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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"GOD THAT CANNOT LIE PROMISED"

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, Sunday Evening, December 27th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

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"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."—Titus 1:2.

Even the most casual observer of human life must surely have recognized that life during the last few years has been attended by unusual changes. Changeful as life has always been, it seems as though its changefulness has been accentuated in recent years. There is scarcely an interest of life which has escaped the unsettling influences of our day. It would seem, indeed, as though human society, or the expression of it which we call civilization, is itself growing old, as though the summertime of the earth were almost ended, as though the world had reached its autumn in which even its most gorgeous hues are produced by the ephemeral varicoloured leaves whose beauty is the momentary flash of the signal which marks the recession of the tides of life. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the whole world might appropriately employ Childe Harold's plaint:

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."

Where can we look throughout the world to-day for stability? Verily "change and decay in all around I see." The year is just passing; but a few days are left. What is a year? A mere measurement of time, but a period that may enrich or impoverish us in its passage. And what a year nineteen hundred and thirty-six has been! Possibly it has brought joy and gladness to some, but men of discernment have been apprehensive of its intentions from the beginning. It has brought ever-increasing distress of nations, anxieties, perplexities, disappointments, disillusionments. It is folly to boast of our optimism, and to blind our minds to facts. No person

with capacity to view events relatively and perspective, and who has taken the trouble to inform himself of world conditions can be other than apprehensive at the outlook.

But the year is passing and is nearly ended. And what has it left to us? What will its residuum be? Has it made us richer or poorer? happier or more miserable? Has it contributed to our uncertainty or ministered to our stability? Has it established us, or has it had the effect of shaking even the very foundations of life?

As I contemplated this evening service I felt that I should like, if I could, in the name of the Lord; to bring you a keepsake, something that will last, a bit of evergreen, a cedar of Lebanon whose branches will never become bare, and whose beauty is everlasting. Amid the world's uncertainties, is there anything to which we can moor our ship, or, when sailing, any fixed star by which we can safely steer our course? Is there any standing-place for mortal man?

There was for the apostle Paul. Hear him as he presents his credentials: "Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

That is something on which to put the feet of your faith, is it not? Surely it is worth having a Rock like that to stand on amid all the fluctuations of this present, transient life.

I.

"Hope of eternal life" IS CENTERED IN AN UNCHANGING PERSONALITY. Notwithstanding the drift from indi-

vidualism toward collectivism in every sphere of human life, there has perhaps never been a day when the importance and value of personality was more evident. We have seen in our day what one or two men can accomplish, how two or three trouble-makers in Russia brought an empire of one hundred and eighty millions into bondage; how another man, with the heart of a murderer and a liar, a superhuman, satanic personality, can regiment a nation of sixty-five million so as to make himself—and them—a terror to the earth. We have seen too, how, in another nation, one man can subdue all opponents, and gather the reins of government into his own hand, and bring death and destruction to multitudes.

But, on the other hand, what great value attaches to a personality that is based in righteousness!—"A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In whom did this man Paul trust—or in what? Not in institutions, or human organizations of any kind; but in a Person. We have come to a day when we need to emphasize this most elementary of all religious truths, the personality of God: that He is not a mere abstraction, that He is more than Law, or Force, spelled with a capital yet undefined and undefinable, but One Who claims for Himself all the attributes of personality. He it is Who created and Who rules the world. Paul's trust was in One Whose personality does not change. Though kingdoms rise and fall, though thrones should tumble, and crowns be scattered, and sceptres be broken, there is One Who has revealed Himself to this trusting heart as a Personality Who for ever abides.

His is a personality distinguished by one peculiar characteristic. Elsewhere we read of Him as being holy. We read of His faithfulness, of His wisdom, of His goodness, of His mercy, of His love, of His grace. But this man who had troubles enough of his own, and who met with a great many disappointments in life, and who might easily have become cynical and sour had he not had a sure anchor cast where it would hold amid all the storms of life—this man conceived of God, for his immediate comfort and establishment, as possessing a peculiar, predominant characteristic. He describes Him here as the "God that cannot lie".

That was never truthfully said of any other person who has had any relation to this world and its history, but it is true of God. Not only that He *does not* lie, nor that He *will not* lie: Paul uses stronger language than that and says He *cannot* lie. Blessed be God, that that is true of Someone! Let us nurse that idea for a minute or two, and see what comfort we can find in it.

A God Who is personally transcendent, Who is not so wrapped up in His marvellously fabricated universe that He cannot extricate Himself from, nor control, the machine He has made, but a God Who is over and above all, and Who transcends the work of His hands—and such an One as cannot lie.

Was there ever greater need to have recourse to Him than there is to-day? He cannot lie, for *He is a stranger to the impulse which issues in lies*. It is contrary to His nature. He is not subject to any external law which would forbid His deception, but in His very nature and essence He is Himself the truth; and any form of deception would be foreign to His nature. He simply cannot lie because He is God.

There are many people who appear to be honest—so long as they are compelled to be; who appear to be truthful—and who are truthful—as long as it may be conve-

nient. But to say they cannot be dishonest, or that they cannot be untruthful, would be to go beyond the facts. But if the Spirit of Truth will enable me, I would show you, as I am sure it will minister comfort to your hearts, that at the very centre of things, at the heart and core of the universe, is One Who is Himself the truth, Who "cannot lie". He has no impulse so to do. It is not in His nature to desire to deceive anyone.

Furthermore, He is not subject to the limitations which sometimes produce untruthfulness. I have caught many a man in a lie, and so have you. Very often the man has said to me, "You have unmasked me, but I could not help it." Why? He endeavoured to justify his untruthfulness by references to the circumstances which induced him to try to deceive. God is never subject to such circumstances or to any circumstances.

If I could confine myself to this part of my text alone, how interesting it would be to study the philosophy of this statement, that our God "cannot lie"! But I must be content with stating the fact, that it is in accord with His nature to tell the truth, only the truth; that it would mean the violation of His own nature, that He would have to be something other than God, were He to lie.

II.

Perhaps such a Person is rather remote from us, in the thought of many. But my text goes farther and tells us that THIS GOD TO WHOM A LIE IS IMPOSSIBLE, HAS COMMUNICATED HIS WILL AND PURPOSE IN A PROMISE. The apostle Paul had received His promise, and upon the promise of "God that cannot lie", his hope was based.

We do not attach very much importance to promises nowadays, whether of individuals or of nations. But even if a man were true at heart, and desired to tell the truth only, and always to implement to the utmost every promise he made, because of his limitations as a man, no one could absolutely rely upon his promise, because however good his intentions, he might find it impossible to fulfil his promises. Someone may ask you to lend him ten dollars. He does not want it as a gift—only as a loan. He promises to repay it. You credit him with sincerity, and he may really be sincere. He is not necessarily intentionally dishonest because he does not keep his promise to repay. Doubtless he was rash to make it without assurance of being able to fulfil it, but it may be that he finds himself at last unable to do what he solemnly promised to do. He is sorry; but that does not alter the fact that the promise is broken.

It is not so with God. David rejoiced in God because of this, saying, "Thou spakest also with thy mouth, and has fulfilled it with thine hand." There are some people whose mouths speak many things which their hands do not perform. It may seem strange, but I have known not a few people whose tongues were a great deal longer than their arm. They would promise anything, but were slow in performing. I suppose it is because we are so accustomed to that sort of thing that we find faith difficult. The little child, in years of inexperience, finds it easy to believe father or mother. In the beginning of life, he can trust. But before he is very old, he discovers that even his father and mother do not always, because they cannot, do exactly as they said they would do. After a while he becomes not quite so sure of anybody's promises, and if he lives long enough he will require collateral evidence of the dependability of any

human promise. He will be full of doubts and questions.

Thus accustomed to the habits of this strange world, it is not surprising that people should come to the Word of God with a question-mark, that they should ask, "Will He, can He, do as He says He will?"

Recall to your mind for a moment the matchless parable of the prodigal son. Follow that young man after he has made his resolution to return to his father, and see what notions he entertains of his father and his father's house when he comes home: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." He has been so long habituated to the thought and habits of the country in which he has lived, has so long looked upon life through the medium of those who gave nothing away, and who paid but poor wages to those who worked for them, that he has no idea when coming home to his father, that his father could be disposed to give him anything.

No doubt that is why it is so difficult to get people to see that salvation is of grace. If you see something advertised in the papers to be given away, you say, "I do not believe it; nobody gives anything away." Of course they do not, except as a charity. They know nothing of grace in the far country. Nor do men know anything about truth in the absolute, in the ordinary walks of life.

But here is a promise that is unique, and it is the promise of "God that cannot lie". That promise is implied in the very nature of God, just because He is truth. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light", or truth. The sun cannot help shining: it is of its very nature to shine. Truth is light. It is therefore of the very nature of God to communicate Himself. He comes to us that in His light we may see light, that we may know what truth is.

His promises, even the promise of grace, are implied in the works of His hands. This earth is full of the promises of God. You say, "I did not know that." Did you not? The very rainbow in the clouds, the succession of the seasons, the vicissitudes of day and night, come by the fulfilment of His promise: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. . . I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." Every sunrise proclaims God to be the "God that cannot lie". Every sunset bathed with the golden glow of eventide is a preacher respecting the essential truthfulness of God. The earth is not only full of the goodness of God, but it is eloquent of the truthfulness of God.

Even the man of science in his laboratory, who mocks at the Bible, and makes fun of all who believe it, unconsciously pays homage to that truth. I say to him, "My dear sir, what are you doing?" "I am in pursuit of truth in the material world. I want to see how certain elements in combination work." "Suppose you find out how they work, what good will that do you? Do you not know this is a world of change, and the laws of chemistry and of physics may change to-morrow?" "No, they will not; they never change." At last he cries, "I have it. I have made a discovery." What if I were to say to him, "Mr. Scientist, did it ever occur to you that you have, through your microscope, discovered

that God cannot lie?" The whole world of science is based upon that assumption.

And of course every word of God is instinct with it. The Bible is a record of God's promises—and every one of them is the promise of a God "that cannot lie". We observed Christmas morning, how, after the lapse not of centuries only but of millennia; at last the angels announced the fulfilment of the divine promise. The word of God is true. The word of God, like the works of God, attest the truth of the statement that God "cannot lie". His promises are sure.

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." *That all-comprehending promise was exemplified in the person and work of Jesus Christ.* He Who by His word created all things, and Who was the subject of the entire written Word, came Himself to exemplify it: "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He went to the cross, and to the grave, and came forth in resurrection power and glory, and ascended to the Father's right hand, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel; and showed that God could take human nature up into Himself, and impart to it His own nature, making it to become partaker of the divine nature, and give it a place at His own right hand. That is the abiding truth—and that is eternal life. A life upon which death has no power. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The "God that cannot lie" promised.

III.

I confess myself to be somewhat conservative. I like to retain the good things, I am not disposed to discard that which is old simply because it is old. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." We know no theology until we see that, until we see Who our God is.

Here is a Firm that has been a long time in business. In England many firms advertise the year in which they were established. I was once entertained at a restaurant in London that had been continuously operated as a restaurant since early in the sixteenth century. I suppose they must have had several chefs! But still the tradition of the place persists, and I rather fancy they know how to put a good dinner on the table. On the outside of the building was written, "Established in fifteen hundred and", I am not sure of the exact date.

During the Great War the woollen mills of the north of England, roundabout Leeds, Bradford, and Halifax, were converted into khaki mills. When the war was over a friend in England told me that buyers came from all parts of the world to the north of England, to these old firms, and said, "The world is in rags; give us cloth." "We cannot. We are not prepared to manufacture." "Why not?" "Because we converted our mills into khaki mills, and that is all we are prepared to make at the moment." "Dye it another colour, and let us have it. We must have cloth." But they steadfastly refused, and one concern's manager said, "It took this firm far more than a century to build up its reputation, and to establish its good name. The name we bear is identified throughout the world with a particular quality, and this mill will not sell a yard of cloth until we have put our equipment back where it was before, and we can produce exactly the same quality." They had learned that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches".

It is a great thing to deal with a Firm that has been a long time in business, and that maintains the quality of its product. If you want to get your religion from

Chicago University, or even from McMaster, you are welcome. I want an older religion than that. If you look for your salvation to some of the new cults, if you will risk your soul upon them, that will be your responsibility. But I shall not jeopardize my eternal interests by so doing. I am going to a well-established Firm, that has a reputation for having saved a great multitude of people. Here is their promise: "Before the world began." And from then until now they have not lowered the standard. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, worked out a plan of salvation, wrapped it up in a promise, offered it to a bankrupt world, and God has never changed it. It never will be changed.

What is your hope, Paul? "I am building upon the promise of God that cannot lie; and with that for my assurance, I live in joyous hope of eternal life." I cannot conceive of any surer foundation for the feet of faith than that. And that is what the gospel offers to every one of us, the promise of "God that cannot lie".

Are there some disappointed souls who hear me tonight, perhaps by radio? Is there someone who has not been to church in many years? Someone who has taken up an antagonistic attitude toward every form of religion; because he was disappointed in some religious professor? Is there one who has suffered many reverses, who feels that certain religious people were not without responsibility for his trouble? You have turned your back upon all churches, and upon religion generally, perhaps? I call you back to the word of the Lord. There is no reason why you should forsake Him who "cannot lie".

Years ago when I became pastor of this church there was an old man here who had once been wealthy; he had been worth several hundred thousand dollars. One day a business acquaintance called to see him, and after a pleasant chat as friends, he said, "Mr. So-and-So, I have come to rather an embarrassing situation temporarily, and as we know each other so well, I have wondered if I might ask you to lend me your name?" "What do you mean", the other asked. It was a matter of two or three hundred thousand dollars, but he wanted the use of his friend's name only as security at the bank; it would be all right in a month or so. "Certainly! Certainly!" he replied, "I know you would not ask it if you were not sure it was safe." He signed a note, and within a week or two the other man and his business came crashing down like the Tower of Babel—and my friend said he found his entire fortune swept away.

The gentleman of whom I speak said, "I left that city and came to Toronto to begin over again. I had been a member of the church, an officer indeed; but I became bitter toward God for allowing me to experience that loss. For years I did not go to church; I did not read the Bible. But one Sunday afternoon, for want of something better to do, I took my Bible from the table. It opened, and as though by accident it opened at the Book of Proverbs, and my eye lighted upon this verse: 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.' I got a concordance to see what the Bible had to say about suretyship, and learned in a few minutes that only One could safely become surety for another, and that He became surety for me at great cost, prepared to pay the full price. I fell on my knees and cried to the Lord: 'I have been blaming Thee for my trouble. If I had lived by Thy Book, and walked in Thy counsel, I should not have lost what I did!'"

There are people who blame God for their troubles, whereas He is the only One Who can be trusted. I call

you to Him in His name. Commit everything to the promise of the God "that cannot lie", and go out from this place—or rise from the place where you are sitting if you hear by radio—in the assurance that inasmuch as God has promised eternal life, trusting Him we are safe.

There is only one thing that any wise man can do with that which is demonstrated to be true, and that is to believe it. Only a fool will doubt that which is manifestly the truth. The truth is in Christ. Trust Him, and you shall be saved now and for ever.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS—SECOND QUARTER

April to June, 1937

LESSON XIV.—April 4th—THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE INSTANT IN PRAYER.

Lesson Text: Matthew 6:5-15.
Golden Text: Philippians 4:6.

LESSON XV.—April 11th—THE RELATION OF THE BIBLE TO SALVATION.

Lesson Text: Romans 10:8-17; Psalm 1; Psalm 119.
Golden Text: II. Timothy 3:16, 17.

LESSON XVI.—April 18th—FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

Lesson Text: John, chapter 15.
Golden Text: John 15:8.

LESSON XVII.—April 25th—THE CHRISTIAN'S WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

Lesson Text: John 4:27-42.
Golden Text: John 4:29.

LESSON XVIII.—May 2nd—THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.

Lesson Text: I. Corinthians, chapter 8; Romans 14:12-23
Golden Text: I. Corinthians 8:13.

LESSON XIX.—May 9th—HONOURING THE LORD WITH OUR SUBSTANCE.

Lesson Text: II. Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9.
Golden Text: II. Corinthians 9:7.

LESSON XX.—May 16th—SALVATION ONLY THROUGH THE BLOOD.

Lesson Text: Hebrews, chapter 9.
Golden Text: I. John 2:2.

LESSON XXI.—May 23rd—ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

Lesson Text: Romans 10:8-13; Titus 1:1, 2; I. Peter 1:1-9; I. John 5:11-15.
Golden Text: II. Timothy 1:12.

LESSON XXII.—May 30th—THE BELIEVER'S ETERNAL SECURITY.

Lesson Text: John 6:37-47; John 10:27-29; John 13:1; John 17:7, 12, 24.
Golden Text: John 10:28.

LESSON XXIII.—June 6th—THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMPANIONS.

Lesson Text: Psalm 1; I. Chron. 18:1-3; I. Chron. 19:1-4; Prov. 1:7-19; II. Corinthians 6:14-18.
Golden Text: Psalm 1:1.

LESSON XXIV.—June 13th—THE DUTY OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

Lesson Text: I. Corinthians 3:1-7; Eph. 4:11-24; Hebs. 5:11 to 6:3.
Golden Text: I. Peter 2:2.

LESSON XXV.—June 20th—THE BELIEVER AND HIS TEMPTATIONS.

Lesson Text: James 1:1-15.
Golden Text: James 1:13.

LESSON XXVI.—June 27th—THE GIFT OF GRACE, AND THE REWARD OF WORKS.

Lesson Text: I. Corinthians 3:9-15; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:4-8.
Golden Text: Ephesians 2:10.

THE STORY OF THE PLOT THAT FAILED

The History of a Church's Struggle to Maintain an Evangelical Ministry in a Free Pulpit

By T. T. SHIELDS

CHAPTER VIII.

In the progress of our story we come now to the critical year of 1919. The Annual Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec usually held in October, on account of the influenza epidemic had been postponed until January, and was held in Jarvis Street Church, January 15th to 21st, 1919. At that Convention it was decided to hold what was called a Special Conference in Jarvis Street Church about a month later, February 24th to 26th.

Looking back upon it now, one cannot help feeling that that Conference had a place providentially assigned to it in the life of the Baptist denomination. There were nearly seven hundred registered delegates, all but seventy of whom were from outside Toronto. Hundreds of others attended without registration. We observed one morning Jarvis Street filled with about fifteen hundred people at nine o'clock, especially for prayer. So extraordinary was the spirit that the meeting opened nearly fifteen minutes before the scheduled time.

It would be beyond the scope of this article to linger with the memories of that Conference beyond saying that it was really a great gathering of people who had come apparently, not to hear addresses, but to pray. It seems to me now that it was like the Lord's sending of the twelve spies into the land of Canaan. The promise so long before spoken to Abraham was about to be fulfilled, and the people of God had been brought to Kadesh-barnea, in readiness for their entrance into the land of promise.

In the atmosphere of that great Conference, unbelief and all the vagaries of Modernism seemed to wither and die, and the people in great numbers were of one accord in one place. But sitting under the gallery, slightly to the north of the centre of the church, in the rear, was a McMaster Professor, Dr. I. G. Matthews. His teaching had been the issue before the Denomination nearly nine years before, in October, 1910, at the Bloor Street Convention. During the intervening nine years Professor Matthews, notwithstanding his signature to the declaration of the Theological Faculty, had continued the dissemination of his poison.

Of course, he had been defended even by such orthodox men as Dr. J. H. Farmer. (Every man whose soundness has ever been questioned at McMaster University has been defended as an orthodox man while he remained on the Faculty. After he had left, and it became evident that his later state was worse than the first, and that he had gone clean over to the camp of the Modernists, as for example, Professor Foster, who went to Chicago, and Dr. George Cross, who went to Rochester, and when criticism was offered in defense it was argued that he was much sounder than some of his predecessors!) McMaster ran true to form in defending Professor Matthews to the last ditch, insisting that Dr. Elmore Harris, and all who joined with him were bearing false witness against a very worthy man.

Since that time our adversary has written a book. The book is entitled, "Old Testament Life and Literature—by I. G. Matthews, Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis, Crozer Theological Seminary", printed by The MacMillan Company of New York in 1923—four years after the time of which I write. There is nothing new in the book, so far as I can discover. Indeed I have been unable to find any real value in it, but for the sake of that which is to follow, I quote a few passages, that my readers may know how unscrupulous were the defenders of Professor Matthews.

On page twenty-six he says:

"Moses may have written a decalogue, or may even have gone beyond that, but the wilderness experience was neither in its needs nor its culture a literary period, and a Pentateuch written by Moses is an assumption that neither the conditions nor the Biblical material warrants. Such a supposition throws all the rest of the Old Testament into confusion."

On page thirty-one he says:

"In 572 B.C. he (Ezekiel) wrote his vision (Ezek. 50 to 58), the new ritual requirement for the new Judaism. A like-minded contemporary, perhaps about the same time, collected, arranged, and perhaps revised a code of ritual practices (Lev. 17 to 26), now called Holiness Code (H.C.). This was the beginning of a long development which, so far as our canon is concerned, reached its completion in the books of Chronicles about one hundred years after Ezra. So far as the Hexateuch is concerned, Ezra and his school mark the closing of an epoch and practically the closing of the book. The literary product of this school, which was included in the Hexateuch, was of a priestly cast, and is designated by P. P. itself, which embodies the activity of more than two centuries, contains within itself different units of law and slightly different points of view. Suffice it here to say that this school gathered up, organized, interpreted, and reinterpreted the ritual of ancient Israel, using all the oral and written sources at their command. They also rewrote the early history of their people, beginning with the creation (Gen. 1, 2, 4a), supplementing the JED. story where they felt it necessary, *inserting in what they believed to be the proper places the story of priestly institutions and the mass of ritual, of which they were the inheritors, and arranging the whole according to an orderly, priestly, chronological scheme.*" (Italics mine, T. T. S.)

Thus Leviticus is dated about eight hundred years after Moses, and subsequent to the Exile. But again on page thirty-six:

"Abraham went at least part way in offering the not unusual child sacrifice. In all these things they were but following the common practices of ancestors and neighbours."

Speaking of Moses he says:

While we have long pages presenting the life and doings of this great leader in Egypt and in the desert, those earmarks, which a writer contemporary with the events would have left, are all but lacking. The whole background is very vague. Who was the princess who rescued the babe? Where was she bathing? In what part of the land were the scenes enacted? Who was Pharaoh? Is the general name used loosely for the ruler of one of the districts? Or does the tradition lift a local experience up into national significance? Where did the Israelites cross the Red Sea? Where is Mount Sinai, or Horeb? So might we continue to ask questions, but definite information is not to be had,

and reconstruction is all but impossible, save in large outline."

Of the Exodus he says (pp. 40-41):

"The fearful and unwilling people were inspired for the journey by the wonder-working God. Yet, no doubt, natural causes were at work. The people were tired of the locality that now, under the military policy of Ramses II, was more than previously under the direct rule of Egypt. They longed for the ancient freedom of the well-known desert. The plagues, all of them more or less common to the Nile valley, added to their eagerness to withdraw (Ex. 7 to 9). Escape was never difficult. Roads led from Egypt into the desert in at least three different places. Their flight apparently led them down the wady Tumilat a few miles, then they seem to have turned southward into the Egyptian desert to avoid the pursuing army (Ex. 13:37 and 14). As they hesitated, perhaps at the southern end of the Bitter lakes, the spring wind blowing from the south or south-east greatly aided them, and likewise impeded the chariots of Egypt. Thus, most probably in the early years of the reign of Merneptah (1225-1215 B.C.), in a marvellous way they escaped from a hated and feared foe to a new-found liberty.

"Many glimpses of natural motives and the naturalness of the deliverance have been preserved in the documents, but that was not the main thought of the story-tellers. They found a deeper and richer meaning in all the experiences of their founders. To them those were no ordinary days. Yahweh was in the burning bush and in the plague experiences. He delivered them from Pharaoh, and rolled back the waters of the Red Sea. They conceived, and rightly so, that the chief glory of their national birthday was the manifestation and the guidance of their God."

This is what Professor Matthews says of the manna and the water in the wilderness:

"No less thankful were they when the manna—literally 'What is it?'—fell (Nu. 11:7, 8). Whether this was the exudation of the tamarisk tree, which the monks of Sinai still gather and sell, or an edible lichen found in the desert, matters not. The people rejoiced in what they believed to be a wonder wrought by Yahweh, their God.

"Water, likewise in a moment of great need, was unexpectedly provided them by their leader (No. 20:2-13). Whether the sweetening of the bitter waters, or the bringing of the water from the rock was the uncovering of an old spring, the discovery of a fountain hitherto unknown to the tribes, or the releasing of a new current of water, the thirsty nomads neither judged nor cared."

Of Moses' rod he says:

"Later, devout interpreters easily turned the staves and the scepter into the rod of Moses, and duly exalted him against whom their fathers had so often rebelled."

Of the achievements of Moses he says:

"That, during this period, such achievements were brought well under way, is nothing short of miraculous. That later religious interpreters should conclude the story of each struggle with a picture of divine intervention in some supernatural form, is not strange."

Discounting the authorship of Moses, he says:

"The student, of course, does not take all of this seriously. From what already has been indicated, it may be questioned whether any considerable part of the tradition has the warrant either of Scripture or of historic probability. Nomadic peoples living amidst such conditions as are found in the wilderness neither possess a high civilization, nor produce literature."

I feel like apologizing for detaining my readers with quotations from this utterly useless book, and I have done so, not because the vagaries of Professor Matthews have any value, but to show how utterly unscriptural was the position of those who defended him as an orthodox evangelical. I shall make but one other reference to this book. On page one hundred and forty-one we read:

"The dramatic colouring of the Elijah stories makes it difficult sometimes to discern the historic thread."

That is enough. Anyone having a knowledge of the New Testament will instantly see how the New Testament in general, and the authority of the infallible Christ in particular, completely annihilate such theories as Professor Matthews held and taught.

Returning now to the prayer Conference, I remarked that Professor Matthews sat in the back of the church through some of the sessions, and I was informed that he remarked to someone that there seemed to be a slight reaction in favour of the supernatural, but that it was only an eddy in the stream, and would soon disappear, rejoining, we may suppose, the main current of the "consensus of scholarship".

The Canadian Baptist, following that prayer-conference, contained many references to it, and comments upon it. In the issue of February 6th, 1919, there was an article on the front page, signed by: S. J. Moore, J. H. Farmer, James Ryrie, Jos. N. Shenstone, and John MacNeill. Only Mr. S. J. Moore and Dr. John MacNeill remain of these five. The last paragraph of the article reads:

"Brethren of the Churches! this is the 'tide in the affairs' of our Baptist denomination. Let us prepare to take it 'at the flood'. 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.'"

Reading that paragraph, we are reminded of the familiar Shakespearian lines to which allusion is made. It runs thus:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

I believe that prayer-conference was "a tide in the affairs" of the Baptist denomination, and if it did not reach its flood at that Convention, it certainly did a few months later. But it is our conviction that the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec did not "take it at the flood", but rather it was by that Convention "omitted"; and it seems to me that the inevitable is following, "All the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries."

In an editorial in *The Canadian Baptist* of February 20th, 1919, these words occur:

"In his evening address during the recent Convention Dr. John MacNeill expressed the conviction that the Lord is ready to use any denomination that will put itself completely in His hands to do with a whole heart the real will of God. We were reminded of the fact that in Moody's earlier life someone had said in his hearing that it remained to be seen what the Lord could do with one man who was wholly surrendered to His will. Moody registered a vow that, with God's help, he would be, that man, and the results we all know."

It will be our painful duty, as this story continues, to show that Dr. John MacNeill was one of the foremost defenders of McMaster's Modernism, even when the Convention applauded to the echo the man who said the Bible is not all true. But that observation anticipates the development of denominational affairs seven or eight years later.

There were several matters which had a direct bearing upon the decision of the Ottawa Convention in October, 1919, and the influences that issued therefrom, which occurred during the summer of that year. As the exact date is not important, it is enough to say that at the end of the McMaster academic year, Professor Matthews retired from the Chair of Hebrew in the University.

Some time in June of that year, at the close of a Sunday morning service, I met for the first time Miss Anna Murray, who had spent several years in India as a mis-

sionary of the Ontario and Quebec Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and who had been home for some time on furlough, expecting to return to India, if I am not mistaken, about the autumn.

As I greeted the people at the close of the service, Miss Murray introduced herself, and said she would like to have a talk with me in the vestry as soon as I was at liberty. When I was free, she came with me to the vestry, and she said something to this effect: "I came to Jarvis Street this morning having two purposes in mind: first, I wanted to meet you, and to ask you to pray with me before I return to India; and secondly, after a great deal of prayer on the subject, I have felt moved to come to see you to make a special request."

We prayed together, and then I asked her for her further request. She spoke to this effect: "I have spent years in India face to face with the blackness of heathendom. While home on furlough I have visited many parts of the Convention territory, and I am greatly depressed in spirit in consequence." Then I distinctly recall her saying, "Dr. Shields, gray hairs are here and there upon our beloved Denomination, yet it knoweth it not." She went on to explain that in her view spirituality was everywhere declining: Evangelistic passion, and loyalty to distinctively Baptist principles, seemed to be things of the past. She said that she had prayed about the matter, her mind had turned directly to me; and then she added—and please observe this was my first meeting with Miss Murray—"So far as I am able to see, you are the only man in the Denomination who can do anything. I am going back to the frontline trenches again, to face once more the blackness of heathendom, but I felt that before going I must come and lay this matter on your heart, and beg you in the name of the Lord to do something."

I asked Miss Murray what she thought I ought to do, to which she replied, "I have no idea what you ought to do, or what can be done: I only know something must be done; and I believe God will show you what to do. But do something!"

I interpreted Miss Murray's appeal as having been based, not on any particular powers that she believed me to possess, but the fact that I was in an influential position—perhaps a key position—as Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, where nearly all the denominational Boards were centered: I need not assure my readers that I pondered Miss Murray's words very seriously, and sought the guidance of God as to whether I should do anything, and if so, what I ought to do.

Just about this time, and knowing nothing of Miss Murray's appeal, I received a telephone call one evening from Professor E. M. Keirstead of McMaster University, of sainted memory, asking me if I was at liberty to see him if he were to call. Of course, I made way for his visit. He came, and described the McMaster situation as he saw it from within. Professor Matthews had left, and the important Chair of Hebrew was vacant. He said there were influences already at work seeking to fill Professor Matthews' place by one who would be far worse than he.

In the perspective of the years I can now see that Professor Keirstead was right alike in his diagnosis and prognosis. He told me of the influence of Dr. Frank Sanderson as the determined and implacable enemy of Evangelical Christianity, and that while some of the members of the Faculty were far from being positive and aggressive in their Modernism, such evangelical principles as they had were not sufficiently virile to lead them to stand against the insidious modernistic encroach-

ments. He rightly described Dr. Farmer as one who could never be depended upon to resist such influences.

We talked and prayed together, and it must have been two o'clock in the morning before Professor Keirstead bade me adieu.

Strangely enough, Professor Keirstead said almost the same thing as Miss Murray. He said, "Shields, you are the only man in the Denomination who can do anything to stop this drift." (Again, I am sure he assumed that to be true because of my position, and not because of any personal ability or power I possessed. But honesty compels me to record the facts as they were, and that is what he said.) When I asked him what he thought I ought to do, and whether he had any definite course in mind which he would recommend, he answered very much as Miss Murray had done. He had no idea what should be done, but he gripped my hand, and with tears literally streaming down his face, he said, in the privacy of my study at 437 Sherbourne Street, "Shields, in God's name, do something."

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 First Quarter Lesson 2 January 10th, 1937

DR. T. T. SHIELDS, EDITOR

BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT THE SAVIOUR

Lesson Text: Hebrews, chapter 1; Romans 5:6-10.

Golden Text: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Having believed what the Divine Physician has said about ourselves, showing us how utterly sinful we are, we must next consider what are the qualifications of the Physician Himself.

I. We cannot too strongly insist upon the scriptural doctrine that in the person of Jesus Christ, God was manifest in the flesh. The first chapter of the Gospel of John specifically tells us that He was "the Word made flesh", that "the Word was God", and that all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

It is well that our minds should be prejudiced in favour of the truth; and therefore we need not fear that we may speak too convincingly of the Deity of Christ, to little children. It is indeed desirable that they should recognize in Him the One Who is the actual Creator and Preserver of all things, and was and is Himself God. Only a mighty Saviour can be equal to the requirements of great sinners. In proof of this contention, we may turn to many of the Messianic Psalms, as well as to the chapter before us, to find Christ exalted above the angels, "as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they"; and it is said, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Then, too, we should remember the great question Christ asked concerning Himself, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" (Matt. 22:41-46; Col. 1:15-20).

II. We must believe the Word of God which says that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. There are many theories abroad to-day as to the purpose of Christ's coming, and there are those who would call Him a teacher, a reformer, an example, a master—indeed, almost anything and everything but Saviour. But the truth is, Christ came into the world for the very purpose of saving sinners.

The following scriptures may be used in proof of this, and it would be well to have scholars turn to them in their Bibles. Indeed, it might be a good plan to allot the passages to different scholars—number one to the first scholar, number two to the second, number three to the third; and so on; and then each of them would find his or her own scripture. This would give each something to do, and help familiarize them with the Word. The teacher can ask each in turn to read the scripture he or she has found, and pause a moment to explain it, urging each one to receive that scripture for himself or herself, and rest upon it for eternal salvation. There are nine separate passages which could thus be divided among the scholars, as follows: Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10; I. Tim. 1:15; Romans 5:6-10; Gal. 3:11-14; I. John 2:1, 2; Isaiah 53:5, 6; John 1:29; I. Corin. 15:1-4.

"DEUX SONT MORTS POUR MOI"

F. M. Buhler

(The following article is reprinted from the "Seminarian" a paper published by the students of the Seminary. Mr. Buhler, who expects to return to his native Alsace, France, on his graduation next Spring, tells in this article of his work in Northern Quebec last Summer.)

"Bonjour, monsieur!"

"Bonjour!"

The conversation went on in French. He spoke Canadian French and I spoke my own language, but we understood each other very well.

"You need not be afraid, I am not selling anything!" I said to the poor squatter who had settled on the property of the crown on Granada Road, near Rouyn, P.Q.

"All I have is free; I received it for nothing and am giving it for nothing." He stared at me in amazement. I answered his silent question with a big smile and then went on,

"Yes, I have some good news for you!" Again he was puzzled that this stranger should have some personal news for him.

"Do you know what the good news is? It is that Christ came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost." The Lord gave me great freedom in expounding to him the Way, the Truth and the Life. He had never heard the story in the same manner. He had always thought that he had to earn heaven. He was just as ignorant of the grace of God as the logs with which he had built his miserable little cabin. As I intended, after a prolonged conversation or rather monologue, to leave him at his work, I extended to him an invitation to come to our meeting and learn more about the Lord and His salvation. Right then his wife came out of the shack and came up to us on the roadside. On my enquiry, she assured me that she enjoyed reading stories. I handed her the tract "Deux sont morts pour moi," requesting her to read it. She thought it was rather long, but as I insisted, she took it and much to my surprise started to read it aloud. I had not expected that, but yet I rejoiced in the

fact. I was sure at least that the tract would be read. She spoke loud enough for her neighbours across the road to hear and the people going up and down the road received some benefit of the reading. Strange things happen. I never knew that I could get a Roman Catholic, French Canadian, ignorant woman to preach for me in the open air. I saw one of the neighbours trying hard to understand all that he possibly could. I saw also coming up the road another lady which I had the privilege to meet but a short time before. She would not listen to me then, and slammed the door in my face, but now she could not help listening to the same message. What I could not do, this poor woman did for me.

The four-page tract told the story of a sailor who had heard the gospel from another sailor, but who never accepted the Gospel invitation. His Christian friend, during a ship wreck, because he had the assurance of salvation, willingly perished by letting him have his place in the life boat. His last words had been words of warning to the unbelieving sailor, which made such a deep impression on him that he sought and found peace in his soul on the ground of the death of Christ. He himself tells the story, as it is recorded in the tract, how these two had died for him, his Christian friend and the Lord Jesus.

When, after great labour, the lady had finished her reading, she told it over again to her husband and then I asked them whether they liked the story or not. The answer being in the affirmative, I said, "If you want to hear more of that, come to our meeting on Tuesday night!" I felt like bursting out laughing when she questioned, "Is it to be a meeting for the two who died?" But my feeling changed into grief when I thought of their utter ignorance of the things of God. The story was undoubtedly real to her, since she thought that the meeting we conducted was to be some kind of a funeral or memorial service for the two who had laid down their lives for the unbelieving sailor.

Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers who will dispel the darkness and break the bondage of these poor deluded souls of the province of Quebec and of Northern Ontario.

SEPARATE SCHOOL ADDRESSES

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