

A Reply to the Convention Executive Committee

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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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

THE GOSPEL IN RUTH.

The Eighth Lecture of a Series on "How to Study the Bible,"

By Rev. T. T. Shields,

Delivered in Jarvis St. Baptist Church, Toronto, Tuesday Evening, Feb. 27, 1923.

(Stenographically reported.)



OUR one object this evening, as always, must be to find our way to the Lord Jesus Christ. This whole Bible, we have said again and again, is as the King's palace wherein He is pleased to dwell; but we must come to it, not to see the palace, but to have audience with the King Himself. Many of you will remember the almost extravagantly expressed affection for his friend which Tennyson gives us in his immortal "In Memoriam;" and I should like to borrow two or three of his beautiful stanzas to make application of the principle to which I have just referred:

"A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

"He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

"So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not."

Thus, in our study of the Bible, it is only as we find our Beloved, as we find Him at home in these pages, shall we learn to delight ourselves always in the law of the Lord. And if it be that we lose Him, as sometimes we may, we shall do well to emulate the spouse in the inspired Song of Songs. You will remember how she says, "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought

him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them; but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." As we come to any particular passage of Scripture it is well for us to pause on the threshold and to assure ourselves that He is the object of our search, and the desire of our hearts. For when we seek Him in the Word of God with our whole hearts, He will be found of us.

The book of Ruth, like every other book of Scripture, is full of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, it was written for the purpose of introducing us to Him. In the seventeenth verse of the last chapter you have these words: "And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David." And the book closes with a genealogical table, which carries us back to Pharez, the son of Tamar, the son of Judah. The writer to the Hebrews particularly reminds us that it is evident that our Lord came out of Judah, of which Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. And in that great argument for the superiority of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus, the writer makes a special point of the fact that Jesus did not come of the priestly tribe; but for a knowledge of His direct descent from Judah, through his birth of the family of Pharez, we are chiefly indebted to the book of Ruth. Now do not pass over these genealogical tables; do not disregard what seem to be sometimes the drier and less interesting portions of Scripture; for if you examine them carefully you will find that hidden away among almost unpronounceable names, which in places crowd each other like mighty trees of a forest, or like great rocks in a weary land,—hidden away among them you will find some precious nuggets of truth, all of them linking us up in some way or another to our Lord Jesus Christ. The book, then, is a link in the record of the lineage of David's greater Son.

This book must have been written at a time when David had already become famous in Israel; for the outstanding feature of the book is that it is a story of the antecedents of David, the son of Jesse. He was already a conspicuous figure in the history of God's people when this book was written; otherwise his genealogy would not have been of any particular interest. It must have been written at a date long after the events recorded in the book occurred. In the last chapter of the book we are reminded of a custom that had formerly obtained: "Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel." But the practice had fallen into disuse at the time the story was written, and he inserts this explanatory word in order that his readers may understand why Boaz plucked off his shoe. These matters give us some indication of when the book was written; but, while written in David's day, or later, its history, as its opening verse informs us, belongs to the days when the judges ruled. Therefore, you have that problem to solve, as to how the writer obtained his information of that which happened so long before with such wealth of detail; for certainly it could not have been written by one who was a contemporary of the events recorded. The facts probably were obtained, or knowledge of them, from other documents; but the whole story bears unmistakably the stamp of divine inspiration.

The book of Ruth is really one of the most charming idylls to be found in all the realm of literature. If it had been possible to lose this story from the canon of Scripture, and then to have rediscovered it among some old manuscripts, and to have read it asking one's self the question, where did this come from? who wrote it? what is its purpose?—if one were to approach it almost without the assumption of its having a divine origin, there is something about the story itself, its inherent beauty, its intrinsic moral and spiritual worth, which differentiates it from all merely human productions. It seems to me it is impossible to read the story of Ruth without feeling it has its legitimate place in the canon of Scripture. It is beyond any question an integral part of the Word of God.

In passing, I just want incidentally to ask this question, which applies to other portions of Scripture as well as the book of Ruth: what is it that distinguishes the inspired Word from all other books, whether it be Genesis,

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, or any other book—what is it that separates it, and differentiates it from any other kind of literature, which makes you instinctively feel as you read it, this is different from anything to be found in any other book? The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book; but no matter into what language it is translated, it remains the same book of distinction; it stands out a thing apart. It has been translated into languages which have been reduced to writing by the missionaries of the cross. Men have gone into Africa and to other parts of the world among savage tribes, and have spent years picking up words that fell from their lips, and gradually reducing the spoken word to a written language, compiling dictionaries, formulating grammars; and then they have translated the Bible into the speech of the people—in many cases the first book of the language to be so translated, and when it is thus translated, it has the same charm; the same peculiarity; there is something about it that differentiates it from all other literature.

What is that something in the Word of God which no language can disguise, which no idiom can conceal? You have observed that there are some people who seem to look well no matter how they are dressed. I mean some ladies, of course: you do not pay attention to how men are dressed. But there are some ladies who seem to have an air of distinction about them, no matter how they are dressed; whether they are dressed in the fashion or out of the fashion, it makes no difference. You know what I mean? I cannot explain it, but the plainest frock worn by some women seems to be an adornment. Someone remarks (confidentially, to a friend, of course), "I saw Mrs. So-and-So, or Miss So-and-So, with a new dress to-day. I should like to have one like it." But when they get it and put it on they do not like it at all. They think it is the fault of the dress; they wonder what in the world is the matter; they do not understand it. But the intimate friends of that lady whose dress was so attractive say, "You know she can wear anything." I remember my mother, when mildly protesting against the careless disregard of the proprieties by certain people, saying, "They seem to think that anything becomes them." Of course, she was speaking of manners; and it is not true of manners: any sort of manners are not becoming. But it is true in the matter of dress in respect to some people, that almost anything is becoming. I suppose it is because of some distinction of figure, some grace of carriage, an undefinable something that puts music and poetry into every pose and motion; and so the dress instead of being an adornment, is itself adorned by the person who wears it.

Now there is something about the Scripture, there is something within it that gives distinction to the language in which its truth is expressed, no matter what that language may be. It is the beautiful soul of the Scripture itself; it is the divinely revealed purpose of redemption running through every book, and that is so different from anything to be found anywhere else, which gives beauty and grace and glory to the language in which that soul is clothed; it is the thought of God in this Book, and even when clothed in defective human speech, the thought of God is always glorious. The unity of the books of Scripture is both good and pleasant, as when brethren dwell together in unity: "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." The anointing oil anointed the whole person, until the fragrance of the divine approval was shed forth from the whole man. Thus, there is a savor of Christ about the whole Bible: "Thy name—says the spouse in the Song—is as ointment poured forth." Dr. Frost was speaking to us on Sunday morning about Aaron's garments being "for glory and for beauty;" and what the garments of Aaron were to the person of the high-priest, the language of Scripture is to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are but garments "for glory and for beauty;" and it is the Person of Jesus concealed and yet revealed in every page and in every verse of Scripture—the incomparable Saviour, "the chiefest among ten thousand," and the "altogether lovely" Son of God.—It is Jesus in the Bible that makes the Bible different from all other books, and it is the all-persuasive presence of Jesus in the book of Ruth that gives it its chief charm. Thus we turn to this as we turn to the gospel.

How well this story lays the foundation for a revelation of Him Who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "Now it came to pass in the

days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband." What a gloomy story!—famine, poverty, emigration, death, death again, death again: three times the dark angel comes into this home. This is the foundation upon which this marvellous story is based.

She heard "that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread," and she decided to return home again, and her two daughters-in-law went with her. But on the way she bade them return to their people. Orpah kissed her and returned, but Ruth continued with her. What about Ruth? She was the grandmother of David; she was the ancestress of our Lord; her blood was in His veins; behold, she was a woman of Moab, outside the pale of Israel; she was a Moabite, and the Moabites had given the people of Israel no reason to be kindly disposed toward them: a woman of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and yet she shows a particular quality that is to find its highest exemplification in her glorious Son Who is to come in the dim and distant future. "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods," said Naomi to Ruth, "return thou after thy sister-in-law." And where will you find anywhere outside of the Bible a passage like this? Oh, the music of it! You know they say that if you pick up a shell from the sea-shore and put it to your ear you can hear the sea roaring. They used to tell me that when I was a child. The echo of the music in which it was born is still within. And this is a little bit of heaven let down to earth, and if you put it to your ear you can catch the echo of the song of the redeemed, the mighty holy Hallelujahs of the sky: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." There is a suggestion, a promise and prophesy of One Who shall be still more constant, and Who will never leave nor forsake those whom He loves.

I rejoice to remember that Ruth was a Moabite; and if you go back over the long line of our Lord's genealogy you will find not only the name of Ruth the Moabite, but of Rahab the harlot, and Tamar as well: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was made like unto His brethren; He was one with us; He stooped to the lowest depths; He made Himself of no reputation; He came to give hope to every sinner. Yet, here, by divine grace, you have the very noblest virtue shining out of the character of the Moabite: touched by Israel's God and by the grace of His Spirit, she had evidently been made other than she was by nature. And the tie which bound her to Naomi was fundamentally a religious tie; for she said, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

"Ah grace! into unlikeliest hearts,
It is Thy boast to come;
The glory of Thy light to find
In darkest spots a home!"

Last week I spoke about the book of Judges as a book of providence; so is this; and so is every book of the Bible. When Naomi, after her absence of ten years, returned to Beth-lehem, the people gathered about and they said, "Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing

the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest." "How many people there are who talk like that!—"the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." They would change their name, and yet

"The threads our hands in blindness spin
No self-determined plan weaves in:
The shuttle of the unseen powers
Works out a pattern not as ours."

"I went out full," she said, "and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." No, she came back again with Ruth, and she was to discover that she had found her fortune after all in the land of Moab. Thus the Lord blesses His people, and brings His purposes of grace to pass.

In the second chapter you will find that Ruth's poverty sends her forth to glean after the reapers. And let me pause here to say that for some reason known only to Himself God's purposes of grace seem to have run very largely through the lives of poor people. Abraham was not a rich man until God made him so. When Jacob went away from home he had nothing, but when he came back he confessed "with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." When Joseph went away from home he not only had nothing, he was nothing; he was sold for silver; and yet God brought him to the throne. Moses became rich because he was brought up in the house of Pharaoh's daughter; but it was not until he became poor that God could do anything with him; and he is noted in this record as having esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." And so on all the way down through the Book. And when Jesus would establish His Church upon earth, He did not do like they do nowadays: if the church of to-day wants to do some great thing, its leaders have a luncheon down town, and they invite the rich men of the city to come together, and they say a lot of complimentary things to each other and talk about the big thing that they are going to 'put over.' They think that that is doing the Lord's work. That is not how God does His work; it is not how He did it in the beginning; it is not how He does it now: He chose the poorest people. The first great preacher, the Pentecostal preacher, had to say, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee." All through the New Testament you will find it true; and down through the history of the Christian Church God has for His own wise reasons taken the "things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." And here is a woman who is immortalized by having her name written upon the pages of "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," who was so poor that she had to go out into the field to glean after the reapers. Therefore, if we are poor to-night we must not be discouraged; and in the spiritual sense it is not until we know that we are poor that we ever become rich; it is not until we become empty that we are really filled. "I went out full," said Naomi, "and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." It is not until we are helpless in ourselves that God is able to bless us.

And Ruth went to glean after the reapers, "and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz." Well, what do you mean by 'happen'? If you mean chance, then it is not true; if you mean that you did not know the purpose behind that ordinary occurrence, then your language is permissible. Ruth little knew what was in that apparent happening when she came upon the field of Boaz. Thus, dear friends, God leads His elect to-day. You know the sweet story of how Boaz came into the field and said unto the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" And they said, "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab." Then Boaz began to take an interest in her, and he said to the reapers, "Do not forbid her; let her follow after you; and do not clean up the fields too closely where she is gleaning; but let fall some of the handfuls of purpose for her." And to Ruth he said, "It hath fully been shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband. . . . The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou

art come to trust." Boaz knew why she had come, that she had come to trust under the shadow of God's wings. By the way, when you read those stories, supposed to be funny stories, about the impossibility of getting along with a mother-in-law, read this inspired story; for there are mothers-in-law and mothers-in-law; and there are daughters-in-law and daughters-in-law; and if a mother-in-law cannot get along with her daughter-in-law, let them both trust under the shadow of God's wings, and they will both be happy there.

How full of human nature this story is, and yet how full, too, of divine inspiration: "And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed." And coming home her mother-in-law said unto her, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" Ruth in sincerity told the story: "I went out to glean and I just happened to get into the field of a man called Boaz." "Boaz?" said Naomi, "why he is one of our next kinsmen." "Yes," said Ruth, "and he told me that I was not to go in any other field, but that I was to keep fast by his reapers until the end of barley harvest." "And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field." When Boaz reached her the parched corn she ate and was sufficed. And when our Boaz gives us a dainty bit, as we sit down under His shadow and find His fruit sweet unto our taste, there is a flavor, there is a something about the meal that He provides which cannot be found anywhere else. It is a blessed thing to learn the secret of shutting yourself up to the fields of Boaz, and taking the good sound, sane advice of Naomi, "Let them meet thee not in any other field. Let it be Boaz or nobody."

We are now come to the third chapter, and I confess it is an extraordinary chapter: it tells the story of the courtship of Boaz and Ruth. I suppose some people would regard the story as unique; they would say it is different from all other stories of courtship. It is, of course, an old world story; but the outstanding characteristic of it, and that which makes it so different from any other story of courtship that ever was known is that the woman helped a little! You see that, don't you? She did not leave it all to Boaz to do; she did a little herself. Of course, in real life they never do that! They are such elusive creatures! That is one interpretation; but may there not be another? I wonder if it means this: that the Bible is after all the one book in the world that is a perfect mirror of human nature, and tells the truth about things; and that it is brave enough to tell the truth even about this?

That is the human side of it, but think of the spiritual application. The Lover of our souls will forgive us if we make love to Him; He will forgive us if we seek Him, when we know that He is seeking us; He will forgive us if we make a ready and willing and hearty response to the appeal of His affection: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face: my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." There is a mutuality about the relationship of the soul to Christ after all. O yes, I believe that salvation is of grace, I believe in God's sovereign electing love; but I believe the love of our Boaz is so wonderful that He has a way of wooing us and winning us in spite of ourselves, so that we become His willing slaves:

For, ah, the Master is so fair,
 So sweet His smile on banished men
 That they who meet Him unaware
 Can never rest on earth again.
 And they who see Him risen, afar,
 On God's right hand to welcome them,
 Forgetful stand of home and land
 Desiring fair Jerusalem.

This story, as far as we have gone to this third chapter, provides a very striking illustration of what constitutes true faith. Faith, after all, is not a product of reason. Faith is a divine intuition; it is a spiritual instinct; it is something that is born in us by the Spirit of God. Yes, the Lord said, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib—speaking of the people in a state of apostasy—but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." But the soul that is really born of the Spirit of God has a kind of extra sense,

analogous to the feminine sense in the material realm. Psychologically, it is a fact that women are different from men. Very few women reason. Now do not be offended by my saying that. It is true. A great many men do not reason either; but very few women reason. They do not count things up like men do; they are a sort of ready reckoner; they get the result by some mysterious means that no one on earth can explain. You ask a woman her reason for doing a certain thing, and she will generally answer, "Because,"—"Because—" with a dash after it, because nobody knows why, and she doesn't either. But in her judgment of many things she is right; she leaps to a conclusion while her slow, plodding, husband lumbers along behind her, reasoning his way through. It is instinctive with a child to trust its father or mother. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Spiritual faith, that out-going of the soul which understands God and which lays hold of God, is something that is begotten within us by the Holy Ghost, that is not natural at all. He has put His Spirit in our hearts teaching us to cry "Abba Father." We call Him Father: we know He is our Father because His Spirit is within us.

Now Naomi had been away a long time, but when she came back, and when she heard that Boaz had taken knowledge of her daughter-in-law, that he had sent her home laden with barley, and that he had let fall also some handfuls of purpose for her, she said instinctively—if I may paraphrase her saying,—"Now give him his full opportunity; do not go in any other field to glean; you depend absolutely upon him. He is our near kinsman, and I feel that he has a great heart and a purpose of love concerning you." Then in the third chapter when Ruth came home and told her how Boaz had spoken to her, Naomi uttered these wonderful words: "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day: I think I know Boaz, and having begun the thing he will finish it. I believe that he will make it his main business, and that he will do nothing else until he has fulfilled his purpose respecting you. You just wait and trust him."

Is not that the attitude of soul that we ought always to assume toward our Beloved? "Sit still, my soul, until thou know how the matter will fall: for your Redeemer will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day." He will save us; He will save us for ever! By a spiritual instinct we know the divine Bridegroom will never be charged with breach of promise. The Marriage of the Lamb will certainly come, and at His appointed hour it will be said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

The last chapter is full of interest. Boaz tells Ruth in the third chapter that while he is a near kinsman, he is not the nearest kinsman. He said, "There is another nearer than I, and I shall have to give him his opportunity according to law. I shall have to give him his chance to redeem his inheritance if he wants to. And then if he does not redeem it, I will redeem it. I will stand back, and I will see if there is any other eye to pity, if there is any other arm to save; and if there be not, then mine own eye shall pity, and mine own arm shall bring salvation."

Do you see the analogy? O no! Jesus was not our kinsman; He was not our next of kin: He became our kinsman in order that He might have a right to redeem. He gave the first Adam his full chance, and he failed:

"O loving wisdom of our God,
When all was sin and shame;
A second Adam to the fight,
And to the rescue came.

"O wisest love that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fall,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail."

"Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they

sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest, the field of the land of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." Do you see?—he had to take Ruth along—not only the farm but somebody with it: that was quite another story, wasn't it? "And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it." Then follows the passage I quoted: "Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses."

So Boaz played the part of the redeemer: he paid the price because there was none other to perform a kinsman's part. Thus are we redeemed by the precious blood of Christ in the presence of witnesses. If I had time to draw the veil and project this passage back to the foundation of things, we should find that long ago Jesus entered into an engagement,—“the mediator of the new covenant,” “the Lamb slain—as we have seen in other lectures—from the foundation of the world”—and Jesus entered into an engagement to purchase a Bride. Somebody asked me the other day what I thought was the meaning of the parable of the merchant man “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Does the merchant represent a soul seeking salvation? I think not. Our glorious Lord Jesus is the merchant man who went seeking goodly pearls, and His heart discerned His Ruth, a pearl of great price—the Church which He would make His bride; and in order that He might have it He sold all that He had and bought it. Jesus invested His all upon Calvary; He purchased His bride with His heart's blood. What Naomi said Boaz would do, our Boaz accomplished. He was never in rest, until He cried, “It is finished.”

And so does our Lord Jesus choose His Bride from among the aliens. Oh, how wonderful that is! “Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife”—a widowed soul, he enriched with all the wealth of his great affection, and of his great estate; the one from whom all hope had departed hoped again. Ruth became the grandmother of David, and was given a place in the honoured list of the ancestors of our Lord. O marvel of grace! That He should love one whose affection the world, and the flesh, have engaged.

I have made only the barest suggestions to you to-night; but I wish you would take the book of Ruth and read it over, and over, and over again, until you see Jesus on every page of it. It will help you to sing still more heartily.

“O Christ, He is the Fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above:
There, to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

“O I am my Beloved's
And my Beloved is mine!

He brings a poor vile sinner
 Into His house of wine:
 I stand upon His merit,
 I know no other stand,
 Not e'en where glory dwelleth
 In Immanuel's land."

May He help us to love Him more and more for His Name's sake.

AN OPEN LETTER.

To the Chancellor, the Faculty and Members of the Governing Bodies of McMaster University, the Secretary of The Foreign Mission Board, and Any and All Other Baptists Who Take McMaster's Side in the Present Controversy.

Dear Brethren:

From time to time it has been reported to me that certain officials of McMaster University, and others who defend her present course, in private conversation, and in other ways, have charged and do now charge me, as Editor of *The Gospel Witness*, with writing and printing that which is not true respecting McMaster University. Only last week a Baptist minister called to see me and told me of one who described me with the ugly word "har".

I have been aware that this campaign by which I am privily slandered with the tongue has been carried on for some years. For years McMaster has refused to meet the issue of Modernism, and has defended herself against her critics by thus besmirching the characters of those who witness against her. By the method above referred to I have been represented before thousands in the Denomination as a man whose word on any subject cannot be believed.

I am not concerned about my own reputation. The one who believes an evil report which is untrue about another, injures himself rather than the person slandered; but I am concerned for the interests of the Gospel for which, in this matter, I have endeavoured to bear my humble testimony.

Fortunately, my Sunday sermons are reported, and one a week is printed; and I understand that the charge of deliberate and wilful untruthfulness is laid against that which appears in the pages of *The Gospel Witness*. My opponents therefore have the advantage over me in this, that my alleged untruthful utterances or writings are on record. If it be a fact that *The Gospel Witness* is a false witness, it ought to be possible to prove its falsity.

The churches of our Denomination have been brought into a deplorably divided state. The controversy has been carried into every church.

I submit if my testimony respecting McMaster be true, it ought to be heeded by our people. If it be not true, and I be, as is alleged, a false witness, and a wilful and wicked disturber of the Denomination's peace, I ought to be silenced. I therefore issue to you the following challenge:

I challenge you individually and collectively to a public debate in Massey Hall or other suitable public building on the question of whether or not *The Gospel Witness* has been guilty of deliberate falsification as has been alleged. I will meet you one at a time or all together, and afford you the fullest opportunity to prove your charges of false witness, and thus to inflict on me the most terrible humiliation to which a public man was ever subjected.

My only stipulations are: (1) That I be furnished at least one week in advance with a copy of the charges you will attempt to prove, that I may have opportunity to have ready to my hand such documentary and other evidence as may be necessary to the defense of my case; and (2) That a complete record of the discussion be made; and (3) That an absolutely impartial presiding officer shall be in the chair.

By this means the present controversy can quickly be terminated. I affirm that the testimony respecting McMaster University published in *The Gospel Witness* is true. I challenge you one and all in the public way I have named to prove to the contrary. If this challenge is unheeded, the public will draw its own conclusions.

Awaiting your reply, I am,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) THOMAS T. SHIELDS.

Editorial

(Editorial Note.—The following article is taken from a booklet which is being mailed this week to thousands of Baptists in Ontario and Quebec with the official Call for a Conference on the present Convention situation, to be held in Jarvis St. Church, April 22 to 24. It is printed here by permission of the Conference Committee of which Dr. A. T. Sowerby is Chairman and Rev. W. J. H. Brown is Secretary.)

A REPLY

To a Circular Issued by the Executive of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, signed by J. H. Farmer, President; C. E. MacLeod, Secretary; and dated March 19th, 1926.

Dear Brother:

We have before us copy of the circular named above, to which we beg leave to reply.

Before dealing with the reasons for calling this Conference we would reply to the paragraph which states "that only such as are committed to the Baptist Bible Union and its programme are expected to attend." The reason for attaching certain conditions to the invitation is perfectly obvious. Such a Conference can only be made possible by the provision of free entertainment in Toronto. We know that a general open invitation would be sure to be responded to by the champions of the present course of McMaster; and it would be impossible for the few churches who will undertake the task of billeting the delegates, to provide accommodation for more than a limited number. Furthermore, it would not seem just or reasonable that we should open our homes to those who are already irrevocably committed to the present programme of the University. The purpose of the Conference is to organize an Ontario and Quebec Branch of the Baptist Bible Union.

We desire, however, to make it perfectly plain that the Baptist Bible Union is merely an organization of old-fashioned Baptists banded together for the defense of the Bible as the Word of God. It asks its members to assume no obligation beyond the acceptance of the principles of its Confession of Faith. The Confession of Faith is a modified form of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, changed chiefly in this particular, that it states each doctrine negatively as well as positively: that is to say, what we do not believe as well as what we believe; and this is designed to protect the organization against some who might join the Union to destroy it. There is nothing in the Baptist Bible Union Confession of Faith with which any Baptist who is not a modernist cannot agree. A false statement was set in circulation from the beginning of the Bible Union's existence to the effect that it was an organization for the propagation of premillennialism: the fact is, the millennial question is not made a test of fellowship. While many, and perhaps the majority, of the members of the Baptist Bible Union are premillennialists, there are some members who are not; and the Bible Union, as an organization, while believing that the second, personal, coming of Christ is just as much a fundamental of the faith as His first coming, refuses absolutely to make the millennial question an issue. The reason for limiting attendance at the Conference to those who would join the Baptist Bible Union was to protect the Conference against the possibility of attendance at the Conference of many who would come to defend the modernistic programme of McMaster; but lest it should appear that the promotion of the interests of the Baptist Bible Union is the end of the Conference, the Committee have decided to widen the invitation to include all Baptists who will declare their opposition to McMaster's present course, whether they are ready to join the Baptist Bible Union or not. The Conference therefore will be open to all who will do one of two things: either sign an application form seeking and accepting membership in the Baptist Bible Union; or (2) sign a simple declaration of belief in the Bible as the Word of God, and readiness to oppose the present course of McMaster University.

The next paragraph suggests there is grave danger implied in the fact that the communication referred to was not sent to all the pastors. The communication will be sent to every pastor, and to every Sunday School Superintendent, and to every church clerk, and to every other Baptist in the Ontario

and Quebec Convention whose name we are able to obtain. The first letter was sent to a limited number asking them if they were willing to set their signatures to the call.

In the Executive's circular the question is asked, "Why should Church officers be approached where the pastor is believed not to be in sympathy with the movement?" The answer is perfectly plain. We are facing tremendous issues. The foundations of evangelical faith are at stake, the Denomination has come to the cross-roads; and we are compelled to decide whether we will consent to the Baptists of Ontario and Quebec going the way of so many other denominations and enter through the gate of Modernism on the high-road of Unitarianism and Agnosticism; or whether we will stand together for the faith. It is an undoubted fact that some of our pastors are under the thumb of McMaster University, and many who are perfectly sound in the faith are afraid to take any action of which McMaster would disapprove. Without apology we declare that much as we desire to promote the spiritual unity of every individual Baptist church, much as we love the aggregation of Baptist churches known as the Baptist Convention, and greatly as we value McMaster University as having in it great possibilities of usefulness to the churches and to the Convention; we hereby declare that we put loyalty to Jesus Christ, to the Word of God, to the truth of the gospel, before all else.

The circular to which we here reply enquires, "Is not the evident purpose and the inevitable result of this propaganda to divide our churches? The Baptist Bible Union in its spirit and history is a divisive movement, notwithstanding its claim to the contrary." To this we reply: The majority of our churches are already divided on this issue—and the Baptist Bible Union has had nothing to do with it. McMaster University is responsible for the division. For years it has persistently endeavoured, by one means or another, to impose the doctrines of Modernism upon our churches. Some of us have done our utmost to stand against this effort. McMaster University has carried the war to the churches; and as letters which are reaching us from all over the Convention abundantly prove, the churches are already divided, except where they are united in opposition to McMaster.

So far as the Baptist Bible Union is concerned it is a defensive force, organized to contend for the faith. It neither designs nor desires to cause division, except as absolute loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God may cause division. The Baptist Bible Union, however, is prepared to stand to the death, if need be, in defence of the Bible as the Word of God. If that causes division, then division must come, whether through the Bible Union or some other organization. The fact is, the gospel is a divisive force: it has always produced separation. Wherever Jesus Himself spoke in the days of His flesh, there was a division among the people. The truth is, the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the great Divider; and some day He will separate between men as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. The unity of our Convention is greatly to be desired; but it can never be obtained at the cost of the surrender of the vital principles of our Christian faith.

Further objection is raised to such an organization as is proposed on the ground that "through the existence of a branch of the Bible Union an endeavour is being made already to assure a body of delegates from our churches who will stand together in our Annual Associations and Convention in support of any resolution the Baptist Bible Union group may desire to bring before the body." What if this were literally true? The object of the Baptist Bible Union is to stand for the Bible as the Word of God. Could there be any special wrong in a company of Baptists agreeing to stand together in Associations and Convention in support of that principle?

But it is objected further: "This destroys the very character of the Convention as a representative and deliberative body. We would no longer be meeting together as brethren under the Lordship of Christ for mutual counsel", etc. We are tempted to the use of strong adjectives. Assuming such an organization within the Convention as is proposed, to be the only one, does it necessarily follow that we should cease to be brethren meeting "under the Lordship of Christ"? Do the gentlemen who oppose us in this controversy claim to be the only ones who recognize Jesus as Lord? Would such an organization

necessarily imply that the delegates belonging to it would be "already pledged before discussion"? There are parties in most deliberative assemblies, as for instance in the House of Commons. But the fact that a man is a member of the Liberal or Conservative organization does not lessen the value of parliamentary discussion. Because a man is a Liberal or Conservative, it does not necessarily follow that he is "already pledged before discussion". It does follow that such parties stand for certain principles, and they are already "pledged" to be loyal to those fundamental principles; and they judge the value of the discussion in the light of those principles. Just so, members of the Baptist Bible Union would go to Convention already "pledged" to be absolutely loyal to the Bible as the Word of God; and only such arguments as are designed to destroy faith in the Bible as the Word of God would be "wasted" on members of the Baptist Bible Union.

But we would remind our readers that we already have intra-Convention organizations. Why did not the Executive protest against the special meeting of the Alumni Association of McMaster, many of whose members are not even Baptists? Why does not the Executive object to the meeting of the Alumni Association at Convention time? Or, let us consider the perfectly legitimate procedure of the various Boards. Do not the Executives of the various Boards prepare their reports for Convention and have the Boards endorse them? And do not the Boards come to the Convention with their recommendations, their minds being already made up as to what is the wisest course to pursue? And do they not endeavour, by argument, to persuade their fellow-delegates to adopt their policies? Surely there is no objection to these procedures. Does the fact that a cabinet prepares the government measures that are submitted to the House of Commons in advance, render parliamentary discussion useless? Did not McMaster University, as an organization within the Convention, come to the Convention in London determined to carry through its programme, and if possible to secure from the Convention an endorsement of its action in honouring Dr. Faunce? Did not the Dean in Theology, Dr. Farmer, who is now President of the Convention, and who signs the circular which we here criticize, as well as the Chancellor and other members of the Board and Senate, fight to the very last ditch to secure such an endorsement? But surely the discussion was not wasted on them!—for well on toward midnight the Chancellor of the University, with the consent of the Dean in Theology who was a member of the Committee preparing the resolution, had seen such light that he seconded a resolution which was moved by the Editor of *The Gospel Witness*, deploring the University's action in honouring Dr. Faunce, and instructing the University to avoid its repetition. If the Convention has an organization to promote the interests of Education, another the interests of Home Missions, another of Foreign Missions, another of Publication, another of Sunday School, what reasonable objection can there be raised to an organization within the Convention dedicated to the support of the principle that the Bible is the Word of God?

The writers of this article are not concerned with the defense of the Editor of *The Gospel Witness*. But all the Denomination has had a stenographic report of the Educational Session of the Convention at Hamilton; and we are bound to say that so far as we are aware no spirit of unfairness on the part of the Editor of *The Witness* was exposed at Hamilton. On the contrary, we believe the whole Denomination owes a great debt to *The Gospel Witness*, for without it the Denomination would never have known of the now open attempt to deliver the Denomination into the hands of Modernism.

Our sense of humour provokes a smile at such words as these: "We, as well as those attacked, have been reluctant to go into print." What are the facts? Until compelled by the rising tide of indignation following the London Convention the columns of *The Canadian Baptist* were closed to all but the apologists for McMaster; and for one solid year the advocates of the present principle poured their "propaganda" into our churches through *The Canadian Baptist*. It is true that since the Hamilton Convention the Editor of *The Canadian Baptist* has published letters on both sides of this controversy; but unless we are greatly mistaken, the President of the Convention has been going into print through the editorial columns of *The Canadian Baptist* very frequently,—certainly the majority of the editorials were not written by the

Editor—and ever since the Hamilton Convention Marshallism and Farmerism have been going into print every week in The Canadian Baptist.

Furthermore, our churches have been flooded with copies of the McMaster Graduate, and of Professor Marshall's sermon preached in Walmer Road, and alleged to have been published by authority of the Senate of McMaster. And Dr. Farmer here says that he has been "reluctant to go into print," when he knows very well that either personally, or through his aides, he has been going into print ever since the Hamilton Convention. It is about time the Denomination demanded some appearance of sincerity and frankness on the part of its officials.

On the last page of the circular under review Dean Farmer, as the mouth-piece of the Executive, says: "There is undoubtedly some difference among us regarding the theory of inspiration, but absolutely none regarding the fact of inspiration and the authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice." So far as we are aware there has been no discussion in this controversy about any particular theory of inspiration: the whole discussion has been about the fact.

We print with this reply, among other things, the statement made by certain students of McMaster University respecting Professor Marshall's acknowledged attitude toward the Bible. When a professor says that if science should contradict the Bible, he would choose science before the Bible, his statement implicitly denies the "fact" of inspiration, not any particular theory of it. When the same professor declares that anyone believing in the literal historicity of the book of Jonah would be regarded in England as an "uneducated fool," and of course in that remark implies that such in one would be so regarded by the professor himself, he does not reflect merely upon any particular theory of the inspiration of Scripture, but actually denies the infallibility and therefore the authority of Jesus Christ Himself.

When the Chancellor of the University, "reluctant to go into print," occupies practically an entire page of The Canadian Baptist in defending Professor Marshall's views of the allegorical character of Jonah as against its historicity, he does not question any theory of inspiration: he, too, denies the infallibility and authority of Christ.

For those whose view of the Bible allows them to say that where the Bible and science conflict, they would put science before the Bible; or who deny the historicity of the book of Jonah, and thus reject the testimony of Christ to that particular scripture, thus implicitly denying His infallibility,—for such to talk about the "Lordship of Christ" we believe is sheer nonsense; and we believe many of our readers would call such an attitude hypocritical.

Furthermore, with Professor Marshall's sermons before us it is simply not true to say that we are agreed "on the fundamentals of the faith and the requirements of the University Charter."

Dean Farmer further says: "Such a course as is being suggested by the minority would substitute force for persuasion. This tends to drive liberty-loving men into the camps of the extremists and defeat the very purpose which it professes to serve." This attitude is characteristic of Dean Farmer himself. At the Hamilton Convention he complained of the spirit of his opponents, and said, "I tell you that kind of thing does not encourage one to be too orthodox." This, being interpreted, means that when Dr. Farmer and his associates are opposed in their programme, and conceive a bitter hatred for those who thus oppose them, their hatred of their opponents will be a mightier factor in determining their course than their love of the truth; and in the name of liberty they will allow themselves to be driven "into the camps of the extremists".

CONFERENCE PROGRAM OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION OF NORTH AMERICA.

To be held in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Tuesday, April 22nd, to Saturday, April 24th, for the purpose of organizing an Ontario and Quebec branch.
April 22—3 to 5.30 p.m., Prayer; 7.30, Prayer in Church Parlour; 8.00, Public address.

April 23—9.30 to 10.30 a.m., Prayer; 10.30 to 12, Conference on present Convention situation; Address by Rev. W. Atkinson on "The Evidences of

Professor Marshall's Modernism"; Address by Rev. C. J. Loney, Hamilton, on "The University's Support of Professor Marshall's Position"; Address by Mr. Thomas Urquhart on "McMaster's Control of Denominational Boards"; 2 p.m., Address by Rev. A. P. Wilson on "Do we need an organization within the Convention to combat Modernism." Address by Rev. John Doods on "Is the Baptist Bible Union the organization we need?" 7.30 p.m., Prayer; 8 p.m., Public Meeting.

Saturday is left open for the expansion of this program if found necessary. It is expected that one of the world famous Baptist speakers who will attend the World's Christian Fundamentals Conference, April 25 to May 2nd, will speak each evening, Thursday to Saturday. Fuller announcement will be made later.

CONSTRUCTION AND DESTRUCTION.

The Canadian Baptist contains the following paragraph which was well worth reprinting:

Construction is far more costly in time, money and intellect than destruction. The construction of the Lusitania cost \$3,000,000. The destruction cost \$1,400 for one torpedo. It took three years to build the ship. It took three minutes to destroy it. The ship was 900 feet long. The torpedo was 14 feet long. A fool can tear up that which it takes the wisest man in the country to build.—Selected.

The fathers of the Baptist denomination in Canada wrought heroically and sacrificially to lay the foundations of Evangelical Faith as interpreted by Baptists. In the department of education "Fyfe" is the outstanding name among the pioneers; the financial foundation of our educational work was laid by that splendid Baptist, the late Senator McMaster. But much that these men believed and taught is now denied by the university that bears McMaster's name. It is true that the Chancellor and the Deans, with Professor Marshall to assist them, can destroy in a few years what it took a half century to construct. There is no doubt whatever that McMaster University, if permitted to continue its present course for five or ten years more, would utterly destroy the Baptist denomination.

THE STUDENTS' PROTEST.

Chancellor Whidden makes another weighty statement in the editorial columns of *The Canadian Baptist*—by the way, has *The Canadian Baptist* an Editor, or is the paper the megaphone-boy of McMaster? The Chancellor raises the question of the accuracy of the students' statement that the protest represented thirty-eight per cent. of the ministerial students of McMaster. We would like to know upon what records the Chancellor is depending? We do not believe he will be bold enough to say that the ninety-seven whom he quotes are actually accredited ministerial students having been given standing by the Ministerial Committee.

The paternal air which the Chancellor assumes is positively amusing. He is not at the moment concerned as to "whether or not they had the right to prepare and sign such a document". We thought McMaster boasted of "Baptist Liberty"! And "they should have first consulted with some of their older brethren"—but why discuss it? We do not want to be sarcastic; but we do respectfully suggest that the Chancellor should get somebody to write his letters for him. If he does not, McMaster will soon be known as "The McMaster Kindergarten" instead of University.

WANT OF SPACE.

Piles of material which we should like to have printed in this issue will have to be spread over several issues of the future.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. 1.

T. T. SHIELDS, EDITOR

No. 2

Lesson 4

SECOND QUARTER

Apr. 25, 1926.

Application for entry as second-class matter is pending.

THE GREAT CONFESSION.

LESSON TEXT: Sixteenth chapter of Matthew.

To be studied in harmony with the lesson text: Mark 8:11-38; 9:1.

Luka 9:18-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35).

I. THE UNBELIEF THAT ASKS A SIGN.

1. Sometimes even believers ask a sign. The nobleman of Capernaum (John 4:46-54) came to Jesus in a sign-seeking attitude. In all such cases, though, there may be an element of faith, it is ever mixed with doubt. The nobleman referred to, lost his desire for a sign in the presence of the Person of Christ; coming to know him personally, he was able to trust His simple Word. 2. The case before us is one of positive unbelief. The Pharisees came seeking a sign. Underlying such a demand, there is always a purpose of self-justification—a disposition to condition faith upon a sign which is but another way of refusing to believe, by insisting that sight be substituted for faith. There is much in our day that masquerades in the robes of a superior spirituality; and insists that faith is always accompanied by certain signs and wonders,—such as, healing, and speaking with tongues. In many cases this attitude of mind reveals not faith but unbelief. 3. In the physical realm there are signs for those who have eyes to see. But what are the signs discernible "in the face of the sky"? What is the redness of the sky? It is a sign only in the sense that it is the first evidence of a change of weather, effected by a meteorological law. So in the spiritual realm, there are signs for seeing eyes. It must ever be remembered that spiritual realities can be discerned only by a spiritual faculty. When men ask for a physical sign of a spiritual law, they ask that the spiritual realm should be physically discerned. 4. The one all-comprehending sign is the sign of the prophet Jonas. We hear much about the Book of Jonah, as to whether it is history or mere allegory. It is well to remember the large place Christ gave it in His teaching. Jonah was a type of Christ. In a figure, he died and was buried and rose again; and it was to the testimony of one who spoke in the power of a resurrection, the Ninevites gave heed. And we have our Lord's authority for regarding this as a type of His own death and resurrection. He declares that this combination of physical and spiritual realities, this union of physical and spiritual powers, is the only sign that shall be given. The death and resurrection of Christ is the supreme manifestation of (1) sin at its worst, finishing its work at the place of a skull,—when it is finished bringing forth death; (2) of judgment upon sin as inevitable, inasmuch as even Jesus Himself did not escape when He stood in our place; (3) and of grace and power abounding in resurrection. 5. Hence the one and only foundation is the truth of a crucified and risen Saviour. Beyond this revelation of God, true faith will ask no "sign".

II. A REASON FOR SPIRITUAL MISUNDERSTANDING.

We have here an interesting psychological study. 1. The disciples had forgotten to take bread. One may forget. In this instance, preoccupation with spiritual matters may well have been the cause. 2. But any consciousness of failure anticipates rebuke. It is when our hearts condemn us not that we have confidence toward God. 3. The mere mention of "leaven" reminded them of their neglect. When Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees", they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread". Thus it appears that it is with the heart man understands as well as believes. In the consciousness of failure, we all are super-sensitive to the point of misunderstanding the very Word of God. 4. It would appear, however, that the disciples' forgetfulness in this instance was unblameworthy; for it is evident Christ did not intend in what He said to rebuke them. 5. Our Lord Himself implies that true faith will trust God for the relief of our infirmities as well as for the forgiveness of our faults. For He surely means to suggest that, notwithstanding they were without bread because they had forgotten to take it, He was able to supply their lack. Thus at bottom faith after all is but a recognition of the grace of God; and that the blessings of God come to us wholly because He is gracious and never because we deserve them. 6. We have also here the great truth set forth that faith should grow with our experience of the Divine faithfulness. Christ says, "Oh, ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?" (vss. 8-11.) "Why is it that you have not become stronger in faith by past experiences?" Long before David had profited by this principle when he argued with Saul that, inasmuch as God had delivered him from the lion and the bear, He would also deliver him from the Philistine (I Sam. 17:34-37). 7. By the leaven of the Pharisees, Christ intended the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Our readers will remember our discussion of the parable of the leaven three lessons back. It is certain that evil doctrine works like leaven; but we may also remember that in the parable of the tares, the children of the Kingdom and the children of the wicked one, were set forth under the same figure,—both were seed which had been sown in the field. Thus the principle of the operation of leaven may be used to illustrate the spread of either good or evil. 8. What were the principal ingredients of this leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (1) The Pharisees were positive in their teaching; and their dependence was wholly upon human works, upon human merit; their religion was a religion of self-righteousness, which consisted in the mere externals of life. (2) The Sadducees were the ancient materialists. They denied that there could be any resurrection; and said that there was neither angel nor spirit. They were naturalists, and therefore materialists, too. And though Pharisees and Sadducees differed from each other in their theories of life, yet they made common cause against Christ. Here, perhaps, we have an interesting psychological explanation of strange things witnessed in our day; namely, of men who are theoretically orthodox, but who always take the side of those who openly avow their disbelief in the supernatural. We shall

do well to heed the Saviour's admonition, and beware of the leaven of the modern Pharisees and Sadducees.

III. PETER'S GREAT CONFESSION.

1. The uniqueness of Christ is revealed in the fact that we discern no inappropriateness in His asking so strange a question respecting Himself: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Such a question on the lips of any other man respecting himself would have marked him as an intolerable egotist; yet instinctively we feel that in this question concerning Himself Christ goes to the heart of every problem of life, for this question goes to the heart of His whole mission: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" 2. The views which others entertain of Christ are interesting. What other people say of Christ may perhaps be a legitimate subject of study. 3. But it is our personal conviction which determines character and destiny. "Whom say ye that I am?" Here is an opportunity for the teacher to make the lesson very personal by demanding of their scholars an answer to that question: What have you to say of Christ? What is He to you? 4. Peter gives the only possible answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." For proof of this, we may refer to His miraculous birth attended by so many manifestations of the supernatural; to His sinless life, which was a proof of His supernatural birth; to the miraculous powers He exercised throughout His career; to the fact that the Scriptures are fulfilled in Him. 5. The only way by which this Truth may be learned—it is revealed from Heaven (vs. 17). This principle accepted, the arrows of the wicked are quenched by the shield of faith. 6. The foundation of the Church is not Peter, but the Truth he confessed; namely, the eternal Sonship and Sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ. This was the theme of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost; this truth he established by proving that the ancient Scriptures had been fulfilled in Christ, and that His promise of the Holy Spirit's coming was now fulfilled in their experience. Thus upon this Rock, that God had made, this same Jesus whom men crucified, both Lord and Christ—the Church was built. 7. The impregnability and invincibility of the Church is here taught. This is true of the Church universal,—that the powers of hell are impotent to overthrow it; but we believe it is true also of the local church. The conquering weapon is the truth of the Lordship of Christ. Let that truth be actually put to the proof in the life of church-members, and there is no power in hell that can stay such a church's progress. 8. The keys of the Kingdom. This we may readily admit is a somewhat difficult passage. We are sure, however, that it affords no warrant for the Roman Catholic's pretentious claim. We should learn to differentiate between the apostolic and succeeding ages. The apostles really had no successors. We read in the Word that the Church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2: 20). A special revelation was given to the holy apostles and prophets (Eph. 3: 5); and that special revelation is handed down to us in the inspired Word. Therefore, the apostolic authority is perpetuated in the Scriptures; and here we have the keys which unlock the door.

IV. THE EMERGENCE OF THE CROSS.

1. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew" etc. (vs. 21). It is difficult for any of us to learn to relate time to eternity, but time is a Divine order. God is the Author of punctuality. We read "of the fulness of time"; "the time of the Gentiles"; Christ spoke to His disciples of "your time" and "mine hour". God knows when, as well as how. 2. There is here a principle or Divine revelation and discipline: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 13). Milk must be given to babes, and meat to men. Thus He is ever leading us on and up to a place whence He can begin to show us more. 3. The light this passage shows on our Lord's foreknowledge. His death was no accident: He knew He had come to die. He had been moving toward the Cross from the foundation of the world. Redemption was not a sudden impulse, but an eternal plan. 4. The light this throws on His unchanging grace. Men of noble impulses may do good suddenly. It is sometimes easy to make sacrifice on impulse; but deliberately to plan and persevere in doing good at a great cost to ourselves,—this is love indeed. Read the story of Abraham and Isaac, and how for three days "they went both of them together". Thus Father, Son and Holy Spirit moved to the Cross from all eternity. 5. The light this throws on the purpose of Christ's death. It was not merely an example. The death and resurrection of Christ are infinitely more than that. He died to atone for our sins,—the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. 6. The offense of the Cross. It is strange that so soon after his great confession Peter should have spoken as he does here. It should teach us that the best of men may become the voice of Satan. Was there not involved in this a further resistance to temptation on the part of Christ? 7. Our Lord refers to the disciples' cross. We must know the cross subjectively as well as objectively. The Cross in His thought was always an instrument of death. We are crucified with Him. 8. What are you worth? (vs. 26). 9. Tasting of death (vs. 27, 28). The usual interpretation of this passage is to the effect that it finds its fulfillment in the next chapter in the transfiguration. An interpretation of the transfiguration is given in II Peter 1: 16-18. We remember a great sermon of Spurgeon's on this text, in which he argued that no one would really "taste of death" until after the Second Coming of the Lord. Men would die as to their bodies; both the just and the unjust would enter upon some for good or for evil.

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A CORRECTION.

In our leading article last week, in the first line on page 12 we were made to say "Prof. Marshall" instead of "Prof. Matthews" in our reference to the motion moved by Dr. MacNeill, seconded by the Editor of this paper at the 1910 Convention in Bloor Street.

We regret the mistake, although no doubt careful readers would see from the context that it was an error.