

# The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Pastor and Editor.*

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

**"WILL REVIVAL COME TO THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION BY COMPROMISE OR BY CONTENTION FOR THE FAITH?"**

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, Sept. 27th, 1925  
 (Stenographically reported)

"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

"And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.

"Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

"So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."—I Kings 18: 17-21.



IT IS NOT often I refer to our larger audience, but on this occasion I do speak, not only for those who are within these walls, but for many thousands of people throughout the Denomination who will read what I shall say this evening.

There is a very interesting analogy between the conditions obtaining in Elijah's time and conditions which almost universally prevail in the religious world to-day. It is indisputable that we are living in a time of—I had almost said, religious declension; but perhaps that would be scarcely accurate, for we have religion enough—but we are living in a time when many have declined from the ways of the Lord; and have turned from "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints".

It is my hope, and I think it is a hope well grounded, that so far as our Baptist people are concerned in these two provinces of Ontario and Quebec, our churches and ministers have not departed from the faith to the extent that some have—I mean so far as our doctrinal position is concerned. I trust we shall all

admit that we need a spiritual revival, that we need to see, and desire to see, the truths which we profess to hold translated into action and transmuted into Christian character; for it is of no profit that we should call Him, "Lord, Lord", if we do not the things which He saith—but so far as I know, our ministers do still preach, with but few exceptions, if any, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And we really have no other confidence than that the power of the Holy Ghost is still available to quicken dead souls, and to make men new creatures in Christ Jesus. Again and again when these matters have come before the representatives of our churches in convention, they have emphatically declared their loyalty to "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints".

But in this country, beyond question, Modernism is as rampant as in other lands: in Canada itself, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick was an honoured guest of the Victoria College Alumni, and preached in a neighbouring Methodist church. I have repeatedly said that if there be any fundamental of the faith which that gentleman does not deny, I do not know of it. At the establishment of the United Church of Canada, one of the distinguished speakers was a Dr. Morrison, Editor of *The Christian Century*. Tom Paine, Ingersoll, or Voltaire, could not surpass him in his opposition to Evangelical Christianity. But we have to remember that this man Fosdick has returned to what was formerly a Baptist church; so that I hope you who are members of other denominations will not say that I am throwing stones at other people's houses. The fact is, all denominations are subject to this plague; and if we have been kept measurably free from its acceptance, at least intellectually, it is because some few have been endeavouring for years faithfully to enforce a quarantine order. We did have in our own University—for fourteen years he was permitted to do his deadly work—Dr. J. G. Mathews, Professor of Hebrew. His book published not very long ago on the Old Testament constitutes a denial of everything which Evangelical Christians believe: there is not one solitary page anywhere, where it is possible for him to deny the supernatural, where he does not do it. We suffered his presence altogether too long.

And we are in danger, dear friends, of a repetition of the same thing. I want you clearly to understand that when I speak from this pulpit on these matters, I may not tell you all I know on the subject, nor give you every reason, at the outset, for my statement; but you will understand more clearly a little later. I say, we are even now in imminent danger of a repetition of that kind of teaching.

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Those of us who have protested against false teaching are invariably represented as "disturbers of the peace", as "troublers of Israel". Elijah was so represented; and so has every faithful minister been represented through all the long course of the church's history. But, my dear friends, so far as we are concerned on the lines in which we have troubled Israel—if we have troubled Israel—we intend to trouble her still more—still more ("Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!"); and I want to serve notice upon my brethren—this will be printed,—and I want to serve notice upon the brethren who are determined to bring upon us this further infliction, that this thing will be fought to the very end.

I am not at liberty at present to mention the name, at least, I do not think it is wise to do so at present; I shall mention it in due time—but I ask you Baptists what you think of this: when in an official meeting a man who has been regarded for years as, not the champion of orthodoxy, but as a standard of orthodoxy in our Baptist Denomination, in discussing the appointment of a

professor, says, in effect, "If this man were to be appointed for the Old Testament I should not recommend him. His view is substantially Dr. Driver's position; but inasmuch as his subject belongs to another department, I think we are reasonably safe." To that gentleman I put the question, "I want to ask you if you consider it is safe to appoint a man to teach the New Testament who does not believe the Old?" "Well, I would not put it exactly that way. There is the question of the authorship of certain books of the Old Testament, and the dates of certain portions of the Old Testament. And," he said, "frankly, I am not sure of these things myself; and I have to ask myself where to draw the line." Then on the question of the resurrection of Christ he said, "Of course, this gentleman believes in the resurrection, but he insists that he must interpret it. It is a spiritual resurrection. It must be interpreted in the light of Paul." Very well!—if they will interpret it in the light of Paul we would not be afraid. But the resurrection of Christ is really not a matter of interpretation: it is a matter of fact; and the man who has a shadow of a shade of a ghost of a doubt about the literal, physical, resurrection of our Lord has no rightful place in any Christian institution. "If Christ be not raised"—what have we?—"your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

Where are we in these matters? What was the trouble in Elijah's day? It was just this, that men had substituted another religion for the religion of Jehovah. They had followed the teaching of a false religion,—some one else, some thing else, had been put in God's place; they followed after Baal. I am aware that we do not now in this enlightened land make graven images, nor bow down to pictures; but we are menaced with a religious system which, in principle, is not greatly different from the religion of Baal: Modernism substitutes, at every point, the natural for the supernatural. In its attitude toward this Book, it will accept only that which may be naturally explained; in its attitude toward the Lord of the Book, our Lord Jesus Christ, they reduce Him to the natural plane, denying His supernatural birth, His miracles, and His supernatural resurrection and coming again. Hence they go forward and deny the supernatural experience which the Bible promises; they deny the necessity of the new birth, of a new creation by the power of the Holy Ghost. One of the leading modernists has declared: Modernism is an absolutely different religion from that held by people who are called fundamentalists. He says the Bible of the modernist is not the Bible of the fundamentalist; the Christ of the modernist is not the Christ of the fundamentalist; the religious experience of the modernist is not the religious experience of the fundamentalist; the hope of the modernist for this world is not the hope of the orthodox evangelical; and he says all parties may as well face the fact, that it is an entirely new religion. And so it is!

The question for us to ask is, Whether we want any new religion or whether the old is good enough? I do not know how many there are here this evening who are disposed to be favourable to these views; but I appeal to any of you who are in the middle of the road. The great danger in this conflict to-day is not from the out-and-out modernists. In some respects I have more respect for men like Fosdick, and Faunce, and Morrison, and the rest of them—I have more respect for them than I have for some of our so-called orthodox Baptists, who publicly will subscribe to every solitary fundamental of the faith, but who privately will play politics and surrender everything to the enemy. If there are any such here this evening, or in our larger audience through the printed page, I want to ask you, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be

God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." If Modernism is well grounded, if it be worthy your consideration, if it offers you promise of salvation, if it be, indeed, from God, then be a Modernist out-and-out.

Let us look at the case. What is your view of the Bible, is it a natural Book, or is it divinely inspired? If it be natural, if it is to be reduced to the level of other books, except in so far as its human authors were men of genius whose genius transcended that of ordinary men,—I say, if the Bible be nothing more than that, if it be an evolution of the religious consciousness of men, and if it did not actually come down from God, if that be your conviction, then have the courage to say so, and be a naturalist out-and-out; and say, "The Bible is not my authority; I am my own authority, and I will receive of that Book only that which commends itself to my reason.

Who is Jesus Christ? "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" If it be so that Matthew's account, and Luke's account of His birth, and the implications of the New Testament on every page, be unreliable—for I insist that Matthew and Luke are not the only New Testament writers who refer to the virgin birth. It is my judgment that there is not a page of the New Testament that does not assume it, and that is not shot through with it—but if that be your judgment, then take your stand squarely upon it. If Baal is your god; if reason is your god; if the consensus of human scholarship is your authority; and if the modern professor knows more than the inspired prophets and apostles, then have the courage of your convictions, have the courage to stand squarely on that Unitarian platform; and admit that is what you are. Let us have done with halting between two opinions. If it be so that we have to accept this doctrine of despair, that the poor broken-hearted sinner has no help other than that which is resident within himself, or that which may come to him from his environment, and that salvation, if salvation he ever obtains, is a matter of human effort, of human achievement, then let us accept that, and plainly declare it; and let us close our prayer meetings, and have done with the mockery of bowing our knee to God, if we do not expect God to answer.

And so on through the whole category. If it be so that Jesus is not coming again, if it be so that we must educate and legislate this sin-cursed earth into an experience of a "golden age", and if there be no cleaving of the skies, no rending of the heavens, no coming of the King in His glory, then let us be honest enough to accept that position, and take our stand with those who hold it; but let us have done once and for all with halting between two opinions.

"Oh," but you say, "I am not prepared for that; I am not included in that class." Well, then, see that you take your place boldly on the other side: "If the Lord be God, follow him." How many of you here to-night do really believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative, Word of God? How many believe it, will you put up your hands? Yes, now when you go to Convention put up your hands, too, will you? Stand on your two feet and say so. If this be the Word of God, let us accept all its implications, let us bow to its authority.

And what of Jesus Christ? Is there anyone here who doubts whence He came? Is there anyone here who would deny the accuracy of His word when He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world"? Do you doubt that He was speaking the truth when He said, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"? Do you believe in His pre-existence, in His eternal Sonship? Do we believe that

the Babe of Bethlehem is the Incarnate God, that He was verily begotten of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin, as the Scriptures say, that He lived by the power of the Spirit, and died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God, and rose again and ascended into Heaven, and some day is coming again? ("Hallelujah!") These are old truths, there is nothing new in them; but I declare to you that if our Baptist people would, at every point, not only accept them intellectually, but yield themselves wholly to these truths, and be absolutely loyal everywhere to the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, we should have a revival.

I know very well what some of our brethren are thinking. I heard not very long ago of a company of men who said, "Now brethren, let us get together and pray; let us get back to the old comradeship that we enjoyed before this controversy began; let us get back to the old fellowship which was so rich before we began to dispute about these doctrinal matters. If we forget all about these things, we shall have a revival." I want to ask you, with the Word of God before you, if that is how revival has come at any time? The truth is, my friends, revival always involves controversy. If there is an unconverted man here to-night, I tell you that you will never have salvation, you will never have a revival in your own heart until that controversy between your soul and God is settled; for at the root of all controversy is this sin of rebellion against God, this refusal to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ; and God will never be at peace with you until you accept His estimate of His Son.

One of the brethren down South, I will mention his name, Dr. Scarborough, President of the South-Western Theological Seminary, when dealing with this question, said that what we need to do is to get all the modernists, and all the middle-of-the-roaders, and all the fundamentalists, together in one great soul-winning effort. Then a lot of brethren say, "Amen! That is fine." No man outside the insane asylums ever talked greater twaddle than that! How can you get modernists to unite in a great evangelistic effort when they do not believe souls need to be saved? How can you get them together as a great evangelistic body when the modernists do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, or that the Holy Ghost has power to make dead souls alive again? The thing is perfectly absurd; and we must come to an agreement on the basis of the truth of God as revealed in His Word, and through His Son—or we shall never have a revival.

I have no love for contention; but any man who contends for the faith is immediately labelled as a fighter, as a man who would rather contend than anything else. Let me remind you that for eleven long years in this pulpit I endured, I prayed night and day with tears, and sought by every means in my power to overcome the obstacles that were standing in the way of a great spiritual awakening; and four years ago last Monday night that last decision was taken; and God has been with us in power and blessing ever since. They may say what they like about revival by compromise; but I challenge the men of compromise to show us their revival. Where is it? Where are the fruits of it?

Let us turn to the story of our text: Elijah said, "Come on, you prophets of Baal, build your altar, and put wood upon it, and put the sacrifice upon the wood, and pray to Baal, and if Baal answers by fire, let him be god." And these eight hundred and fifty priests—they were greatly in the majority—built their altar, and they laid their wood upon the altar, and the sacrifice upon the wood; and "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered." And about that time

this prophet began to be sarcastic. That is what they say about the Pastor of Jarvis Street, if I may venture a comparison in that one respect; they will admit that the Pastor has a little bit of Elijah in him in this respect. But I declare to you if they knew how much of it I keep back, they would give me a Victoria Cross! This Modernism is learned lunacy. That is what it is. I challenge them: Come on you modernists, build your altar, lay your wood, and your sacrifice, and show me the results of your modernism in converted men, in transformed lives, in redeemed homes! Show us one solitary instance where the doctrine of doubtful inspiration has produced results; when the atonement by blood is denied, let us see what our modernist friends produce. Do you know that Modernism is the finest thing in the world to empty churches? All over the land they talked about the great congregations of Dr. Fosdick—and he preached in a church into which you could not put this congregation if you tried; you would have to sit on each other's laps. Congregations are not an infallible test, however; the question is, What do you do with them when you get them? I ask my modernist friends, and my middle-of-the-road Baptists, who compromise at every turn, and fear to declare boldly their allegiance to the whole counsel of God, show us the fruits of your labours; let me see any modernist brother whose ministry is blessed like our young brother McGinlay's ministry has been blessed out in Alton, a village of four hundred people completely transformed. Stand up, Brother McGinlay, and let us see you. Come next Sunday, both morning and night; and bring all you can to hear him preach in this church.

The great Dr. Dinsdale T. Young, whose ministry has been so marvellously blessed in London, that great preacher of the gospel, stands alone. I will tell you what a Methodist told me in London; he said, "Dr. Young is disliked by the younger generation of Methodist ministers. They would put him out of that hall if they could, but they cannot find another man in Methodism that can fill it." Dr. Young said at the induction of a minister who was just settling in a new church a year or so ago, "I do thank the Lord that the new theology empties churches." And so it does. It just dries them up at the roots and puts them out of business. If you want any examples of it, and if you are in exuberant spiritual health, I am almost inclined to give you three months' vacation to go around to the different churches and see what Modernism does.

But we must not shirk the responsibility that comes upon us; for Elijah's time was to come. He was sarcastic; and he said, "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked—cry aloud." I have heard some people cry aloud in another fashion to Jehovah in the confidence that He hears; but they were to shout that Baal might hear—but "there was no voice, nor any that answered"; there was no connection between Baal's altar, and the heavens above. The brooks were dried up, the fields were barren, the granaries were empty; and the king had organized two parties, heading one himself, and placing Obadiah at the head of the other, to go throughout the land to see if they could find a little water to save the cattle,—anything—anything at all, short of bowing his knee to God, and saying, "I have sinned." But the revival does not come in that way. They even appointed a committee to go and look for water; but revival does not come that way, the blessing comes from above.

I do not know if there ever was a greater hour in human history than when, in the presence of the followers of the prophets of Baal, Elijah said to the people, "Come near unto me." And all the people came near. Can you not see that

great crowd getting just as close to the altar which was dedicated to Jehovah as they possibly could? "And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt-sacrifice and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water." Are you afraid to challenge God to demonstrate His power? Are you afraid of the water? Are you afraid? How do you pray? I was talking to you last Sunday morning about waiting upon God. How? "Wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." And Elijah said, "I am going to put this beyond all peradventure; I am going to let God speak for Himself." I rather think he said, "I have been trying to speak for Him for some time without effect, and now I am going to let Him speak out of Heaven."

And then he prayed. Brother Bradley was speaking last night about short prayers. Well, here is a short prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things"—Listen: "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." This prophet said, "I am going to prove God's word to be true; I will do just exactly according to His word."—"Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou has turned their heart back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell. He did not have to pray a long time. The prophets of Baal prayed a long time; they were at it all day. They began in the morning and they prayed until noon, and they kept it up all the afternoon until the offering of the evening sacrifice. But Elijah just prayed this short prayer; it ascended up to Heaven—and "then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." That is the way God does things.

What is the application of this? If we are going to have a revival, we need to repair the altar; we need to give God the first place. I am quite willing to be called "unlearned and ignorant"; but I declare to you that when my Lord Jesus has spoken, I don't care what anyone else says; for me that is absolutely the last word on any subject. He died; He was the first begotten from the dead. Why? "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence." That is why He rose. Let us give Him His first place. And we have our Sacrifice. We do not need to lay the wood upon the altar; we do not need to lay the sacrifice upon the wood, in that sense; what we do need is to give first place to the Sacrifice of the Cross, with all its implications: "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Brother Bradley was telling us this morning of how fire from Heaven falls upon that Offering. He read to you this evening that when Peter preached that gospel in complete dependence upon God, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word. We must simply put our gospel to the fore; stake everything upon the cross of Christ. That is what I mean. I do not know any other way of saving souls. What was this building erected for? Not to amuse people, not to entertain

them, not to provide for any kind of material comfort. It was dedicated to one purpose only, that of sounding forth the everlasting gospel that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

"Well," someone says, "we are orthodox enough; we all believe that." Ah, my brothers and sisters, it is one thing to preach the cross of Christ objectively, it is another thing to yield to its subjective power; it is one thing to have Christ on our lips, it is another thing to have Him in our lives; it is one thing to say Christ has been crucified for me, it is another thing to say, "I am crucified with Christ." You witnessed this ordinance to-night, and heard me quote that text: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Someone says in their heart, perhaps, "I love to think of being on resurrection ground"! But listen: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." What did the cross mean to the Apostle Paul? He preached it as the sinner's only hope; but he said that by that cross he was crucified unto the world, and the world unto him.

When shall we have a revival? When we yield ourselves wholly to the cross of Christ, my friends. That is how we shall have a revival; and you cannot have a revival with the world, the flesh, and the devil in the church. You simply cannot have it. There must be separation; there must be an entire yielding to the authority of Jesus Christ in every relationship of life, in all departments of life; so that He is my Lord everywhere, and at all times. When we do that, when thus we give ourselves to Him, the fire of the Lord will fall. It will—it will fall upon you as you build the altar down there in the shop, down there in your place of business; as you erect the altar to Jehovah and put that truth in faith before the people, God the Holy Ghost will take your testimony and make it effective to the salvation of souls. It is not for the preacher alone: it is for all to yield ourselves to God.

I was going to speak a word to you about our whole Denomination, only a word. We are going to have a Convention before long. Oh, I long for the day when the fire of God shall fall, when we shall get down before God in earnest prayer and supplication for a great spiritual revival. When will it come? On what conditions will it come? It will never come, my dear friends, while we compromise on these matters, never in the world can it come. A good orthodox professor said to me the other day, "Oh, I wish you would sit in with us; I wish you would help us." I said, "I would love to help you with both hands. I fought Dr. Matthews for years, and you stood by his side. I tried to set you free so that you might declare the whole counsel of God." The trouble is people don't distinguish between their friends and their foes. He is the foe of evangelical religion who, on any point, compromises on these great matters. I do not care twopence for the whole crowd of them; we can do without anyone, and everyone, I don't care who he is. The only thing I do care for is that we should have the presence and power of the Holy Ghost; and, as we have that, the fire of God will fall.

I come back to you members of Jarvis Street Church, to remind you that it is useless for the pulpit to contend for the faith by lip, it is useless for you



to contend for the faith by lip, unless we contend by our lives, unless day by day we exemplify the truth we profess, unless we are ourselves living sacrifices, "holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to the world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Oh, unsaved man here this evening, I bring to you a great hope. The Saviour Whom I preach is the Creator of all worlds: He made the sun; He laid the foundations of the earth; he "meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance"; "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." He made you, spirit, soul, and body; you are His creature, the creature of His hands; and He Who made you can re-make you. The one great obstacle in the way of that re-creation was your sin and mine: "your iniquities have separated between you and your God"; but He Who "weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance", weighed the perfect righteousness of a perfect Saviour against your unrighteousness, and restored the balance. He blots out your sins, washes you in His precious blood, and by the power of the same Spirit Which brooded over the chaotic darkness and caused it to respond to His Word "Let there be light", and there was light,—by the power of that same Spirit, in the twinkling of an eye, even while I speak to you, old things can pass away, and all things become new. You may pass from this house this evening, a new creature. What other gospel is worth preaching to poor bankrupt men and women? Oh, I beg you to come this evening to the God Who answereth by fire. Let Him be God; let Him come into your life. He will consume the sacrifice and lick up the water. He will fill you with His presence. Revival will come, in a word, when we put Jesus Christ first, when we allow Him to be Saviour, to take away our sins, when we make Him our Lord to command us in the way that we should go. When thus we obey Him, we receive power; and, dare I say it, the Executive of the Godhead, God the Holy Ghost enters our hearts and lives, enabling us always to triumph in Christ Jesus.

Are there not many people here to-night who need this gospel? Do we not all need it? Shall we make this a night of re-consecration of ourselves to God? Are there any young men who have been playing, not with fire from Heaven, but with strange fire, with doubt and unbelief—have done with it, and come back to the solid foundation, and yield yourselves to Christ to-night; come back to the God Who answers by fire.

#### LAST SUNDAY.

The attendance at the Bible School last Sunday morning was 1,043. At eleven o'clock, Rev. W. C. Bradley, formerly of the Egypt General Mission, now of Sydney, Australia, preached. Mr. Bradley's ministry has been signally blessed of God, thousands having been converted through his instrumentality. There was a strong evangelistic appeal in Mr. Bradley's message, and a number responded to the invitation. At the evening service the Pastor preached the sermon appearing in this issue; three were baptized; and a large number came forward confessing Christ and desiring baptism.

#### NEXT SUNDAY.

During the Pastor's absence, Pastor James McGinlay, who has been so marvellously used of the Lord in the village of Alton, will be in Jarvis Street next Sunday, October 4th. Mr. McGinlay will teach Dr. Shields' Bible Class at 9.45, and preach morning and evening.

The publication of this paper as a missionary enterprise is made possible by the gifts of members of Jarvis Street Church and others, and is sent to subscribers by mail for \$2.00 (under cost) per year. If any of the Lord's stewards who read this have received blessing, we shall be grateful for any thank-offering you may be able to send to The Witness Fund at any time; and especially for your prayers that the message of The Witness may be used by the Holy Spirit for the defence of the Faith, the salvation of souls, and the exaltation of Christ. As our funds make it possible, we hope to add to our free list, from time to time, the names of ministers at home and missionaries abroad.

## EDITORIAL

### A GREAT UTTERANCE.

In the Central Hall, Westminster, London, England, on Friday, June 12th, 1925, a great meeting was held under the auspices of the Bible League of Great Britain, which was described as a "testimony to the full inspiration of the Bible, and against theories of Modernism concerning the Bible." The meeting was presided over by the Rev. H. E. Fox, M.A. Stenographic reports of the addresses delivered on that occasion are published in the *Bible League Quarterly* for October-December, 1925. This magazine is recognized, even by modernists, as a periodical of high standing in which thorough scholarship is expressed.

A list of the speakers at the great meeting referred to will convince the candid reader that care was taken to select men of standing and ability. The list includes the Rev. Paul Kanamori, the great Japanese preacher; Professor R. Dick Wilson, Ph.D., D.D., of Princeton; Col. Hope Biddulph, D.S.O.; Ven. Archdeacon W. S. Moule, M.A.; Admiral Sir Harry H. Stileman, K.B.E.; and Rev. W. M. Robertson, Pastor of Texteth Baptist Tabernacle, Park Road, Liverpool.

We wish we could share with our readers the addresses of all these great men; but we have a special reason for publishing in this issue an address delivered by the Rev. W. M. Robertson, of Liverpool. In next week's issue of *The Witness* we shall publish a second address delivered by Mr. Robertson at the same Conference. We ask our readers to give special attention to these two addresses, to read them with the greatest care; and to put them on file. We desire also that our readers should judge of the quality of the testimony given by Mr. Robertson; and to consider whether these addresses sound like the utterances of a man who speaks without knowing what he is speaking about. At the moment we think it wise not to tell our Canadian readers why we wish them to weigh Mr. Robertson's words. These articles will be found of special interest to Canadian Baptists. Thus far we are taking our readers into our confidence at the moment, by telling them that we shall have occasion to refer to these articles, and to Mr. Robertson's standing, in the future.

These articles are published for their intrinsic worth, and also as a standard of the ability and reliability of their author. We are very much afraid that we shall have to make some future issues of *The Gospel Witness* exceedingly interesting.

## THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

By Rev. W. M. Robertson.

The Rev. W. M. Robertson said: Mr. Chairman and Christian Friends. The subject on which I have to address you is the Authority of Scripture, and the subject is of profound importance. What is the ultimate and final seat of authority in matters of religious thought and practice? The question indicates the crux of the controversy which is raging throughout Christendom to-day.

(1) **THE NEED OF AUTHORITY.** This ought to be apparent to every one of us. There is an instinctive longing in the heart of man for a standard of faith and conduct which shall be infallible. The instinct is a valid one and not simply the remnant of superstition. Man is a rational being and requires illumination, but more, he is a sinful being and needs salvation. And until we are perfectly certain concerning our authority we must falter in our faith and be uncertain in our conduct. It has been said that the essence of religion is obedience. But to whom and to what? We must be sure to whom we must render that obedience. Surely there can be but one answer. The authority which can command absolute obedience can only be found in the revealed will of God. Only He Who gives us being and sustains us in being has a right to demand from us our unfaltering obedience and allegiance. The very word "Authority" implies a personal relation, and this can only be that between God and the soul. Thus far all is clear. But it is here that the real problem comes in. Granted that the revealed will of God is the ultimate and final authority—where is the knowledge of that will to be found? How may we be sure that we have arrived at a sound knowledge of the will of God? Three views contend for the mastery.

I. *We have first of all the Modernist view.* To the Modernist the individual is the only authority. Dean Inge, in an article contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly*, says: "The seat of authority for Protestants is the inner light, the inspiration of the individual. . . . No vagaries of fanatical or unbalanced visionaries alter the fact that for the Protestant, the conscience and spiritual experience of the individual are the foundation of faith and morals."

This is characteristic of Modernism in general. With varying emphasis but common result, Modernists make the basis of authority subjective. They do not all postulate the precise faculty in man's make-up that is to be the final thing in deciding the question. But they all agree that the seat of authority in these days must be found somewhere in man himself. Some say that it is *reason* which should predominate. But we must have something about which to reason! The keenest intellect may become unbalanced. Reason is clouded by sin! Therefore nothing inherent in man can itself be a final authority. If it comes to a question of reason then mine is as good as yours, and every man can easily make himself a law unto himself. *Others postulate conscience.* This is not the time to enter into a discussion of what conscience is, but it can never be an infallible guide. I am thankful to God that I have not to live by some people's conscience! You take a Mohammedan. He will put a knife into your tenderest part and think nothing at all about it; his conscience will never say him nay! Men have done the most awful things and conscience, seemingly, has made no protest. Conscience must be educated, and the only thing that can do that is the Word of God.

*If experience is made the seat of authority, whose experience?* Experience is of great value. It can verify the Word of God, it can be confirmatory of it, but it can never be a substitute for it. There are many varieties of religious experience! Whose experience is to determine that which shall be for all of us the final authority?

When you examine all the modern proposals for the final authority for Christian people you come to this conclusion, that every man must be a law unto himself. In rejecting all objective authority the Modernist is left with a foundation of sand. There is no finality but a maze of subjectivity. We are left to flounder around in an atmosphere of uncertainty. So we resent and repudiate the Modernist solution of our question.

II. *Then there is the Roman Catholic view.* If you ask a Roman Catholic what is the final court of appeal in religion he will say, "The Church in the decisions of her councils is the only basis of authority." The Church! What Church? We are not only told this by Roman Catholics, we are also told by

other "Catholics" to-day that the Church is the supreme authority in questions of faith and practice, and we are informed that the Church was in existence before the New Testament was written, therefore we must not be bound by the New Testament, but by the Church's interpretation thereof! It is perfectly true that the Church was in existence many years before the New Testament was completed. But if this is suggested as proof that the Church is above Scripture, we take leave to disagree. The Church had the Old Testament Scriptures from the outset, and it was of these that the Apostle Paul said, "They are able to make wise unto salvation" (I Tim. iii. 15). The Jewish Church came into existence by accepting Divine revelation, and so did the Christian Church. Take Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. What is it but an exposition of and appeal to the Old Testament? Nor this alone. Although the *written* Word of the New Testament was not in being until after the Church was formed, the *spoken* word of Christ and the Apostles was! It was the acceptance of this revelation that begat the Church. The Church therefore cannot be the *creator* but only the *custodian* of Holy Scripture. The Word of God did not come through the Church but to the Church. The Church is not, and never was, the author of Scripture.

III. *We come now to the Protestant view.* Evangelical Protestantism has always contended that the Bible is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. The objection is sometimes made that Protestantism substituted the idea of an infallible Book for the older dogma of an infallible Church. The antithesis is both foolish and fallacious! The idea is not a late invention of Protestantism—it is the original idea that inheres in the Scripture itself. Protestantism simply reinstated the Word of God in the place from which Rome had displaced it. The Bible assumes such authority. Modern assertions to the contrary go to pieces against the weight of evidence. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were accepted as authoritative by the Post-apostolic age. The writings of the Fathers are full of illustrations of this truth. Augustine, for example, says: "Who knows not that the authority of Scripture is such that no question can be raised whether what is found therein is true and right." In all the controversies that raged in the early days of Christianity the disputants invariably appealed to the Scriptures as being the absolutely authoritative court of appeal. Much has been made of the differences springing from the exercise of private judgment. Such differences have been greatly exaggerated. There is far greater unity among evangelical believers than is generally supposed. There is great unanimity in essentials. Take the person of our Lord. We stand unflinchingly by His true Deity. When it comes to a question of salvation, we are one. Only through the atoning sacrifice of the Cross can sin be removed. We believe in His literal bodily resurrection. And so on through the great evangelical verities. It is only a begging of the question to say that the acceptance of the Word of God will mean endless controversy. The enthronement of the Bible means the glory of Jesus Christ and the salvation of men, and I am not ashamed to say that out of years of unbelief I have now come to a place of absolute faith in the Word of God. Dr. Horton says: "The Bible has now been dethroned from its position of unquestioned authority and can no longer be regarded as the test and standard of Christian truth." It would be lamentable if it were true. Do you wonder that the reaction in the world is of such an evil character? It cannot be otherwise. If the man in the street gets the impression that there is no real authority in the Bible, and he has a perfect right to do as he pleases, the responsibility for his action, to a great extent, will lie at the door of those who have declared that God's Word has been dethroned. It cannot be dethroned. The wish is father to the thought. It may be true among the ranks of those who have made shipwreck concerning the faith, but it is not true concerning the vast majority of believing people to-day. Therefore despite all the assertions of the Higher Critics we believe in the authority of the Word of God. We do not make the statement ignorantly. Some of us have had to fight through the darkness of unbelief ere we were brought into the blessed sunshine of Jesus Christ. We are there now believing that the Word of God is enthroned by the Son of God, and no puny mortal can dethrone it.

WHAT ARE THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE RESTS? Must we say, as so many say to-day, "You know, those old reasons for believing

the Bible have all been exploded"? Not at all. They are as valid and as valuable as ever.

**I. INSPIRATION.** *We believe the Word of God is our authority because it is inspired of God.* All Scripture is God-breathed. You say, "What do you men by that?" In the words of another, "it is supernatural in source, unerring in truthfulness and comprises words as well as subject matter." You say, "Yes, but that means verbal inspiration." Yes, it means that! And some of us are very indignant at the attempts of men to cloud the issue by suggesting mechanical inspiration. "No educated man any longer believes that the Bible is verbally inspired," we are told. The insinuation is that "education" is somehow an obstacle to faith in this particular doctrine. The insinuation is false. Many intellectual giants in the past believed the Bible to be verbally inspired and many whose educational qualifications are unquestionable still believe it. The doctrine of verbal inspiration must not be confused with the mechanical theory which implies the suppression of the human element altogether. It does imply that the writers of Scripture were so guided by the Holy Spirit in their choice of words that truth was expressed and error avoided. The original manuscripts of the Scriptures were in this sense verbally inspired. The Bible is the result of the supernatural working of God. It is the Word of God. As Dr. Torrey says: "If you have an exact and logical mind, you must take your choice between Verbal Inspiration and bald infidelity." Our mystical friends won't like that, but it is true, nevertheless! What are the proofs of inspiration? They are manifold. They are internal and external. We have time for a few only.

(a) *There is the argument from fulfilled prophecy.* This line of reasoning is at a discount to-day, but its cogency is as great as ever. There is in fulfilled prophecy an unanswerable argument for the Divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. *There are the predictions concerning the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Dr. Pierson says: "There are 333 references to Christ in the Old Testament, cited in the New either as predictions fulfilled or provisions applied to Him." Remember that four hundred years lay between the close of the prophetic period and the birth of our Lord, and you will see the impossibility of these predictions apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. It has been well said that "No amount of captious ingenuity will destroy the substantial fact that the leading features of our Lord's earthly manifestation were announced centuries before He actually came among us."

*There are the predictions concerning the history of the Jews.*

In Deuteronomy, chapter xxviii, you have what has been called an epitome of Jewish history. Looking back from our present day standpoint we are confronted with the stupendous fact that the predictions of Israel's sufferings and dispersion which were given over a thousand years before the events came to pass, have been literally fulfilled. To what conclusion must we come? Surely that such a phenomenon is only to be accounted for on the ground of Divine inspiration. Of course, the critics will tell us that the Book of Deuteronomy was not written by Moses, but that it was written six or seven hundred years after Moses. They say that numerous authors compiled it. When you ask for names they drown you in a flood of anonymity! But this is an "assured result" nevertheless! But, grant, for the sake of argument, that the critics' contention is correct—that still leaves seven hundred years before the dispersion of 70 A.D. We insist therefore on an answer. Where did those unknown writers get that wonderful insight that enabled them to foretell the history of Israel so accurately? It takes more credulity to believe the critics' theories of the book than to believe that Moses wrote it. The Jew to-day is a living witness to the inspiration of the Bible. This book stands with the imprimatur of God upon every page of it.

*Think of the sublimity of its teaching.* Someone said to me, "Have you studied contemporary religion?" Meaning, of course, "Comparative" religion! He said, "You know, other books of the great religious systems of the world are just as wonderful as the Bible." Are they? Have you ever read the grotesque assumptions in those religious books as to the creation of the world? Then turn to the peerless and wonderful Word of God—"In the beginning God created"! The unclean thing can never produce the clean. You can never say that that wonderful account in the first chapter of Genesis came out of the grotesque Babylonian legends. Never! The sublimity of its teaching, the presentation it

gives of the character of God, its morality and its marvellous unity are abiding arguments for the inspiration of the Word of God.

*Think of its indestructible vitality.* Someone has said, "There is only one book that has been really hated." Oh, the malignity that has been heaped upon the Word of God! Think of the persecution and vindictive cruelty that has been manifested towards those who loved it! *This is not such a book as a man would write if he could, nor such a book as a man could write if he would!* It is amazing, this wonderful Word of God! It tells man what he is to his face and makes no apology. You sometimes sit for your photograph and get a proof. Then you get the final article, and as you look at it you say to your friends, "It is splendid! Isn't it like me? It is a living picture." But you know that is not true. There are sundry blotches that some of us carry, but the kind photographer retouches the plate and gives you a nice face. But when the Bible is giving a photograph of humanity it does not obscure the blotches, it indicts men for being sinners. The hatred displayed against the Word of God can be accounted for on the same grounds that explain the world's hatred to the Son of God—"Me it hateth because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil" (John vii., 7). Hated and hounded, persistently persecuted, attacked by all the weapons hellish hate and ingenuity could invent—the Word of God still persists and its propagation is greater than ever. The Reason? It is not the product of dying men. It is instinct with the life of God.

II. AUTHENTICATION. The supreme proof of the inspiration of the Bible is the authentication of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He appealed to Scripture not as illustrative but as authoritative. He always appealed to the Word of God for authority for the settling of questions. The Scripture cannot be broken! He supplements it but never supplants it. He places his hand upon these historic incidents, disputed and denied by the critics, and confirms them. Again and again He speaks of the Scriptures as possessing an unquestionable authority, as constituting a law to which His life, His death and His resurrection could not but conform. He authenticated the Old Testament and pre-authenticated the New. He gave an assurance that His Spirit would be sent to guide His apostles. The critics refuse to bow to the authority of our Lord! In the early days of the German invasion, even advanced critics said, "We do not mean to invalidate the testimony of Jesus Christ." But to-day the situation is quite different. The critics no longer submit to His authority. Invoking the aid of a Kenosis theory, they think to evade the witness of Christ to His Word. Things have come to a pretty pass when men who call themselves Christians sit in judgment on their Lord and Master!

When you have said all you may, legitimately and illegitimately, about the self-emptying of the Lord Jesus Christ, remember that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Remember *bodily*. This is not spoken of the pre-incarnate Christ; this is a statement which covers the incarnation. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and if you invalidate Jesus Christ's testimony then you charge Almighty God with error. Canon Liddon said, "To charge Him with error is to deny that He is God." How foolish it is to say that He was morally infallible but not intellectually so. Unerring wisdom is an attribute of God. Whatever the Lord Jesus Christ laid aside he could not lay aside His attributes, and He never ceased to be, while on earth, anything He had ever been before. He is the Faithful Witness.

Be careful as to how you speak or write of our Blessed Redeemer's person. We have grown accustomed to Modernists talking about the limitations of Jesus, but it is appalling to find those who pose as orthodox lending themselves to this kind of thing. It is folly to say that a true doctrine of Christ's humanity involves the limitation of His knowledge. With Peter we affirm—"Lord, Thou knowest all things" (John xxi., 17). Some have gone too far in their concessions to the other side, and have found themselves false witnesses where the truth is concerned!

III. VERIFICATION. The popular philosophy of the hour is Pragmatism. They judge of a theory as to whether it works. Well, the Bible works! What was it lifted our own land out of the depths of superstition and savagery? You have only to think of our own land when the light of the Gospel broke upon it—its Druidical chants and cruelties, the awful sacrifices of shrieking human victims, to know whether the Bible works or not. And how marvellous are the

annals of missionary work! How great have been the achievements accomplished by those who went forth with the Sword of the Spirit in their hand. The powers of darkness have been defeated, and souls, long captive by Satan's powers, have been set free. Some years ago, as the shades of evening were falling, I stepped off a steamer on to one of the Fiji Islands. As I walked on shore with a friend, we saw the dusky forms of the natives coming towards us, and somewhat alarmed at their appearance I said, "Do you think it safe to go farther?" "Oh, yes," said my friend, "it is all right." Soon we reached a church on a hill, from which sounds of singing came. I could only understand one word of the song, but what a word! "Jesus." Fifty or sixty years ago that land was the habitation of cruelty—the abode of cannibalism. They showed us where the cannibal feasts used to be held, and there are places where the rotting bones of the victims may still be found. What had changed the whole atmosphere and outlook? This Book! Men went forth with the Word of God, and proclaimed its saving truths, and the moral waste began to bud and blossom as the rose. And it is this Book, the Modernists are trying to destroy! What awful insanity indeed! "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the Word which in the Gospel is preached unto you."

"Hammer away ye hostile bands,  
Your hammers break. God's anvil stands!"

### The Jarvis Street Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson XXVIII. October 11th, 1925

#### GOD'S CALL TO THE BACKSLIDER.—Jeremiah, chapter 3.

##### I. How the Love of God Exceeds all Human Love.

In the first four verses of the third chapter Israel's relationship to the Lord is represented under the figure of the relationship of a wife to her husband. A wife's forsaking of her husband is recognized as involving a final separation; and God's people are charged with having had many lovers, "yet return again to me, saith the Lord". He charges that Israel has been unashamed notwithstanding her wickedness. Blessing has been withheld: "The showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain" (v. 3). Notwithstanding, "thou refusedst to be ashamed." The Lord of glory before Whom angels bow, instead of being first and all in all to His people, has been the last; and yet He pleads with them saying, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" (v. 4). So is it still: there is no love like the love of God.

##### II. The Power of an Evil Example is Illustrated in Verses Six to Eleven.

It must be borne in mind that Jeremiah's message was particularly to the people of Judah the southern kingdom which included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as distinguished from Israel with Samaria as its capital, which included the other ten; and in these verses Israel and Judah are compared. The unfaithfulness of Israel and Judah to the Lord is represented under the figure of a breach of the marriage covenant. It is a figure which is used throughout the Bible. It is natural that it should be so, because the Church, composed of all true believers, is described in the New Testament as the Bride of Christ. 1. Israel is represented as having been unfaithful to her vows, and as having sought other lovers; and yet her divine Lord said to her, "after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not" (v. 7). Then the Lord said, "For all these causes I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce." So we should ever remember God will not for ever be content to take the last place. 2. The Lord complains (vs. 7-11) that treacherous Judah had followed the example of "backsliding Israel". How strikingly this principle is illustrated to-day! If only men were spiritually enlightened they could see men reaping what they have sown on every hand. Notwithstanding the example of multitudes of transgressors before them, the experience of

every one proving that the way of the transgressor is hard, men refuse to be warned, and go on still in their iniquity. Verily, nothing but the grace of God within the heart, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, can turn men back again to God.

### III. God's Call to the Backslider, verses 12-25.

The lesson should prove a very useful lesson in all classes, for there is none of us who does not need to confess:

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love."

1. God here announces His willingness to receive His backsliding people (v. 12). How wonderful that notwithstanding all our sin, God should ever be crying to us, "Return"! 2. He sets forth His terms in verse 13: "Only acknowledge thine iniquity," etc. And with this the New Testament agrees,—1st epistle of John, 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," etc. 3. A divine exhortation is contained in verse fourteen, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." God will keep His covenant even when we ignore it. This is the hope of the believer still, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." 4. Verses fourteen to nineteen contain a gracious promise expressive of the determination of grace to bring back the backslider: "Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me." 5. The backslider's confession in response to the divine exhortation is set forth in verses twenty to twenty-five: "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." (v. 22). These verses are suggestive of Peter's confession: "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

### THE EDITOR IN THE WEST.

Dr. Shields left Monday night for Calgary where he will speak at Fundamentalist and Baptist Bible Union meetings, October 1st to 7th, in the Victoria Pavilion. Dr. Shields will return to Toronto Sunday morning, October 11th, in time for his Bible Class at 9.45; he will preach at both services, and, weather permitting, motor to Alton in the afternoon to baptize thirty or more additional candidates, who have been converted under the ministry of Pastors James McGinlay and Gordon Brown.

### BAPTIST BIBLE UNION CONFERENCE AT HAMILTON.

#### Pastors Specially Note.

The table is being prepared for the big spiritual feast at Hamilton, October 13th to 15th. In fact, the good things are so many that the Hamilton table will not hold them all; consequently a double-header will be made with Toronto, and concurrently with the three days' Conference in James Street, Hamilton, a similar Conference will be held in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto. The key-note of the Conference will be "Revival". The Baptist Bible Union recognizes that the mightiest apologetic for Fundamentalism is the manifest power of God resting upon the ministry of the fundamentalists. Every address will be inspirational and constructive, yet without quarter for the Devil and his friends.

Among other speakers will be Dr. J. Frank Norris, Pastor of the largest Baptist church and Sunday School in the world; Dr. W. B. Riley; Dr. T. T. Shields; Pastor James McGinlay; Dr. Oliver W. Van Osdel; Dr. J. W. Gillon, of Kentucky, a warm-hearted Southern preacher whose powerful ministry was signally owned of God in Toronto last summer. Dr. Norris will give his great message on, "Power From On High"; and will also speak on, "The Mission of The Church", and "Institutionalism vs. Evangelism".

Many of our pastors have intimated their intention of being present at this feast. It is expected that hospitality will be furnished by the Hamilton friends for out-of-town visitors. Fuller announcement of this will be made in next week's *Witness*. Meanwhile, pastors and laymen, lay your plans to take in the Baptist Bible Union Conference along with the Baptist Convention which follows.