone, and he had a great job to get out the stone. It took years of cultivation for him to get that field looking as it does to-day.

There are some people who want to do the Lord's work like children building a house with a box of blocks." They say, "Wait a minute, and I will show you how to build a house." But that is not how the Lord's work is done. It is a harvest field, and sometimes you will have to work years and years on one person to get out all the stones and snags, until by and by there is room for the word of God to grow and develop. Do not be discouraged, teachers, if you find stones in the bit of land you are cultivating. You have found some tough characters, have you not, in the boys you try to teach? Never mind, let us be labourers. There are few labourers. But *let us be prepared for hard work.*

I want to tell you a story. I was talking to a young lady last night, and she had two sheets of paper. I suppose three months ago — I cannot tell you exactly the time — she was not a Christian at all. She called up a certain place, and asked if there was any chance of employment, and the person who answered the telephone was a young lady, a member of this church. She said there was no work available at that house, but she got into conversation with this girl and arranged to call for her and bring her to church the next Sunday. She brought her, and

the very first time she entered this church she was converted.

She said to me last night, "I do not know whether anyone else has done more than I have, but I have made over a hundred calls this week." She gave me the two sheets, and there they were, the streets and the numbers written down and the names, and what she had found in that house. And she said, "I have got seven promised to meet me at the bus Sunday afternoon." Out of the one hundred calls, seven percent. Let us take say five hundred workers in this church, and let every one of the five hundred do what that young girl did last week — and she did it in her spare time. What then? You would have fifty thousand calls made in one week. And supposing they each got seven percent, there would be thirty-five hundred new scholars next Sunday. And this girl is just as busy as anyone in this church. Oh, she was not boasting: she did not know that everyone else was not doing it. It was just a simple story, but it was most interesting. And I found she was not only working for the Sunday School, but she was working for the church, and she said, "I met a big business man, who seemed to be quite important, at one of the homes at which I called. And he said, 'Oh, you are from Jarvis Street! Well I read something about Dr. Shields, and I do not understand it'." And she said, "Well just a little while ago I was not converted, and I did not understand him either, but since I have been saved I understand him quite well. There are a lot of things I did not understand before I was saved, and since I have been saved they seem to be quite simple." And then she said a wonderful thing. This man had spoken about the Scofield Bible. She said, "I am just a young Christian; I am only about three months old, and I do not know much. But I just pray, and I study my Bible, and I am getting to know something about it. But all Dr. Shields tells us to do is to go to the Bible itself. And you know, we ought all to be Dr. Scofields, and learn to read the Bible for ourselves without somebody else having to tell us what it means." Was not that fine for a young Christian? I found that she had gone into more than one hundred homes testifying. I tell that to you deacons, and to you Sunday School teachers — a babe in Christ, three months old! Supposing you had five hundred workers doing that! Fifty thousand calls in one week, and I don't know how many religious conversations. What then? We should soon have hundreds seeking the Saviour; but "the labourers are few."

III.

This word and I have done: "PRAY YE THEREFORE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Shall we hear that note in our prayer meetings in future? What shall we pray for? Bless the Sunday School teachers? Yes; that is all right. Let us pray that their number may be doubled. Pray that God may bless the testimony of His people? Yes, let us pray that God may raise up thousands of other witnesses who will go on testifying. Pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send forth labourers into His harvest. Now why should we pray the Lord for that? Well, in the first place *you need skilled labourers.*

Our brother from England told us about the boys in Mr. Fegan's home being put on a farm in England, and being trained for a year or more in the simple elementary things of farming, so that when they come out here they

will not be perfectly green, like the grass, so that they will know a little bit about farming. Of course, they have to have experience after they have been trained.

It is not an easy thing to do the Lord's work. Certain people have certain gifts. I do not suppose everyone has a gift such as this young lady of whom I spoke. But let us pray the Lord of the harvest, and He will send forth teachers, and preachers, and visitors, and all sorts of workers if we earnestly seek Him. We pray for revival. Sometimes I wonder if we are right in praying for revival, merely saying, "Lord, revive us". If some of the Lord's people would go out and do the Lord's work they would have a revival in their own hearts the minute they started. That is the way to get revival.

And then another thing, no one but those whom the Lord sends will be able to put up with the discouragements: they will not be persistent enough. *It takes a good deal of courage.* You need to be able to face the east wind; you need to be able to face the shut door, the severe look — though you will not get as many as you expect. A hundred difficulties will beset your path, but when the Lord sends forth labourers, they will be able to stand that.

And then, above all, the reason we need to pray the Lord of the Harvest is that *He has to pay the labourers.* If we had lots of money, and just advertised for a few labourers, do you suppose we would have any trouble getting labourers? We would have lots of them if we paid them. But you see the Lord pays the labourers, and no one but those whom the Lord calls will work for the Lord's wages.

Now let us go forth as labourers into His harvest. I appeal to your Sunday School teachers, — O let me be faithful with you — if we are down in attendance this morning it is not because the scholars were sleepy Sunday morning, but because the rest of us were a bit sleepy during the week. Let us go out to the Lord's work as labourers in His harvest.

And for those who are unsaved, you know the way of life, do you not? You have heard it a hundred times: Christ died for you, He was buried, He rose again, and He lives and is ready to receive you. Come to Him now, trust Him.

Let us pray:

We beseech Thee, O Lord; bless our meditation this morning. Stir us up to greater earnestness, to greater zeal in Thy service. Send us all forth as labourers in Thy harvest field. Bless any who ought this morning to confess Christ. Give them the help of Thy Spirit, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

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The Gospel Witness

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THE CHRISTIAN WRITER

By George M. Bowman

TO THE writer there are few thrills that compare with the electrifying experience of watching words of original composition bounce from the keys of a typewriter he is manipulating. But this thrill is increased when one is writing for Jesus Christ.

The Christian writer is highly privileged among writers. Eternal influences accompany his work. The reader's eternal destiny is determined often by God's use of the words of a writer who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This high privilege carries heavy responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the Christian writer to learn to write in a professional manner. The best way to learn to write is to write every day, checking your work with that of the best current authors. A good home-study course is an excellent aid to professional copy. It is also the Christian writer's responsibility to make sure that his writing contains that "extra something" which must go into all writing that is slanted to honour the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer who fails to recognize these responsibilities as his own, ceases to be useful in the field of Christian journalism.

By what method do we obtain that "extra something" in our writing? What is the channel by which it comes to us from heaven? The experience of Christian writers everywhere proves that: *The method is prayer. The channel is faith.*

Prayer is more than a position of body. It is an attitude of soul. It is the spiritual attitude of a right relationship to God. It is an attitude that enables the Christian writer to enjoy constant communion with the heavens. It is the rich experience of talking with God as a man talks with a friend.

Effective fervent prayer can be offered up to God only by those who recognize that faith is the channel of divine blessing. The channel of faith is not the exercise of grasping at something abstract. It is knowledge — knowledge of a Person, knowledge of His purpose and knowledge of His principles. The Person is Jesus Christ. His purpose is redemption. His principles are an eternal love of righteousness, and an everlasting hatred of iniquity.

Faith is *knowing* these things, *believing* or accepting them, and then, *trusting* our whole lives — here and hereafter — to the fact that they are true. It is only by prayer and through faith that we really can learn to live in harmony with His purposes and His principles.

The details of His purpose and of His principles can be learned by making daily visits to His library of truth. For the Christian writer, regular Bible reading is indispensable. The Author of that great book condescends to assist us in *our* writing if we are willing to ask Him. "If any of you lack wisdom" declared the Apostle James, "let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him."

Through faith in Christ, and by prayer to Christ, the Christian writer can draw on heaven's unlimited resources of wisdom to put that extra something — or, better still, that extra "Someone" — into his finished copy.

A SOUL'S CONFLICT

(Studies in Psalm LXXIII)

XI. THE-NEW RESOLUTION

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

(Report of Sermon preached on Sunday morning, 3rd January, 1954, in Westminster Chapel, London)

Psalm lxxiii, 27 and 28

"It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works."

THESSE two verses come not only as a conclusion, as a literal conclusion to the Psalm and its message, but also at the same time as the conclusion at which this good man had arrived as the result of the experience which he describes at length in the body of the Psalm. It is his final meditation, and the conclusion at which he arrives. He expresses it as you observe in the form of a resolution. He has finished his review of the past, and is facing himself and the future. He resolves that as far as he is concerned there is one thing of which he is always going to be certain and sure, there is one thing he is going to do whatever else he may not do. "For me," he says, "nearness to God is good for me". This is the thing on which he is going to concentrate.

In putting it in this way this man gives us an insight into what had become his whole philosophy of life, his way of facing the uncertainties of life and the unknown future that lay ahead of him. It is here that we discover the great value of these Psalms. These men not only experienced things in this world, they recorded them and they recorded their reactions to them, and as the result of all that had happened to them they laid down certain great principles. We have here, therefore, the quintessence of their wisdom. Divine, heavenly wisdom is to be found in the Bible. In a sense this is the great central message of the Bible. It tells us that ultimately there are only two possible views of life and only two possible ways in life.

Now we are familiar with this Psalmist's particular experience. He had had a very painful experience, he had been most unhappy. He had been looking at others and had observed that it seemed to be the case in this world that ungodly people flourish whereas godly people always seem to be in trouble; and that began to set him thinking. He began to wonder whether, after all, there was any purpose in being religious and in being godly—he is constantly in trouble. Other people never seem to have trouble. Is there anything in it; and still more seriously, is God just, is God true to His own teaching? Those were the thoughts that had come creeping into his mind and he was, as he tells us, in real trouble. It was most painful for him and he was in such trouble that he was about to express himself and to say: Is there any value in it after all, does it pay for a man to wash his hands in innocency and cleanse his heart, is there any point in trying to walk the narrow way and live a God-fearing life? He was on the point of saying that, but he didn't. He realized that if he did say that, it would be an offence to God's people. There were others looking at him, perhaps, and to speak in this way would be to offend against the generation of God's people. Then he went to the house of God where he understood it all. God

opened his eyes and gave him the right view of life, put him right in his own process of thinking, taught him to think spiritually and then in detail showed him how wrong he had been—wrong in his thoughts about the ungodly, wrong in his thoughts about God, wrong in his thoughts about himself. And then God revealed to him the fact that He was still looking upon him, still ready to bless him. And the man sees himself, sees what a beast he had been, how stupid, how irrational he had been. Then he began to praise and adore and worship God and to realize that whatever might happen to him, though his flesh and heart might fail, God is still the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. Having gone through it all in that way he arrives at this conclusion and he forms this firm resolution which he puts to us in these two verses.

Now it seems to me that we can do nothing better at the beginning of a New Year than to consider this man's wisdom. We have arrived at a certain stage in life, we have all had various experiences. I wonder whether we have come to this man's conclusion? I wonder whether we see that this is really the essence of wisdom? I wonder, as we face our unknown future, whether we are facing it in this way and manner?

I.

Let us look at it. First of all let us look at THE ACTUAL RESOLUTION which the man had formed. Here it is again in the authorised version: "But it is good for me to draw near to God." Another translation could be this: "But I, nearness to God is good for me". He is contrasting himself with others. "But I, as for me, it is good for me to be near to God"—or "nearness to God is good for me." That, I say, is this man's resolution; it is his resolve, that this is going to be the first and chiefest thing in his life in future. His ambition is going to be just that, to keep near to God. It helps us to see the importance of this resolution by putting it in the form of a contrast. In other words, there are only two positions, ultimately, in this life and world, and here they are. First of all he puts the negative. "For, lo," he says, "they that are far from Thee shall perish: but I, nearness to God is good for me". You see the contrast. Other people are far from God; but FOR ME, he says, IT IS GOOD TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD. I say that there are only these two positions in this life and world. We all of us are either far from God or else we are near to God. And there is no other possible position. So it is vitally important that we should arrive at this man's resolve, to be near to God.

I have no doubt at all but that what was uppermost in this man's mind was something like this. Reviewing his

sad experience he comes to this conclusion. He says to himself: "What has really been wrong with me of course, and what has accounted for all my trouble, is just the fact that I did not keep near to God. I thought it was the ungodly, I thought it was the various troubles that I was experiencing." But now, having been given the enlightenment which he had in the sanctuary of God, he sees quite clearly that these were not the cause of his trouble at all. There is only one thing that matters and that is man's relationship to God. If I am near to God, says this man, it does not matter really what happens to me; but if I am far from God, nothing can eventually be right. Now this is a very profound conclusion. We all tend to think that we need certain things. We are interested in conditions, we are interested in events and in our happiness. We think that our happiness depends upon these other things. Now it was because he had been thinking in that way that this man had got into such a wretched condition. The very sight of the ungodly and their apparent prosperity had upset him, and had made him envious, and he had begun to grumble and complain. He had spent days and weeks in that wretched state of self-pity, and he now sees that it was due entirely to one thing only and that was that he had not kept near to God. This is the beginning and the end of wisdom in the Christian life. The moment we get away from God everything goes wrong. *The one secret is to keep near unto God.* It is exactly like a ship crossing the Atlantic that suddenly loses sight of the Northern star, or in which the compass goes wrong. If we lose our bearings — well, we must not be surprised at what takes place. That is the thing that this man discovered. "This is the thing I need," he says, "not blessings, nor the prosperity of other people, not these other things of which the world makes so much. The one thing that matters is to be near unto God, because while I was far away from Him everything went wrong and I was wretched; but when I come back, though my conditions remain the same, I am all right, I am full of joy and peace, I can rest confidently and happily and securely in the arms of His love. Therefore, this is my resolution — for myself I am going to live near to God. That is going to be always the big thing in my life. I am going to start with that every day that comes. I am going to say to myself, whatever else happens, that this is the essential thing, to be near unto God."

II.

Now that was this man's resolution. Fortunately for us he also lets us into the secret as to WHY HE ARRIVED AT THIS RESOLUTION. He gives us the reasons for it, and this is why we should thank God more and more for the Bible and its detailed instruction. The Bible never just gives us a general injunction; it always gives us reasons for the injunction. And we need them. We can easily forget the general injunction, but the Bible always provides us with detailed explanations. Here are some that are suggested in these two verses.

One good reason for getting near to God is this, THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE FATE OF THOSE WHO DO NOT KEEP NEAR TO GOD. He puts that first, you notice, and I think that he does so because he is still thinking, in a sense, experimentally. It was these ungodly people who really had led him astray; he is anxious, therefore, to safeguard himself against falling into that trap again. It will be there still. He knows as he comes to face the future that the world is not going to change.

The ungodly will still be as they have always been, their eyes standing out with fatness. Everything will be marvellous and wonderful for them. He knows that is going to be the case. But he says that he is never going to fall into that trap again. So he puts it first — "Lo," he says, "they that are far from Thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee." God has done it in the past, He will do it in the future. Now we have been all through this in detail, the Psalmist has dealt with it at length. Summarizing it, this is how he puts it: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors." "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." That is just a summary of history, that is just to go through the whole story of the world before the Flood, the whole story of Sodom and Gomorrah and similar events. What a fool Abraham seemed on top of the mountain with a handful of sheep in contrast with the cities of the Plain with their vices and immorality. Well might he have asked: Does it pay to be godly? "But lo," he had said to himself, in effect, "they that are far from Thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee." That is the long story of Old Testament history. Here he puts it very plainly. "They that are far from Thee shall perish."

It does not matter what the temporary prosperity of the ungodly may be, it does not matter that all appearances may be to the contrary at this moment — if you take your view of life from the newspaper you may well think the world which is not Christian is having a marvellous time with its glittering prizes and the adoration and the pomp and the glory and the wealth of it all; but as certainly as the fact that we are alive, that is sure, they that are far from God shall perish. "The mills of God grind slowly," very slowly, and at times we think they are not moving at all, but "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." That is the message of the Bible; there it is from beginning to end. That is the whole meaning of the life of faith. We are all called to view life as the great heroes of the faith mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews did; we have to do what Moses did. We have to "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the wealth of Egypt", we have to see through this world and its life, we have to see it under condemnation, under the wrath of God, we have to see the punishment that is coming to it for certain. It is all going to perish, it is passing away. We must therefore see through its vanity, its emptiness, its nothingness; and it is as we see that that we shall resolve, as this man resolved, to keep near to God. The world and its works are all passing away, "change and decay in all around I see", moth and rust are in the very warp and woof of the most glittering, golden prizes that the world can offer. There is a terrible process of fading away, and all who are far from God live in a moving, shifting world. We must realize that, that we are moving steadily in the direction of the grand assize, the end of the age, the last judgment, the trumpet of God. "They that are far from Thee shall perish". Are we clear about that, I wonder? Is your worship of God grudging, is there any hesitation in your mind as you face the future as to whether you should go on with the Christian life? Are you somewhat shaken as you look around and see others and what happens to them — these people who

never go to a place of worship but with whom nothing ever seems to go wrong? Is the Bible true? We need to learn the lesson that was taught to a farmer by an old minister in America. This farmer decided one particular wet summer that he would harvest his crops on a Sunday. The old minister warned him and others like him against this. But this man decided he would do it, and he had marvellous crops and his barns were bulging, as it were, with stores and with wealth. He said to the old minister when he met him on one occasion that his preaching must be wrong. He said: "Sudden calamity has not descended upon me, my barns have not caught fire, God has not killed one of my children or robbed me of my wife, I have done the thing you always warned me not to do because of the consequences that would follow. But none of the consequences have happened. What about your preaching now?" And the old minister looked at the farmer and said this: "God", he said, "does not always make us His accounts in the fall." He does not always do it at once, but as certainly as we are here in this world now, this is the message of the Bible. "They that are far from God shall perish." There is nothing else for them. It may take a long time, appearances may all be to the contrary, but it is certain, it is sure. There is no Gospel apart from this. What is the message of the Gospel? "Flee from the wrath to come," and unless there is a "wrath" there is no need of a salvation. That is the first reason for his resolution.

But let us come to the positive. "But it is good for me", he says, "to draw near unto God. I have put my trust in the Lord God". He does not merely live a godly life because he is afraid of hell. That is one of his reasons as we have seen. I have no interest in a so-called Gospel which does away with the fear of hell. There are wonderful people who say that they are not interested in hell or in heaven, that they are just and pure in their outlook upon life and God. But the Bible warns us against hell, and it shows us the glory of heaven. Here, this man puts it in terms of the character of God. "It is good for me to draw near unto God: I have put my trust in the Lord God." He has resolved to be near to God and to live his life as near to God as possible. Why? Because *God is good*, because of the character of God. Here again, I am sure, we all feel condemned because this element enters so little into our religious life and worship. If we but realized the true character of God there would be nothing we should desire in this world but just to be in the presence of God. We desire to be in the presence of people we like and love. We like to be introduced to, and to be in the presence of, people who are considered great in various ways and for various reasons. And yet how loath we are to spend our time in the presence of God. How ready we are to think of God as the mere distributor of blessings, and how slow we are to realize the glory of being in the presence of God. The Lord God, the Lord Jehovah! That is what this man says and what he is emphasizing. He is emphasizing the sovereignty of God, the unutterable greatness, and majesty of God. The Lord God Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, the self-existent God, the Eternal God, the Absolute, the Everlasting God — He is the One to Whom we can be near.

Then another truth he emphasizes particularly by the term Jehovah is *God as the Covenant God*, God, if you like, in His covenant relationship to men. You remember that it was especially when God called Moses to deliver

the Children of Israel out of the captivity and the bondage of Egypt that He gave a special revelation of Himself as Jehovah. He had given His Name before, but now He defines it; and He always uses this Name when the Covenant is involved. In other words, God in His gracious purpose towards us, God as the God Who planned salvation, God as the God Who is concerned about our well-being, our welfare and happiness, covenants Himself, pledges Himself and binds Himself to us, that He is going to do all this for us. Now, says this man, the one thing I want in life above everything else is to keep near to such a God. I want to keep in touch with Him. That is our way of putting it — we are grateful to some great personage when he says that he is going to keep in touch with us. And we like to keep in touch with such people. We feel it is a privilege and an honour, and that is quite right. But O that we might see this, that the ultimate blessing of the salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ came to give us is eternal life. What is eternal life? He has defined it. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Or, as John puts it in his first Epistle, where he writes in order that "You may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ". Now the Psalmist says: "This is my resolve. I want to keep near this God, I want to keep in touch with Him, I want to spend all my time with Him, I want to live as always in His presence. I like to think of His power and His promises, to think of His consistency." And is not this a comforting and consoling as well as an uplifting thought on the first Sunday morning of a New Year? We do not know what is awaiting us, we live in a world that is changing, that is full of change. And we ourselves are not consistent. We are inconsistent, the best of us, changeable creatures. And in our world there is nothing that is so characteristic as the instability and the uncertainty. Is there anything more wonderful than to know that at any moment we can enter into the presence of One Who is everlastingly the same, "the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning", to know that whatever may be happening around us, whatever may be happening inside us, we can go to Him and that He is always the same, the same in His might and in His majesty, in His glory, in His love, in His mercy, in His compassion, in all that He has promised! Do you not understand this man now? I do not care about the others, he says, but I, as for me, nearness to God is good for me. O, my friends, let us think more about God. Let us meditate upon Him, let us turn our minds and our hearts towards Him, let us realize that in Christ He offers us His fellowship, His companionship constantly, always.

But let us go on to another reason that he gives. "It is good for me," he says, "nearness to God is good for me." Now I have already emphasized this, and I want to re-emphasize it. The pragmatic element must never be excluded, you must not dispose of the pragmatic. I mean by that not that you must become Christian in order to derive certain blessings, but that you must remember that if we are Christians *we shall receive certain blessings*. And it is right that we should say so. It was "for the joy that was set before Him" that our blessed Lord "endured the Cross", and is not this what the Apostle means when he says: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Put these

things in the right order. Start with God as God, and because He is God, and then remember that He is God for you. In other words, it means: This is the place of salvation. And that is why the Psalmist wants to keep there. "For me, it is good to be near always unto God." It is not surprising that he says this in view of the experience he had gone through. You remember his misery and wretchedness and how it was too painful for him until he went into the sanctuary of God. But having understood there, his happiness came floating back to him. He rejoiced in God, and he felt that he had never been so happy in the whole of his life though the ungodly were still the same. It is good to keep near to God, it is the place of salvation, it is the place of deliverance.

James in his practical manner puts this very simply and gloriously in his Epistle. He says: "Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you." This again is a glorious thought with which to start the New Year. We can be certain of this, that every time we take a step in the direction of God — if I may speak thus — God will take a step in our direction. Do not imagine when you consider drawing nigh unto God that you will find it difficult. If we approach Him truly, if we approach Him honestly, we can always be certain that God approaches us. He is the God of salvation. That is a very good reason for drawing near to Him; He has every blessing that we need. There is nothing we can ever stand in need of but God has it. All blessings come from God; He is "the Giver of every good and perfect gift". He has put them all in Christ, and He has given us Christ. "All things are yours," says Paul to the Corinthians. Why? Because "ye are Christ's". It is an inevitable bit of logic. It is good for me to draw near to God because when I am near to God I know my sins are forgiven; but when I am far from God I become doubtful of that. I cannot deal with a guilty conscience. I can deal still less with the accusations of other people. It is only when I am near to God in Christ that I know my sins are forgiven. I feel His love, I know I am His child and I enjoy priceless blessings of peace with God and peace within and peace with others. I am aware of His love and I am given a joy that the world can neither give nor take away.

Anyone who has ever tasted of these things must say that there is nothing comparable to being near to God, this God. Look back across your life, look back across this last year. Pick out the most glorious moments in your history, the moments of supreme peace and joy. Have they not been moments when you have been nearest to God? There is nothing to equal the happiness and joy and peace which result from being near unto God. Is there anything that is comparable to this realization that in the presence of God you are lifted up above your circumstances? You begin to know something of what Paul meant when he said: "I have learned; in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," "I know both how to be abased, and how to abound". You are made independent of circumstances and accident and chance, independent of everything. It is good to be near to God because it is the place of salvation, because it is the place where you get all the blessings. It means that you are immersed in the ocean of God's love and staying there, keeping there. Let us adopt this man's resolve to keep near to God.

Then he goes on to say that it is also a place of safety. "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God". We need this again. As we

look into this unknown future we do not know what is going to happen. Anything may happen, many things may happen, and if there is one thing we crave for, and the whole world is craving for at this moment, it is security and safety. We all look for security, we all look for someone we can trust. We have been let down so often, we have let ourselves down. The thoughtful man asks: "Where can I repose my trust, on what can I bank with an absolute sense of safety?" And there is still only one answer. It is God. It is good for me to draw near to God; I have put by trust in this Lord God, this Jehovah, this covenant-keeping God. The Psalms, of course, are full of this idea. You find it also in the Book of Proverbs: "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe". There was a man outside in the world and the enemy began to attack him. He could not deal with him; he did not know what to do; he was alarmed and terrified. Then he ran into the strong tower, the Name of the Lord, this Lord Jehovah. The enemy cannot get in there. In the arms of God, these almighty arms, he is safe: no enemy can penetrate and attack him there. Yes, says John in his first Epistle in the last chapter: "We know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in the evil one", and "that evil one cannot touch us". Why? Because we are in Christ, we are in God. You are perfectly safe there. Let me quote again one of the grandest things the Apostle Paul ever said: "I am persuaded" — he is certain — "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans viii, 38 and 39). Safe in the arms of Jesus. If you are there, though hell be let loose it cannot touch you. Nothing can harm those who are in the safe keeping of their covenant-keeping God.

The last thing he mentions is again very wonderful. Let me just note it. "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works." Now this is a very vital addition. This is the point at which we should all arrive. His final reason for determining to keep near to God is this. He says, I am going to keep near unto God in order that I may glorify God, in order that *I may declare all His works*. I imagine his argument was something like this. If I keep near to God I will be blessed, I will experience His salvation, I will have this great and marvellous sense of security. And of course that will immediately lead me to praise God and to magnify God and to glorify God before and amongst others. So he says: I am going to keep near to God in order that I may always praise God, and as I praise God I will be testifying about God to others. That is a point at which we must all arrive.

You remember that the first question in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith is "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer is that, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Now this man puts it the other way round. He puts enjoyment first because he is dealing with the matter experimentally. He had been so unhappy, so he comes down to our own level and he says: Keep near to God and you will be happy, you will enjoy God and you will glorify Him. These two things must always go together. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Yes, says this man, I am going to keep near to God in order that I may glorify Him as

well as enjoy Him. He is the great Lord God Almighty, and the tragedy of man and the tragedy of the world and of history is that the world does not know that; but my business is to tell people about Him: I will do so in my life, I will do so with my lips; I will do so in myself and in words. The whole of my life shall be to thy glory of God; and I cannot glorify God unless I am near to Him and am experiencing Him. But as I do so I shall reflect His life.

III.

Thus we have looked at this man's resolve, and we have looked at his reasons for his resolution. In a hurried word may I give you a reminder of HOW ALL THIS IS TO BE DONE. It is not enough to say: Keep near to God, and if you do so these things will happen. How do I keep near to God? We must be practical, we must get down to the practical level. You and I as Christians know that we can always draw near to God in Jesus Christ. We need not scale the heights or descend to the depths. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . . That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans x, 8 and 9). We need not worry about this because, if we are Christians at all, we know that however much we may have sinned, however much wrong we may have done to others and to ourselves, if at this moment we come to God and confess our sins, admitting that we cannot undo them or save ourselves, and trusting entirely in the Son of God and what He has done on our behalf, by His life of obedience and His sacrificial saving death, we are accepted of God, we are reconciled to God, we are in communion with God. That is the way. Yes, but remember to keep near to God. That is this man's resolve. How do I do it? *By prayer*, a life of prayer. I must insist upon this. If I believe all I have been saying, well, then I believe that I can talk to God. If I realize truly Who He is, I shall want to talk to God. The man who really keeps near to God is the man who is always talking to God. We must resolve to do this; we must decide that we will not allow the world to control us any longer, but that we are going to control it and our time and our energy and everything else. Prayer.

Then *Bible reading*. In this Book God speaks to you. Therefore read the Scriptures.

Then *public worship*. It was when he went into the sanctuary of God that this man found peace and rest for his soul. And we have often had the same experience. Very well, if you want to keep near to God, not only pray in private, but pray with others, not only read the Word and study it in private, come and do so with others. We help one another, we bear one another's burdens.

Then *meditation* and taking time to think. Throw the newspaper on one side and think about God and about your soul and about all these things. We do not talk enough to ourselves. We must tell ourselves that we are in His presence, that we are His children, that Christ has died for us and that He has reconciled us to God. We must practise the presence of God, and realize His presence, and talk to Him, and spend our days with Him—that is the method. To draw near unto God means to seek God, never to give yourself any satisfaction or peace or rest until you know that your sins are forgiven, until you know God, until you know the love of God, and you are conscious that when you pray He is ready to listen and you can speak to Him in various ways.

The final thing, of course, is to *obey Him*, because if we disobey Him we break contact. Sin always means a breaking of the connection, it means going far away from God. So the two rules are, to seek God and then to obey God. And if in this pilgrimage, which we call life, you should sin or you should fall and be conscious that the contact and the communion is broken, you immediately re-establish it by confessing your sins and knowing that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness."

God grant that as we face a New Year this may be our heartfelt resolve—"For me, nearness to God is good for me." O that we may know Him and dwell with Him and spend the remainder of our days really basking in the sunshine of His face and enjoying blessed fellowship with Him.

(Conclusion)

—The Westminster Record

THE LIGHT WILL SOON BREAK

Last night I saw a faint yellow light struggling with feeble timidity against some angry clouds; they gathered against the light as if determined to shut it out; and the pale moon seemed too languid for resistance, but the breeze came to help her; the thickening clouds were broken, and the moon seemed to take heart; brighter and brighter were her mild beams, until at last she stood up in the southern sky, the clouds all gone, like an angel watching from afar the flowers which the sun had just forsaken. So shall it be with our cloudy life, if we be God's children, the clouds are not permanent. They are but elevated shadows. The true light will pierce them, melt them, scatter them, and we shall stand out distinct as stars, lighter than ever cloud ascended, renewed in lustre by the infinite glory of God.—PARKER.

Then count the cost and know
That here on earth below
Thou needs must suffer with thy Lord, and die.
We reach that gain, to which all else is loss,
But through the cross!

—SIMON DACH

The Gospel Witness Family

has the happy privilege of studying similar portions of the Bible together, and praying for common objectives together. **BUT WE MUST INCREASE.**

Send us **NAMES - NAMES - NAMES**

When you have finished reading this copy of **THE GOSPEL WITNESS**, pass it on to someone else. If you can use additional copies we should be glad to supply them. Spread the truth.

EVIL OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Those of us who have been engaged through the years in the struggle in the Protestant world between modernism and the truth of the Gospel see the same arguments and a similar parallel in the struggle between Communism and freedom.

Inside of the church there can be no peaceful coexistence between the modernist who denies the Word of God and the faithful Christian who stands by the Word of God. Those who accepted the inclusive church, which is nothing more than the principle of peaceful coexistence between the modernist and the Bible-believer, have lived to see that the modernist triumphed. In our opinion the greatest single tragedy of our day is that the great Protestant bodies represented in the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America are now committed to an inclusivist-modernist program. What they call Christianity, the way in which they define Christianity, is entirely different from the historic Christian faith. The only hope of saving the day at all is to arouse the Christians that are left, to lead them out into true, separated testimonies, and to begin afresh a glorious witness for the Son of God.

In a recent issue of the *Christian Beacon* we quoted Dr. J. Gresham Machen on these issues. He felt that the greatest enemy of the day in the Christian world is not the modernist but rather the Bible believer who makes common cause with the modernist. He said emphatically that there are three positions that can be taken: the first is to stand for Christ, the second is to be a modernist, and the third is to be a Bible believer who co-operates with the modernist. The latter position, he emphasized, is by far the worst.

The reasons for this are clear. The out-and-out Christian has a testimony which rings true. The out-and-out modernist can be identified. But the Bible believer who keeps company with the modernists and co-operates with them in their programs only adds confusion and commendation to the modernists themselves.

The same parallel applies in the present struggle between Communism and the free world. The first and the best position is that of freedom — defending it, maintaining it, and proclaiming it. The second position is that of the Communist. He is a member of the Party, he makes no bones about his position, and he actively champions the Communist world utopia.

The third and most dangerous and damaging of all is the position or nation that claims to defend the cause of freedom but is willing peacefully to coexist with the Communist. Those who champion peaceful coexistence, which is the line desired by the Communist, are doing more harm to the Western world and the cause of freedom than the Communists themselves. They are the best possible spokesmen for the Communist cause. No one knows this better than the Communists. One expects a Communist to favor peaceful coexistence, but one does not expect a defender of freedom to champion the Communist cause.

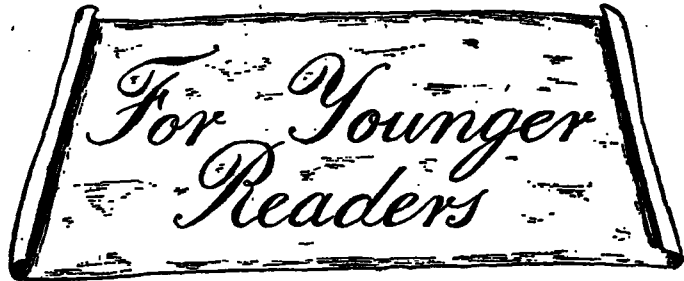
The West has been losing ground and the East has been gaining strength because of those in the West who profess to be loyal to freedom but champion peaceful coexistence with Communism!

The tragedy and the disaster that inclusivism and peaceful co-existence has wrought within the church ought to be a lesson to those outside of the church, if

they have eyes to see it. The world cannot exist half free and half slave. Those who appease slavery will be enslaved themselves.

The titanic battle now raging between the Communist world and the Western world is being lost step by step because men who profess freedom's cause also aid and champion the Communist cause. Such persons are the worst enemies of all!

—*Christian Beacon*



THE SUNBIRD

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee; because he trusteth in thee."

—Isaiah 26:3

Miss Amy Carmichael gives a beautiful illustration from nature of this kind of trust. The sunbird — one of the tiniest of birds, a native of India — builds a pendant nest, hanging it by four frail threads, generally from a spray of valaris. It is a delicate work of art, with its roof and tiny porch, which a splash of water or a child's touch might destroy. Miss Carmichael tells how she saw a little sunbird building such a nest just before the rainy season and felt that for once bird wisdom had failed; for how could such a delicate creature, in such an exposed situation, weather the winds and the torrential rains? The rainy season came, and from her window she watched the nest swaying with the branches in the wind. Then she perceived that the nest had been so placed that the leaves immediately above it formed little gutters which carried the water away from the nest. There sat the sunbird with its tiny head resting on her little porch, and whenever a drop of water fell on her long, curved beak, she sucked it in as if it were nectar. The storm raged furiously, but the sunbird sat quiet and unafraid, hatching her tiny eggs.

We have a more substantial rest for head and heart than the sunbird's porch! We have the promises of God! Are they not enough, however terrifying the storm?

"Like a bird that found its nest,
So my soul has found its rest,
In the centre of the will of God."

—Mrs. C. E. Cowman, in
Mountain Trailways For Youth.

Have You Answered the Editor's Letter Yet?

A contribution from every GOSPEL WITNESS reader would help lift our burden, and enable us to balance our books.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 First Quarter Lesson 12 March 24, 1957

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

CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST

Lesson Text; Hebrews 4:14-5:10.

Golden Text: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4:6.

I. Our Sympathetic High Priest: 4:14-16.

The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, most probably the Apostle Paul, endeavoured to explain to those of the Hebrew race and Jewish background that Christianity was the fulfilment of the message of the Old Testament as given in type, symbol, ceremony and historical events. As a Prophet, as the Word of God Incarnate and as the express image of His Person, the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets of old (Heb. 1:1-3). As the Mediator of the New Covenant, He far exceeds in name and position the heavenly hosts of angels, mediators of the Old Covenant (Heb. 1:4 - 2:18). As the Founder of the New Economy of grace, He is superior to Moses, the founder of the Old Economy of law (Heb. 3, 4). As a High Priest, He surpasses in nature and ministry the high priests of the Old Covenant (Heb. 5-10).

The priests of the tabernacle and of the earthly temple occupied a position of importance and dignity; they were revered, respected and obeyed by the people. But the Lord Jesus Christ is described as a "great high priest," for no other has been so exalted as He (Heb. 3:1). He is great, in the first place, because of the sphere in which He ministers. The high priest of the First Covenant was privileged once a year to pass into the holy of holies, but our Saviour, the High Priest of the New Covenant, passed into heaven itself, of which the earthly holy of holies was but a type (Heb. 7:26; 8:1, 2; 9:1-12, 23, 24). He is great, also, because He is the Son of God (John 3:16). He is the High Priest par excellence, however, because of His perfect sympathy with those for whom He ministers in His high and holy office.

As the Son of God, our Saviour has all power over Satan, sin and death. As the Son of Man He secured that power for us at infinite cost to Himself. He suffered, bled and died to win for us eternal life. If He had never voluntarily subjected Himself to the limitations of humanity, while still being God, He could not have become the perfect High Priest. One might illustrate by reference to doctors in a leper hospital. Although free from the dread disease, they voluntarily obey the rules of the hospital, that they may experience the restrictions of their patients and sympathetically assist them.

Christ was tempted like as we are, except that in His conflicts with the Evil One, He never once yielded to sin (Luke 22:28). As He was God, He could not sin, and yet He could be tempted, and was tempted to a degree beyond that of any man. One may imagine a strong citadel, which cannot be taken, yet can be repeatedly and fiercely assaulted. We yield to sin's slightest pressure, and then the attack ceases. Our Saviour, on the other hand, was assaulted by Satan to the very limit, yet He did not sin. It is not sin to be tempted, but it is sinful to yield to the Tempter. The Lord Jesus Christ can fully sympathize with us in all our trials (1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 2:14-18).

Therefore, since we have such a High Priest, we are exhorted to hold fast our profession, and the Hebrews, especially, were counselled not to abandon the hope of the Gospel which they had heard, and not to return to Judaism with its inferior priests and incomplete sacrifices (Heb. 10:23). Moreover, we are all exhorted to come with assurance to the throne, which is now through Christ a throne of grace (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 10:19-22), to obtain grace for "timely assistance".

II. Our Perfect High Priest: 5:1-10.

The prophet of Old Testament times was God's representative with men, while the priest was man's representative before God. He was chosen of God to appear before Him on behalf of the people. His function was two-fold; to supervise and offer the sacrifices calculated to take away sins (Heb. 8:3, 4; 9:9; 10:11; 11:4), and to present to the Lord the tithes and free-will offerings of the people. Christ, our High Priest, made one effectual sacrifice for sins on our behalf, for ever (Heb. 9:25-28; 10:10-13), and through Him we dedicate our all to the Lord in gratitude for His sacrificial love (Rom. 12:1, 2).

There are two types of sympathy; first, the sympathy which fellow human beings feel one for another when all are involved in a similar condemnation or trial (Luke 23:39-41; Heb. 7:28), and secondly, the compassion of one who, although touched with the feeling of another's infirmity, is yet above and beyond it, and has the power to relieve the guilt or sorrow. The first type of sympathy was that of the Old Testament priests, who were as helpless as the people, inasmuch as they also were compassed by infirmities and sins (verses 2, 3; Lev. 4:3). But our Saviour had compassion upon all, and performs in love His function as our Advocate before the Lord (1 John 2:1).

To intrude into the functions of the holy priesthood was a great sin (Numb. 16:5, 36-40; 18:6, 7; 2 Chron. 26:18; John 3:27); only those chosen of God might serve. Our Lord Jesus Christ was ordained of God (John 8:54), who publicly proclaimed His good pleasure in His Son (Matt. 3:17; John 12:28), declaring Him to be the Son of His love, especially when He raised Christ from the dead (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5).

The Old Testament priests were chosen from among the descendants of Aaron, the founder of the order, but our High Priest was declared to be a priest of the new order of Melchizedek, whose name means "King of Righteousness" (verses 6, 10; Gen. 14:18; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 6:20; 7:1-21). Since no record exists of the lineage, birth or death of this priest, he is cited as foreshadowing the Son of God, who existed from all eternity and abideth forever, untouched by change or death like the priests of the Aaronic line (Heb. 7:3, 22-28).

As being very God of very God, our Saviour was perfect in His holy Being and Nature. But in a manner beyond human comprehension, He became perfect as a sympathetic High Priest by His sufferings as the Son of Man (Heb. 2:9-15). He shared our sorrows and became sin for us, that He might bear away our sorrows and remove our sins (Isa. 53:1-6; 2 Cor. 5:21). He knew the meaning of agonizing suffering; and this passage (verses 7, 8) seems to have special reference to Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39-44), where our Lord experienced the full significance of sonship. He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross (John 14:31; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 10:5-9). Because of His vicarious death to atone for our sins, eternal salvation is available to all who will believe and accept His full provision and obey His gracious invitation (Isa. 55:1-3; John 3:16; Heb. 3:7, 8; Rev. 22:17).

Daily Bible Readings

March 18—A Merciful High Priest	Heb. 2:10-18
March 19—A High Priest of our Confession	Heb. 3:1-15
March 20—Order of Melchizedek	Heb. 7:11-17
March 21—Unchangeable Priesthood	Heb. 7:18-28
March 22—A Heavenly Priest	Heb. 8:1-6
March 23—One Sacrifice	Heb. 9:23-28
March 24—The Priest-King	Zech. 6:9-15

Suggested Hymns

Arise, my soul, arise!
I lay my sins on Jesus.
Man of sorrows, what a name!
The Great Physician now is near.
Jesus knows thy sorrow.
What a Friend we have in Jesus!

AN URGENT APPEAL

Dear GOSPEL WITNESS Reader:

Nearly thirty years ago someone placed in my hand for the first time a copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. At that time Dr. T. T. Shields was engaged in the fiercest religious conflict ever waged in the Dominion of Canada. The issue then was Modernism.

While not a few of God's children had become aware that a drastic change had gradually taken place in the testimonies of many of our churches, it was not until THE GOSPEL WITNESS defined the issue for us that we clearly understood the true cause.

Soon I became a regular reader of this potent periodical. Its defence of evangelical principles against the encroachments of Modernism and every other "ism", together with its crystal-clear declarations and expositions of God's truth, were of great assistance in helping me to decide to enter the gospel ministry, and ultimately bringing me to Toronto Baptist Seminary. Since then a host of young men have, after reading THE GOSPEL WITNESS, decided to enter the ministry, and have come for training to Toronto Baptist Seminary from various parts of the world. At the present time we have in the Seminary young men from England, Ireland, Wales, New Zealand, and elsewhere, practically all of whom have come through reading THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

The Board of Directors, which is composed of the Deacons of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, is determined that the course this paper has always taken will be rigidly followed. THE GOSPEL WITNESS is, in the truest sense, a missionary paper. It is therefore with delight that we hear from time to time of people through this agency being converted, others reclaimed, and faithful Christian workers encouraged. The heart-warming pastoral messages which appear from week to week continue to give hard-pressed ministers, and others, refreshment, and very often a new lease on life.

Naturally, there are many problems connected with the publication of a weekly religious journal. The only difficult one THE GOSPEL WITNESS has ever faced is a financial one, as we do not receive any revenue whatever from advertising, and it is still our desire to refrain altogether from advertisements. Our only sources of income are from annual subscriptions and the contributions we receive from friends. The subscription price never did pay for the heavy cost of publication; but by the help of God, and through the assistance of our Gospel Witness Family, we have been able to continue to this day.

OUR FISCAL YEAR ENDS MARCH 31st. We are naturally most anxious to meet the year-end with balanced Books. A Gift large or small from each subscriber would greatly assist in achieving that goal. Kindly be assured that a gift to THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a DONATION to MISSIONS; and personally we know of no better way you can invest your missionary money.

With hearty thanks for all past favours, and hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience,

Yours sincerely,



Chairman of the Board of Directors

THE GOSPEL WITNESS
130 Gerrard Street E., Toronto 2, Canada.

Dear Dr. Slade:

Enclosed find my GIFT of \$.....
toward THE GOSPEL WITNESS Fund, in response to your Annual Letter.

Name:

Address:

ONLY SEVENTEEN DAYS TO THE YEAR'S END

THE GOSPEL WITNESS FISCAL YEAR ENDS MARCH 31st

In our ANNUAL LETTER — printed in this issue — we have reminded all GOSPEL WITNESS subscribers and friends that we do not carry advertisements, and the subscription price does not cover the cost of publication. Also THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a missionary enterprise and it is sent to many home and foreign missionaries free of charge. From many parts of the world we have received news of blessing through reading the pages of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. A recent letter from a missionary in South America contains the following:

"For some time Mrs. H. and I have been receiving free THE GOSPEL WITNESS AND PROTESTANT ADVOCATE" and we would like to extend our most sincere thanks to those who make this welcome gift possible, for both my wife and I find the periodical helpful and inspiring. The sermons by Dr. Shields are exceedingly good, and living in a very Roman Catholic town we can well appreciate the articles on Romanism.

"Again thanking you for your kindness and generosity and praying that the Lord's richest blessing may be yours continually.

Yours sincerely in His Service,

Have You Answered The Editor's Letter Yet?

A contribution from every GOSPEL WITNESS reader would help lift our burden, and enable us to balance our books.

Subscribe for THE GOSPEL WITNESS or help us expand our evangelical testimony by obtaining new subscriptions.