

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor*.

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

Address correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto.

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE VIRGIN BIRTH INDISPENSABLE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH AND EXPERIENCE.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 19th, 1926.  
 (Stenographically Reported.)

"Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?"—Hebrews 1: 5.



T this particular season of the year the advent of the Lord Jesus into the world is celebrated by uncounted millions of people. That One called "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king," is an indisputable fact of history; that He lived a wondrous life, that His earthly career was attended by many manifestations of extraordinary power, is a further fact of history; nor is it disputed that He died at the place called Calvary. But His entrance into the world, and His resurrection, ascension, and coming again, have ever been a subject of controversy.

Among Christian people twenty or twenty-five years ago, speaking generally, the scriptural record of the miraculous birth of our Lord was assumed; one supposed that the truth of the virgin birth was sufficiently established, and that it might now be taken for granted everywhere. And yet even that fundamental fact is to-day a subject of very sharp discussion, and of wide differences of opinion. There are those who are reluctant to abandon the Christian position, or to surrender the Christian hope, who vainly endeavour to find some middle place of meeting where the truth of the Incarnation may be held, while the fact of the virgin birth is denied. It is well therefore for us on such an occasion to look into the scriptural records again, that those of us who believe may be reassured, that the roots of our faith may strike more deeply into the soil of revelation; and there is hope also that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit some to whom this has hitherto been an obscure truth, may come to accept it and to rejoice in all its implications.

I have spoken upon this subject before—I expect to speak on it again; for the reason that I conceive it to be the function of the pulpit, not to entertain primarily, certainly not to amuse, nor only to inspire: but carefully, patiently, and persistently, to instruct. It is necessary that we should be grounded in the truth of the gospel, that we should consider the same aspects of the truth over and over again until the truth becomes a part of us, until we could as easily part with a hand or an arm as we could surrender any of these precious elements of the divine revelation. So we are on old ground, and ground which I trust to many of us will be familiar, but none the less interesting, none the less valuable, because we have traversed this road before.

The subject announced for this evening was, "The Virgin Birth Indispensable to Christian Faith and Experience". By that, as I shall show you, I do not mean that in order to be a Christian one must be thoroughly instructed in the meaning of the birth narratives of our Lord. One may be soundly converted by believing one single passage of Scripture; but if the truth as it is in Christ, or any element of that truth, finds access to the human heart, if the truth be hospitably received, if it be received in the love of it, that one element of truth will leave the door open for all that God reveals to follow after.

You will remember the story to which I directed your attention some months ago, of the man who was born blind, and whose eyes were opened; and who got into a discussion with the doctors of the law concerning the Person of Christ. They declared that He was a sinner, all that they could say of Him was, "We know not from whence he is." This man who had been blessed by the touch and the word of the Lord Jesus responded by saying, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Thus he found himself suddenly made an apologist for Jesus Christ—and he had never been to school, he had never been theologically trained; yet by that one flash of divine illumination he had been so instructed that he utterly baffled the doctors of the law. And when they could not meet his arguments they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out"—and men have always been trying to do that—"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"—you see, the door was open: the truth had entered, and his spirit was hospitable toward the truth, he was ready to receive and entertain it—"Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

Blessed be God! we have not to know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in order to be saved; but if we are saved, the truth that saves us will open heart and mind to everything that God has spoken. Did I make that clear? I tried to say something like that a little while ago, and I read somewhere that Dr. Salem Bland expressed his delight that Dr. Shields was in agreement with him! I am perfectly—and still happily—unconscious of it!

Let us come to our subject—that is a little introduction by the way, the path up to the door.

Our text is not found in Matthew or in Luke: it is taken from one of the

epistles, and it is quoted from the Old Testament; and yet I believe that unmistakably it points to the virgin birth of Christ: "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" It directs our thought to a point of time. But Jesus Christ, as the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, "from everlasting to everlasting," was and is God. But this refers to His incarnation, to His manifestation among the sons of men.

Let me begin my argument—I am not going to keep to that text, my proposition is that the truth of the virgin birth is absolutely essential to Christian faith, that you cannot dispense with it, you cannot deliberately surrender it, without surrendering the foundations of the faith. And I beg of you to follow me closely this evening, and perhaps by God's grace some may be helped to answer those who hold that it is a truth, or a doctrine, that may be surrendered without any real loss.

#### I.

The only record of the birth of Jesus that we have insists that He was virgin-born. If we deny that He was born of a virgin, we may, with equal reason, deny that He was ever born at all; for we have no separate record of His birth, except that which declares that He was divinely begotten, having a human mother but no human father. You know that, specifically, Matthew and Luke only record the fact; and it is a mere commonplace to suggest to you that these two gospels view this miraculous event from two different, but not contradictory, standpoints, and that the two records are complimentary to each other, the one completes the other. And I remind you that it is quite consistent with the principle of divine inspiration to admit that certain truth may be incorporated in the divine record which, because it was true, was taken from human sources. That is to say, the writers may have been divinely directed to communicate with persons with whom the truth respecting certain events resided, and, receiving the truth at their lips, that truth was recorded. As for example in the Old Testament: the genealogical tables might thus have been copied from family records, and if they were true, there was no reason why they should not have been so copied. That does not invalidate, or in any sense impair, the principle of direct divine inspiration. You will understand that inspiration assumes the record to have been inspired, that the writer was divinely superintended so that that which he wrote was that which God wanted to have written. Now, obviously, Matthew views the matter from the standpoint of Joseph, and Luke from the standpoint of Mary; and with these two persons the sacred secret of our Lord's birth resided. Joseph tells, by implication at least, the shock he felt when a certain discovery was made; and how the angel came to him and by a direct divine revelation explained to him that which it was necessary for him to know. The narrative of Luke is especially attractive. I do not know where you will find anywhere a more beautiful story, told with a nobler reticence, than the record contained in the gospel by Luke. But both assume the same fact, that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Nowhere in all literature can you find a passage like that—that is God speaking of one of the deepest mysteries of life, the profoundest of all revelations.

I cannot go into that particularly, but shall deal with the objection some people raise, that Matthew and Luke are the only evangelists who refer to the virgin birth of Christ. I never read that but I find myself registering the

strongest possible objection to it, for I cannot find a single passage in the New Testament that does not take the virgin birth for granted. For example, Mark begins his gospel thus: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Is it not implied there? What says this text? "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?"

We do well to remember also John's gospel, particularly the concluding chapters. In the story of the crucifixion it is written that as John stood before the cross, and the dying Saviour beheld him, and, at the same time, beheld His mother, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to John, "Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." Well, read John's gospel with that in view, read it over again and keep in mind what Luke has said that "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart"—always full of wonder as to what manner of child this Child of hers was, what He should become, what He should do in the world. And you remember that Mary had lived a long time with John—for John's gospel was undoubtedly written after the other three—and who shall say that John's view was not coloured somewhat by his long association with the human mother of Jesus Christ? And having known her so well, and talked with her so often—for what conversations they must have had! What wonderful fellowship these two must have had as they talked together, the one about the Master, and the other about her Son, to whom He was Master as well—yet notwithstanding that very intimate acquaintance with the mother of Jesus, John begins his gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Do you not think the virgin birth is there implied? And if you go on to the second chapter where Jesus shows His first sign, and for the first time manifests His glory, you will find that when they had no wine, they came to the mother of Jesus, and she told Him, and with a gentle rebuke He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." But what did she answer? She said to the servants—listen—" whatsoever he saith, unto you, do it." She said, in effect, "You will see a wonder to-day"—for there was a secret in Mary's heart which was not shared by anyone, and she knew that that Son of hers was divinely born. And so,

"The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed."

He made it apparent that the whole universe was His temple, that the whole created order was filled with the praises of the only begotten Son of God, for in His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.

And, my friends, if you study the epistles of Paul you will find the same truth implied. I have not time to go minutely into the first chapter of Romans where He is said to be "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." He is divine, He is proclaimed the divine Son of God by the Spirit of holiness. But there are many passages that imply the truth, that take it for granted, notably "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Peter speaks of Christ "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world"—but, listen—

"but was manifest in these last times for you." Of course! the Incarnation is not only implied, but expressly taught. Peter declares that in the holy mount they were eye-witnesses of His majesty—and to ascribe majesty to a peasant, lowly-born as Jesus of Nazareth was, were sheer folly. Peter knew better, he knew He was the Son of God. So in this epistle from which I have taken this text, merely as an accommodation, and later in the epistle, we read, "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." We read of the "mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

I do not suppose that even the critics would presume to deny that that is the teaching of Scripture, particularly in the two gospels; although Fosdick says that the apostles did not make it a fundamental of the faith, and there is no reason why we should; and goes so far as to say that only Matthew and Luke state the case. Only a blind man could talk like that! I think the whole Book supports the truth that Jesus Christ was virgin-born.

I say, that truth is indispensable to the Christian faith, for the reason that if that be denied, we deny thereby the divine character of this Book, and its divine authority.

If you read *The Gospel Witness* this week, you will have read there an account of a Commission which investigated the teaching of a certain professor in Brandon College, Manitoba. The Baptist Ministerial Association of Greater Vancouver also asked him certain questions. Among others, they said, "Do you believe that the Scriptures teach that Christ was born of a Virgin?" To which he answered, "Yes." Their second question was, "If so, do you accept the teaching?" "Yes, I accept it and present it as the teaching of Scripture. Personally, however, I find difficulty in thinking through, satisfactorily in my mind, this question. I, therefore, emphasize the Incarnation. I firmly and positively believe and teach that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. I believe in the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ."

Whatever may be said of that, the rejection of the truth of the virgin birth involves the rejection of the New Testament—and of the Old, it involves the rejection of the Bible as the Word of God. If one turns aside from that truth, he turns aside from everything else. Any school boy could understand that, that inasmuch as the Scriptures teach that doctrine, if that is rejected, the Book that teaches it is rejected—there is no escape from that.

## II.

And furthermore: implicitly you deny the unique character of the Person of Christ. He was without sin. How did He escape the taint of original sin? I do not mean to say—let us be careful here—that the virgin birth in itself establishes the truth of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholic Church recognized that long ago and invented the doctrine known as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Always bear in mind that that has no reference to the conception of Christ, but it refers to the conception of the Virgin Mary, that Mary herself was immaculately conceived, that she herself was sinless, and therefore Christ, being begotten of the Holy Ghost, was the Son of a sinless mother. But that does not avoid the difficulty: it only pushes it back another generation, for it is just as difficult to conceive of Mary—and more difficult indeed—as being sinless, as to conceive of Jesus Who had but one human parent, being sinless. But the divine Nature was His, "He took on him the seed of Abraham"; He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners". You ask me to explain how He escaped the taint of original sin on His mother's side? I simply answer, I cannot tell you, I don't attempt

to understand it, except that the spiritual was predominant in Him, and from the beginning the Holy Ghost had the ascendancy. But if you deny His virgin birth, then you deny His unique character as "One Who was separate from sinners.

Then, of course, everything with that goes. Why, you deny the special value of His death. I do not know how often I have tried to explain to seeking souls the substitutionary work of Christ, saying even to a young boy or girl, "Now, when Jesus died upon the cross He died instead of you." And often I have seen the look of wonder in their eyes, and I have had to say to them again and again, "If He had been a man, your sin would have killed Him without mine, or my sin without yours. It was only because He was both God and Man that He was able to die for you and for me." But do you not see, dear friends, that our sins require the payment of an infinite price; and if Jesus be reduced to the level of a man He becomes—Oh, let me say it without irreverence, for it is utterly inevitable—He becomes but a child of shame, not the divine Son of God, one of infinite merit Whose life equalled in value the life of a million worlds. But if once we come to see that while He was human, He was the very incarnation of Deity, we shall understand that He was infinite in all the qualities of His mind, and that therefore His Deity gave to Him an infinite capacity—I think it was Spurgeon who said it—and infused a boundless degree of compensation into all the pangs He bore. We need a divine Saviour, an almighty Saviour; and we have such while we hold simply to the record of the Word of God, that He is the Son of God begotten of the Holy Ghost.

### III.

And then, while a thousand other things might be said, I want to make this very simple and direct application of this principle. Why do we believe? What is to be the reward of our faith? What do we need in order to be saved? Or, to put it this way, how do you conceive of salvation? Merely an escape from the consequences of sin, merely escape from hell and translation to heaven? Surely there is more than that! Why is it that so many professing Christians are never found in the place of prayer? Why is it that so many who have named the name of Christ seem to have an abhorrence of spiritual truth? It is because they are, at the very core of their being, in their very nature, at variance with God; they have no affinity for the Holy One. The very thought of God shocks them, the presence of God would be purgatory. An unregenerate man would rather be in hell without God, than in heaven with Him; there is nothing in him that is in agreement with God, or with spiritual things, he is "enmity against God".

What is salvation? Is it only a matter of bookkeeping, blotting out our sins because Jesus Christ paid the price? No, no; that is but an element in it. I will tell you what it means: it means that every one of us has to be so changed by some means that in the very depths of our nature we shall be brought into agreement with God. In other words, we have to be fitted to be at home with God—that is what salvation is. I remember reading that when Spurgeon was a young man, little more than a boy, he once said that if a pickpocket were to get to heaven without being regenerated he would pick the angels' pockets. Some venerable deacon came to him and said, "Mr. Spurgeon, you made a great mistake." "Well", said he, "what did I say that was wrong?" "You said that if an unconverted man could get to heaven he would pick the angels' pockets." "I think he would", Spurgeon said. "Well", said the man, "don't you know angels have no pockets?" And Spurgeon said, "No, I did not

know that, I am glad to be informed. I will change it, I am sure he would pull a feather out of one of the angel's wings!" It was but a simple way of saying that he would be his old self, and that he would carry on his old trade somehow or another.

What do we need? We need a salvation that is equal to the task of changing us from our natural state into a condition where we shall be in perfect harmony with a Holy God. And you are not going to get that by any Social Service programme, let me tell you that! And you are not going to get that by any educational process either, nor by any principle of a long drawn out process of evolution—there must be a radical change.

But what has that got to do with the virgin birth? Just this, that the denial of the virgin birth involves inevitably a denial of the supernaturalism of the Christian religion; it reduces the whole matter to the human plane. The very best that such a religion can do is to sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment, and the Lord Jesus said that would not do. You mothers know that will not do either, you know what I mean. I was talking to a man the other day who said he never knew what that meant. If he had asked his mother or his wife, she could have told him! It just means that if you have old cloth, and you sew a piece of new cloth on it, it will tear away the old. And the Lord Jesus said that human nature was beyond repair, and could not by any means be patched up.

Where shall we get a new nature? How shall we be made new creatures? Well, this truth of the virgin birth postulates—no, rather to be more explicit—it proclaims a stupendous miracle, and it offers hope to me, who am "dead in trespasses and sins." What is salvation? Listen. Merely subscribing to a creed?—and I should be the last to belittle the value of creeds—No; not that. To be instructed in the truth of the Scripture? No, that is invaluable; but that is not salvation. To be a member of the church? No! To be baptized? No! To come to the Lord's Table? No! What is it? This is what it is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." ("Amen!" "Hallelujah!") "Christ in you"—and I do not see any chance of having Christ in us unless the Holy Ghost shall come upon us, unless our hearts become the cradle in which the Christ is born. In other words, the miracle of the virgin birth, the miracle of the resurrection, of which I was speaking to you last Sunday evening, while these events are facts of history, and as such, may be brought within the limit of a certain time, there is a sense, in which in their application, to the redeemed, they are ageless experiences. The miracle of the virgin birth is repeated, the miracle of the resurrection must be experienced, by us, or we are yet in our sins. ("Amen!" "Praise the Lord!")

But oh, my brethren, the wonder of it all, when the angel brought the wondrous promise to Mary, and she was humbled in contemplation of the high honour that was promised her, and asked concerning this, "How?" even as Nicodemus asked a similar question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The answer was, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Oh, that is what we need, that the Holy Spirit shall come upon us, that the soul dead in trespasses and sins shall be quickened into newness of life, and we shall be born again, or, perhaps more accurately, not so much born again, although we are born again, but "except a man be begotten again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We are "begotten again" by the power of the Holy Ghost; and that being so, there is not only hope, there is absolute certainty that some day when the work of

Christ is finished we—oh, say it over in your heart, poor discouraged souls, say it with me, for that is how I feel about it—we shall be without fault before the throne of God. And another text: He shall present us “faultless before the presence of his glory”! Faultless! Where? According to human standards? No! Faultless before men? No! He shall present you faultless “before the presence of his glory.” When God withdraws the veil and manifests Himself in all the fulness of His redeeming glory and the glory of His redemption, even there our Lord shall say, “There they are, perfect before God.” (“Praise the Lord.”) Fulness! “Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”; we shall be just like Him Who is “the express image of his person”.

And I do not wonder that He said He will do it “with exceeding joy”. Have you ever wondered what is meant by that passage, “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame”? There is the joy, the joy of seeing at last of the travail of His soul, and being satisfied. In the glory of the Father's presence! I give it as my testimony that I want no amendment to this gospel, it is good enough for me, and it will be good enough while time shall last, and through all the dauntless cycles of eternity. Oh, may God help us to yield ourselves to the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

Let us pray: O Lord our God, we need such a mighty Saviour as Thou art. Those of us who are Thy children this evening, praise Thee that Thou hast come to us, and saved us by Thy matchless grace. Let this be a night of confession, we pray Thee. We have sought the blessing of God upon this service, and we believe that Thou wilt quicken souls dead in trespasses and sins to-night. As those who stood by and saw Lazarus come forth from the grave at Thy call, so let it please Thee, O Lord, to give us the joy of seeing men quickened by the Divine Spirit, and made new creatures in Christ. We ask it for His name's sake, Amen.

*(Ten responded to the invitation).*

#### CHICAGO BAPTIST BIBLE UNION MEETING.

The Editor was privileged to speak at a B.B.U. Conference held in the Central Y.M.C.A. Auditorium, Chicago, December 16th. There were afternoon and evening sessions and a fellowship banquet between at which about ninety sat down. There was a fine attendance at both public sessions, and several pastors were present from outside points. The services showed a very healthy interest in all B.B.U. matters. The new Field Secretary, Rev. W. E. Atkinson, was present, and has evidently already won a large place in the affections of the people.

## Does Your Subscription Expire in December?

Our Circulation Department informs us that they have sent out approximately fifteen hundred notices to subscribers whose subscriptions expire during December. Fifteen hundred is no insignificant number even to a paper with a very large circulation. There has been a most gratifying response to the notices sent out, and we have found that many are not only renewing their subscriptions, but have put an estimate upon the value of the paper equal to that of our Italian pastor, and instead of sending \$2.00 for renewal, they have sent \$10.00, others \$5.00, and smaller amounts. This is to say that it would give the Editor a very merry Christmas if the office could report all these subscriptions renewed before Christmas. If you have not already sent in your renewal, will you not please do it at once?



## Editorial

### THE SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL "GOSPEL WITNESS" READERS.

*The Gospel Witness* wishes its readers a Merry Christmas, but we do not see how anyone can really celebrate Christmas without a very real sense of the favour and presence of Christ Himself. On the first Christmas morning He was the Theme of the angels' music, the Object of the star's direction, and the One to Whom the wise men presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and we can express no richer wish for our friends than that this Christmastime should bring them into closer fellowship and communion with Christ.

When the prodigal son came home to his father's house they began to be merry, and we know of no true merriment to be found anywhere outside the Father's house; only as we enjoy His favour through His forgiving grace, and wear His robe, and sit at His table, can we really have the merry heart that "doeth good like a medicine". And this is our wish for every *Witness* reader for this Christmastime.

But we wish our readers also a Happy New Year. Few will have come through the present year without some sorrow and some tears. We have made many mistakes; we have often missed our way in the journey, and have had to retrace our steps; we have failed in many particulars to achieve that upon which our hearts were set—but as the Old Year dies away, new hope springs within our hearts that next year may be better because it shall be "new".

And who of use does not need a New Year which shall be new in a thousand particulars? We remind you of One Who said, "Behold, I make all things new." He can give us a new year by giving us new grace, and new courage, and a new endowment of power. We believe that only as the year is new can it be happy. May we all have a new experience of the grace and power of God

### McMASTER'S APPEAL FOR MONEY.

McMaster University, we understand, is making preparation to appeal to the Denomination for contributions toward a Forward Movement Fund. It will be well for Baptists everywhere to recognize what is involved in this appeal, in order that they may have some understanding of the character of the institution and the work to which they contribute.

What will the money given to McMaster University be used for? It will be used to maintain an institution that discredits the Word of God. Its Faculty and Governing Bodies have pronounced themselves in favour of a view of Scripture which denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, which denies the historicity of Jonah, and which therefore denies the infallibility of Christ. What ought a really saved man who has been made a new creature in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, who believes the Bible to be God's Word, and who trusts Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord—what answer ought he to make to an appeal for funds to support such an institution? We should say that if he were many times a millionaire, if he would be faithful to his trust as one of God's stewards, he would refuse to give one penny to such an institution.

Once more: McMaster University has appointed, retained, and endorsed, a man who denies that Christ bore the punishment of our sins and died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God". McMaster University is on record as endorsing a man who denies the very central and fundamental truth of the Gospel of Christ. Surely God's stewards ought to refuse to give a single cent to support such an institution. We have sometimes wondered where the thirty pieces of silver came from which were used to pay Judas for his betrayal of the Son of God. Did the chief priests and the scribes take up a collection for the purpose? If they did, could any true lover of Christ make any contribution to a fund to be used for such an infamous purpose? As we view the matter, Professor Marshall's teaching amounts to an absolute betrayal of the truth of the gospel; and we believe that anyone who would give to support McMaster under the present circumstances would be assisting to raise

another thirty pieces of silver to pay a modern Judas for crucifying the Son of God afresh.

In view of McMaster's open repudiation of evangelical principles we can see no sound reason why any genuine Christian should give a copper to its support.

**THE JANUARY MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.**

In addition to the Conference call issued through *The Gospel Witness* of December 16th, the Committee have sent out the Call in pamphlet form this week to thousands of Baptists throughout Ontario and Quebec, accompanied by the following letter:

325 Soudan Avenue,  
Toronto, December 17th, 1926.

Dear Fellow-Baptist:

We enclose herewith a Call to a general meeting of Regular Baptists to consider the formation of a new Society of Regular Baptists for the purpose of carrying on missionary, evangelistic, and educational work.

We ask you to consider the Call carefully and prayerfully, and if you are in accord with the purpose and principles set forth therein, we affectionately invite you; and in view of the present situation in our Convention we would urge you to be present at the meeting. A helpful and suitable programme is being arranged, the details of which will be published later.

Extra copies of the Call are enclosed for your interested friends, whom you may invite to come with you.

Entertainment will be provided for out-of-town visitors on the usual plan, and in order to aid the committee it is requested that all out-of-town friends who intend being present, send their names to the Secretary, Rev. Alex Thomson, 325 Soudan Ave., Toronto 12, on the form appended, stating whether or not they will require entertainment.

Trusting we shall have your prayers and your presence.

Yours on behalf of the Committee,

W. J. H. BROWN, Chairman.  
ALEX. THOMSON, Secretary.

Rev. Alex. Thomson,  
325 Soudan Avenue,  
Toronto, 12, Canada.

Dear Mr. Thomson:

This is to say I shall attend the meeting in Toronto, January 11th and 12th.

Name.....

Address.....

Church of which member.....

Do you desire entertainment.....

If any readers of *The Gospel Witness* who are Baptists, anywhere in Canada, should have been missed, we hope they will accept this letter as a personal letter to themselves, that all who can possibly do so will be with us in Toronto January 11th and 12th. It would greatly assist the Billeting Committee if those intending to be present at the Convention would be good enough to send the Committee notice of their intention.

**ANOTHER TORONTO CHURCH TAKES ACTION.**

At the Annual Business Meeting of the Pape Avenue Baptist Church, held December 15th, resolutions were passed dealing with the present denominational situation. We have not the exact text of the resolutions, but they were to the effect that the Pape Avenue Church would discontinue all its financial

support to McMaster University as long as Professor L. H. Marshall is retained on the staff. By resolution also the church decided to withdraw financial support from the Board of Religious Education, and from the Board of Social Service; and expressed regret at the action of the First Avenue Convention in endorsing the teaching and retention of Professor L. H. Marshall.

Little by little the churches are coming to recognize the truth of the allegations made respecting Professor Marshall. McMaster has sown the wind, and in God's good time will reap the whirlwind.

### LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICES.

Notwithstanding the distractions of the Christmas season, last Sunday was a day of blessing in Jarvis Street. For some time we have omitted our short Jarvis Street notes, feeling that it would be presumptuous to expect our great *Witness* family to be especially interested in the affairs of Jarvis Street; but we have learned from many sources that the people are disappointed when no note about our services is included. We therefore report that three responded to the invitation last Sunday morning, and ten in the evening; while four candidates were baptized.

The prayer meetings are well sustained, and we are looking forward to great blessing in the weeks to come.

## THE CANADIAN CONFLICT

By Dr. W. B. Riley.

The following article has been received from Dr. W. B. Riley, who is known as a champion of the Faith all over the continent. Even the enemies of the truth listen when Dr. Riley speaks, and perhaps there is no man in America more generally feared by Modernists than he. Dr. Riley's ministry is a striking vindication of Fundamentalism. It was our privilege to preach afternoon and evening at the opening of Dr. Riley's new and enlarged auditorium. At the three services of the day, by actual count of the ushers, there were only six less than eight thousand persons present.

This great church and Sunday School and the Northwestern Missionary Training School show what the old-fashioned gospel preached in the power of the Holy Ghost can accomplish.

We agree with Dr. Riley. We have been altogether too merciful. Until one has actually crossed swords with Modernism, he would never imagine that supposed gentlemen, not to say Christians, could descend to such depths of untruth and dishonour, as are sounded by its defenders. Next week we shall be under the necessity of revealing one more example of the principle that wherever fundamentalists "hold forth the word of life", they bear their witness in the midst of "a CROOKED and perverse nation." Watch for our article next week on how the minutes of the Board of Governors are twisted.—Editor "Witness".

"The Canadian Conflict concerning the faith has interested me for years. Dr. T. T. Shields I had seen but once and had never heard speak, when I secured a volume from his pen published early within the time of the late war. I read the same with increasing interest and when I had completed its last page, I said to myself, 'That is a sound, scriptural deliverance. Its author is a man of courage and its publication is certain to produce a conflict in Canada.' The years following have abundantly illustrated both my musings and prophecy.

### Shields' Victories

have enheartened Fundamentalists from year to year. The report emanating from each convention left the interested public with the impression that the Canadian Baptists were, in the main, sound, and excited the expectation that McMaster University would be compelled to change its course and to end its theological down grade if it were to be supported by the denomination. At the

conclusion of two annual conventions in continued debates, Shields won, and the things for which he stood were backed by a big majority of his Canadian brethren. In truth, it seemed to the intelligent bystander that he had compelled the Chancellor and certain professors of McMaster University to fall into line with his demands, thereby saving their skins. In reading these annual reports it was a pleasure to note that Shields deported himself as a Christian statesman in each and every one of the conflicts. When he had won, he took no undue advantage of his victory, and sought to lay no intolerable burdens upon the vanquished. He merely applied for a return to Baptist faith and Baptist practice and the conservation of McMaster's established standards. In the verbatim report of this convention we have not found from the lips of Shields one phrase that was to be regretted because of its evident lack of Christian courtesy or sanity of expression. We are compelled therefore to contrast these years with the one just finished by the annual meeting of Ontario and Québec Baptists.

#### The Unchristian Attacks

upon Shields personally, and upon all those who have shown any sympathy with him, is the most outstanding impression of the intelligent reader. Over the States' border Shields is thought of and spoken of as rather a severe fighter, and at times his language has been criticized by the United States papers as a bit strong. But it would seem that this is a British habit and that among his brethren at home, Shields is the mild-mannered man of them all. I have played some part in the controversy now raging throughout the world. As president of the World's Christian Fundamentalist Association and vice-president for the Northern Baptists' Convention territory of the Baptist Bible Union, I have been in more than one battle, and in view of the existing conditions, I confidently expect to have to engage in others. But in the Northern Baptist Convention, to which I have limited my denominational utterances, I have never heard from any of my opponents sentences akin to those which were voiced by Shields' opponents in the late Canadian controversy. Take, for instance, my good former friend, Dr. John MacNeill. Twenty-five and thirty years ago John and I were the best of friends. I went to him more than once in Winnipeg. I dedicated his enlarged house. I held with him Bible conferences and evangelistic meetings and loved him well. I preached in his pulpit without a single criticism from his lips but with encouragement and compliments, exactly what I believe and teach now. When I made up my mind that I could not accept the pastorate of the Walmer Road Church in Toronto, I so reported to their committee, and gladly advocated their calling John MacNeill. It is a bit surprising therefore to note that the "Evening Telegram" of Toronto, October 23, records this statement from John's lips, "Dr. Shields has attacked all the boards as part of the continentwide propaganda carried on by the Baptist Bible Union, whose leader and champion in the South is Dr. J. Frank Norris; Dr. Riley of Minneapolis in the West, and Dr. Shields, the president, in Canada. Their methods are the same everywhere."

One grieves the loss of treasured friendships, and the saddest thing about Modernism is that of separation between brethren who were close, mutual lovers. But this language from John's lips is rather mild as compared with other sentences that are stenographically reported as in MacNeill's speech. For instance, "the only attempt that I have ever found to browbeat that body (the Senate) and to club it into submission was made by Dr. Shields himself since he came to the Senate." But it must be confessed that our friend John, though speaking strongly, kept well within the limits of Christian courtesy as compared with some of his fellow-spokenmen. Take for instance the language of Professor Marshall, the man who has made this breach and whose influence on Canadian Baptists has been divisive. Since he crossed the ocean he has divided the student body, and he has taken positions that have terminated the positions of some of the oldest and most honoured of the professors, and he has caused years of bitterness in the annual sessions of the Provincial Convention. He has not enjoyed the width of the Western Canadian plains that gave John MacNeill his more liberal outlook, nor has he had the advantage of that more American method which says a thing plainly, but less offensively. With true British boastfulness he remarks, "Dr. Shields, because I referred to some evidence of spiritual healing as a scientific fact, has circulated the report that I

teach in class room that Jesus Christ is a trickster, an ignoramus and a deceiver. I say when he said that, that Dr. Shields was guilty, not only of the wickedest lying and slander, but he descended to the most vulgar abuse." Notwithstanding that cries of "Oh, Oh," met this descent, the professor is reported to have continued, "I have given you just a few examples, and speaking quite calmly and deliberately, and without any malice, I take all those suggestions which have been taken from *The Gospel Witness* and I thrust them back again down Dr. Shields' throat, and I say to him: Thou Mest!"

The Northern Baptist Convention controversy has not as yet descended to these depths. But the choicest bit of virulent language seems to have been reserved for a man who has for some years been a Canadian. In fact, so delectable a descent was the speech that I am now about to quote, that McMaster's defenders have been embarrassed by it and have sought to soften the impression made by the same, in explanations and semi-apologies, for the Rev. A. J. Vining capped the climax of anti-Christian speech when he said, addressing his remarks to Dr. Shields and his associates, "I have more respect for a toad, catching flies in the vapor of a dunghill, than for some of you."

That there are difficult days ahead in our Baptist Conventions no one doubts.

This writer expresses the hope that this Canadian custom of Modernists may not be communicated to either the Southern or Northern Baptist Convention debates. Our modernists in the Northern convention have again and again hissed. However, we hope to see them descend no deeper.

#### But There is Another Feature

in this conflict that must impress intelligent readers. Modernism is reasonable only when in the minority. It would seem that Dr. Shields has won this battle at least twice in previous conventions, and never made his victory the occasion of personal or denominational oppression. He was content to ask the Baptist's paper to be impartial and give space at least to the expression of both sides of the controversy.

But when his opponents won a single victory and find themselves backed by a majority, they do what modernism has done in every instance, push their victory to the last possible point, and they straightway took occasion to exclude Shields and his church from the convention. This is modernism's method. When the Convention was in session at Buffalo, New York, we could have sold *The Baptist*, we could have changed the character or complexion of any part of the convention programme. But in answer to the specious plea of the "middle of the roaders" that everything would be put right if we would only be patient, we surrendered and waited. A year later at Des Moines, Iowa, every motion made by Fundamentalists carried, and again we were counseled to be patient and assured that the denomination would right disorders. However, at Atlantic City Fundamentalists were scarcely heard from, owing to a previously arranged promise of silence. A year later Modernism secured its majority by the perfecting of a political organization made up in the main of employed state secretaries and other salaried individuals who have been the balance of power in every convention vote since taken. Now that they are in the saddle, no man is tolerated any more than is absolutely necessary. And now Dr. Shields of Toronto is treated after the same manner, the moment that Modernism finds itself in the majority. Most of us are not sorry to see it so. We have hundreds of the "middle of the roaders" who have never yet waked up to the fact that this is a real fight, and will be waged until one side or the other is put out of commission. The Modernists are making that increasingly evident. Maybe my own church will be the next set for slaughter. If so, we shall accept the conclusions of the State Convention of Minnesota and of the Northern Baptist Convention, without lowering our flag or giving one serious thought to compromise.

In reviewing the past, we grieve that we ever trusted these men or imagined that they were fair. We have found that our trust was misplaced and our imagination was unwarranted. They are determined to carry the Baptist denomination over to Unitarianism and either our leadership will have to be changed or Fundamentalism, which is a synonym for Baptist faith, will perish at their hands. This writer asks for no special quarter; begs no personal

consideration. He admires Shields for the fight he has made in Canada and believes that the reaction will be deleterious both to the Convention that took the late un-Christian course, and to McMaster University in its further endorsement of a man whose faith is not Christian and whose defense has been far from the same.

It was Canada that sent to the States George B. Foster of the University of Chicago, Cross of Rochester and Matthews of Crosier, and we have not had more undesirable modernists among us. Our cause has been menaced by these men as by few others. McMaster's is not a great university, it is a little one. We predict that it will be still smaller as the years go by. McMaster's is not in the position of Brown University and Rochester University and Princeton University, with enormous endowments. They can live and defy the faith of the men that made them possible, a positive proof that an endowment is not of God. But McMaster's is not strong enough yet, financially, to dispense with "the faith once for all" of believers. To be sure, the Rockefeller funds may come to her aid, for they are in the business of strengthening heresy. But God lives and the truth has a marvelous ability to come back. All terms of error have always been temporary, and herein is our confidence.

One thing more we must remark upon before finishing this article. We are proud of Shields' department in that Convention. He sat, according to the reports, silently for the most part, through a most severe arraignment of slander and all the rest, but when he arose to speak constant heckling came in from Modernist quarters. Young Brown, Linton and others, who were equally entitled to be heard, were heckled in the same manner by the Modernists. We want to express here the hope that even though we lose by it, Fundamentalists will forever play the game fairly and behave themselves decently, refrain from hisses, catcalls and every form of heckling. The truth does not need such defense and it is never aided by such expressions. Decency, good order, Christian deportment are the evidences of genuine Christian character and it is in vain for us to profess Fundamentalism in theology unless we bring the same into practice in all matters. The truth is only valuable as it is incarnated in man, and that is why God took the eternal truths of his holy word and voiced them once more in "Christ, the Living Word." He wanted men to see what we need to know and that is only when truth in the abstract harmonizes with truth in the concrete, can truth itself triumph. A thousandfold better meet defeat in fair fighting and contending for the faith, than to win the victory by catcalls, hissing, heckling, charges of slander, descent to vulgar speech and all the rest. My plea, as a Fundamentalist is, that we let Modernists have a monopoly of all of these and that we acquit ourselves not as men only, but as Christians in every controversy.

### CALIFORNIA B.B.U. ANNUAL MEETING.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the Baptist Bible Union of California was held in the First Baptist Church, of Ceres (W. M. McCart, Pastor), Nov. 16 to 18, inclusive. Among the speakers were: B. F. Fellman, President; Supt. Hurlburt of the Bible Institute; C. S. Knight, Geo. Francis, and others.

The conference was largely attended; and at the night sessions the church was filled to capacity. High spiritual levels were attained, and the finest possible fellowship enjoyed throughout.

The church at Ceres has been going through fiery trials; and the B.B.U. meeting gave them all that could be desired in inspiration and encouragement. Bible Unionists should pray much for this noble church and its persecuted pastor. Brother McCart is the victim of a merciless machine, which he has had the courage to oppose.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Rev. B. F. Fellman, Pasadena; Vice-President, Rev. W. A. Matthews, Los Angeles; Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. Joseph MacDonald, Escondido; Executive Committee, Rev. Chas. E. Hurlburt, Los Angeles; Rev. Geo. R. Dye, San Bernardino; H. Cone, Strathmore; M. Philips, Stanley Matthews, A. S. Fielding, T. B. Kilpatrick.

## BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

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T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

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Lesson 4.

First Quarter.

January 23rd, 1927

### THE MIRACLE AND THE SERMON.

Lesson Text: Acts, chapter 3.

#### I. THE FIRST APOSTOLIC MIRACLE. Vs. 1-11.

1. It is significant that it should be associated with the hour of prayer. The believer's chief concern is to maintain unbroken communication with divine resources. 2. The lame man had been a cripple from birth. God is able to correct the faults of nature. We are all sinners by birth as well as by choice. 3. It was a true instinct which led this man to expect help from those who went up to the temple to pray. Men of the world are often critical of the church, but in the hour of their trouble it is to praying men they come. 4. It is ever so that men care more for their bodies than their souls, and would measure the ministry of an individual or an institution to the community by the material good it accomplishes. 5. The apostles were without money, but they were not without power to minister. The church's ministry is never crippled primarily by its poverty. God has accomplished his greatest work through the poor. 6. Every true believer may, if he will, render to needy men a greater service than mere almsgiving. It is not the want of money, but the want of that mysterious, intangible, "such as I have" that cripples the church and the individual. 7. This miracle was the fulfilment of the Master's promise to his disciples. It was a sign of their apostleship, even as His miracles had been signs of His Messiahship. 8. It may be doubted whether anyone has power to confer blessing, even in a material way, without spiritual power. 9. It was fitting that the healed man should use his new found strength to walk, and leap, and praise God. So ought all to do. 10. The genuineness of the miracle was patent to all. That which God works will always stand the test. 11. There is a peculiar affection between those who receive spiritual benefit and those through whom it is conveyed (v. 11).

#### II. PETER'S EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE.

1. He disclaims all credit for the accomplishment. It is vitally important that Christian workers should first get themselves out of the way. The Holy Spirit does not engage to glorify any man or institution, but only to glorify Christ. 2. Peter connects the Lord Jesus with the worthy names of those in whom they believed, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There is a spiritual tactfulness which is divinely taught. 3. He identifies the despised and crucified Jesus as the Son of God, now divinely glorified, and contrasts the action of God in glorifying Christ with that of men. 4. He does not hesitate to charge them with the responsibility of the murder of the Prince of Life (vs. 13-15). Peter speaks very directly and personally. The most important part of any sermon is its application. Nathan's parable becomes effective only when it reaches the climax "Thou art the man". So teachers should remember that when they have held up the truth of the lesson before their scholars, they should prayerfully make a personal application of it to those whom they teach. 5. Peter declares himself to be a witness of the resurrection of Christ, thus fulfilling the mission upon which he had been divinely sent (v. 15). 6. Such blessing as the lame man received through their ministry had come to him through faith in the name of Christ, and there is no other way to establish connection with heaven: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." 7. There is significance in Peter's charge that the religious leaders of the day had crucified Christ "through ignorance": a charge doubtless which would cut them more deeply than any other complaint could do. But the antagonism of men toward Christ is always to be attributed to ignorance: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." 8. This preacher still keeps to his Book, and insists that that which was spoken by the mouth of the prophets was something which God had shown.

#### III. PETER'S EXHORTATION.

1. He calls them to repentance as a condition of forgiveness. There can be no forgiveness without repentance (v. 19). 2. He refers to the second

coming of our Lord as an event which must inevitably come to pass that all the scriptures might be fulfilled. How this preacher magnifies the scriptures! 3. He not only refers to scripture, but actually quotes it (vs. 22, 23). It is well for us that God has given us some enlightenment to help others to understand the scripture, even as Philip rode with the Ethiopian to guide him, but it is often equally useful to content ourselves with quoting scripture, depending upon the Holy Spirit to make use of it. 4. This Spirit filled man declares that all scripture is related to Christ, and that the prophets, who have gone before, were but preparing the way for Him Who at last comes as the Word of God (vs. 22-25). 5. Christ came into the world, not to save men in their sins, but from their sins (v. 26).

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CLEVELAND, OHIO.

## TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY,

337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2.

This new Baptist College rendered necessary by the inroads of Modernism, will open its classes on January 4th, 1927, in the Seminary Building, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto.

A five months' (21 weeks') course, including among other subjects, instruction in Bible Doctrine, Missions and Evangelism, Church Organization, Pastoral Theology, Hebrew, Greek, and English, will start on above date.

A Pastors' Three Year Course will commence in the fall of 1927. Students taking the introductory course from January 4th will count in the three years' course.

Applications from intending students, and from others desiring information, should be made to the Rev. W. J. Millar, Seminary Building, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

It will not be possible to completely organize a faculty for the first term of the Seminary. We aim at doing very thorough work even for the first five months, but we expect before fall comes to be in a position to announce a strong course which will be attractive to men of strength everywhere. Included in the faculty for the next five months will be the following: Rev. W. J. Millar, Acting Dean; Rev. W. J. H. Brown; Rev. Alex Thomson, B.D.; Mr. W. Gordon Brown, B.A.; Miss Jessie Watson; Miss Elizabeth Fuller. Because of the relation of this institution to Jarvis Street Church, the Pastor of the church will be President of the Seminary. The Constitution will be published later. We call special attention to the announcement below:

### LETTER FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Mission City, B. C.,

October 30th, 1926.

Rev. T. T. Shields, D.D.,  
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Brother:

I am instructed by the church to congratulate you on your action before the Convention of Ontario and Quebec Baptists in the conflict with Modernism in the Baptist educational institution, McMaster University. Your heroic stand is encouraging to those of us who, in these dark days of apostasy, are striving to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Modernism seems to have the support of the majority; we are persuaded that this is largely due to the ignorance of the rank and file, and the leaders would have it so. To educate the people in these things would destroy the intentions of these enemies of a crucified and risen Christ.

But God has His Elijah's, and the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and for this we will praise Him.

We are praying for you, and for the noble band who are associated with you in the conflict. May the Lord bless you, and strengthen your hands in the mighty task to which you have evidently been called.

Cordially yours in Christ,

(Signed) STANLEY SMITH, Pastor.