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# The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.  
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"WHO SHALL LAY ANYTHING TO THE CHARGE OF GOD'S ELECT?"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, Sunday Evening, January 3rd, 1937  
(Stenographically Reported)

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"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.  
"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen  
again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—  
Romans 8:33, 34.

The first and great consideration which should engage the minds of men is that of being certain of salvation, that there should be no doubt as to the soul's acceptance with God. If it be so that one objects that he sees no necessity for salvation, then he should make absolutely sure of the ground upon which such objection is based, he should make sure that no salvation is necessary; and if he contends that all men will be saved, that there is no such future for those who live in the doing of evil as is predicted in the Bible, then he should enquire whether such a position can be maintained with absolute certainty on some indisputably authoritative ground.

The matter of the soul's future should be placed beyond the bounds of uncertainty. It should never be placed in the category of things which are problematical. No mortal can afford to be mistaken on this supremely important matter. It is our only wisdom to see that the soul's salvation is absolutely assured.

The second consideration of importance is like unto the first: being saved, being sure, having become a child of God, it should be the supreme ambition of a Christian to walk worthy of his high vocation, to see to it that he grows in grace and in spiritual knowledge, and that through the constant increase of knowledge his character may be symmetrically developed until he shall ultimately be conformed to the image of God.

We should consider first, the principle that we should be in the way of salvation, know that our sins are forgiven; and that we have eternal life; then, that we should work out that salvation that is our "own" by God's gift, "with fear and trembling", in the confidence

that "it is God which worketh in (us) both to will and to do of his good pleasure".

As we are to come to the Memorial Feast this evening, it is well for us who profess and call ourselves Christians to reassure our hearts, that we may be certain that we have a right to a seat in the divine banqueting-hall. And as for those who are aware that they have no such right, or who may be doubtful as to their worthiness to participate in the Supper; they may well consider upon what terms one may come acceptably into the divine Presence, and for what reason one must be excluded from the place where God dwelleth.

I believe the New Testament church is designed to be a symbol and prophecy of the heavenly Jerusalem. I believe the fellowship of the saints on earth should be a true type of the fellowship of the redeemed above, of those who are members of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven". The terms of admission to, and of exclusion from, the fellowship of the saints here, ought to be comparable to that certain distinction and differentiation which must obtain yonder.

I would have you look to this text this evening for instruction and inspiration, and, implicitly at least, for admonition as well.

I.

First, I would call your attention to HOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD HERE DESIGNATES THE SAINTS OF GOD. They are described as "God's elect". That is rather an old-fashioned term. It implies and involves a doctrine sel-

dom proclaimed in our day, and yet a truth with which the Word of God abounds. God's people are God's elect. That is to say, *they are people whom God Himself has chosen*. They are not people who first of all have chosen God, but who have been chosen by Him. If they love Him, it is because He first loved them. There may be very little in them—nothing indeed—and nothing about them, nothing external or internal, to explain God's strange choice. Why men and women choose one another is often a mystery, and is something which only the individuals themselves can explain. Why the Divine Bridegroom should make choice of such a bride as He has chosen may be to us a mystery, notwithstanding, it is His own sovereign concern; for in this spiritual realm, there is no leap-year: it is the Divine Bridegroom Who makes the choice. He Himself chooses, and He says to His people, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

I will go farther, and say, that, to the natural mind, *there is an element of pronounced incongruity in God's choice*; for we should have expected Him to choose far other than He has chosen. Mr. Brown read to you this evening, that strange, that surprising and staggering statement: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorifieth, let him glory in the Lord."

It is well that we should glory in the Lord, for we cannot explain why He should have chosen us; and it is ever a profound mystery to God's elect that they should have been included within the bounds of His mercy. It will be the abiding wonder of all eternity to discover, if possible, why God should have willed that we should be there.

But there is more than a divine choice here. *The very term, "God's elect", implies God's appointment*. They are made His people by the exercise of divine sovereignty, by the exercise of the divine will. He wills that we should holy be. That is a very strange statement, but indisputably true. When we speak of a president-elect, we do not mean that one has been nominated merely, but that he has been elected, that he is the choice of a sovereign people. President Roosevelt is not only the President of the United States, but he is President-elect, having been elected by the will of the people to serve as their President another term. He was elected, not by his own will, but by the will of others.

Thus God's people are His elect people. They have been elected by Him. It is His will that has made them what they are. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Whoever belongs to God is His because God has sovereignly elected him to the divine family, and such as are elected are appointed to obtain salvation, with eternal glory. How marvellous for God to have chosen us, to know that we are His, not by the caprice of our own wills, nor by the influence of changing circumstances, nor by the decree of church or

of council, of priest or of pope—but by the choice of the Eternal Father! Thus to be chosen, and numbered among His elect, is surely the highest privilege and honour that can be conferred upon mortal man.

Who would not say, "I wish I could be sure that He has chosen me. I wish I could be absolutely certain that I am numbered among the elect"? I can conceive of nothing within the sphere of possible human experience comparable to that high privilege of being numbered with God's elect. It transcends every other consideration in life.

*It may be that some will object: one, perhaps, on the ground of others' non-election*. Who says others are not elected? Who dares to say that this or that man is not among God's elect? How dare you be concerned about other people's not being elected? You have no ground for saying so, nor has anyone else. Nobody knows save only those who are among the elect.

"Ah well", says another, *"this is my objection, that I am not included"*. Would you like to be elected? Do you wish that an invitation to the banqueting table had been sent to you? Is it your great desire that the Spirit of God should not pass you by, but should call you to the marriage feast? Are you fearful lest you should be excluded? If you have such a desire, you may rest assured that God has not passed you by. The very fact that you desire to be numbered among the elect is proof-positive that the Spirit of God has already touched you, and given you His effectual call.

Perhaps someone else may say, "I should like to be called, but at the same time I should like to be free to respond or not. I should like to be at liberty to choose salvation if I want it." You would have the Creator of all worlds await your convenience, would you? You would have the marriage feast depend upon your will, and have all the preparations of divine grace to depend upon the will of men, as to whether they should be utilized or not?

What if the sunrise were to depend upon your will? What if the succession of the seasons were dependent upon human legislative action? We can change our watches, but we cannot change the face of the sky. In the realm of nature, God's will is supreme, and we have to accommodate ourselves to what we are pleased to call "natural law", which is only another name for the will of the sovereign Creator and Preserver and Ruler of the universe.

Another may say, *"I object to the principle of election"*? I wonder who gave you a white skin instead of a black one? Are you here to-night with a perfect body, not dismembered, nor crippled, none of your faculties impaired? And will you congratulate yourself upon that? You have no objection, I take it, to the electing mercy which makes you healthy to-night, in this building, instead of being laid aside in a hospital? It is to the Lord our God Who gives us breath, and health, and all things, the credit is due. Whether you like it or not, the God of the Bible is a supremely sovereign Being, Who sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be; and His people are His because He has ordained that they should be His.

That is *my only guarantee of salvation*. So foolish I am, I would never have come of myself. So weak, I had no power to come; so base, I did not deserve to come; so truly a mere nobody, I was not worth being called. But God, Who is rich in mercy, when we were

dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ: by grace we are saved; and, for myself I must speak, elected me as a subject in which to display the riches of His grace.

If it be so that there are those here to-night who say, "I do not understand it, but thank God I know I am numbered among the elect", be for ever grateful to God for that great fact. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

## II.

Our text says that GOD'S ELECT HAVE MANY ACCUSERS, those who lay charges to God's elect, who find fault with them. I expect you have found that out experimentally, as well as by a study of the Word. If it be so that as I have spoken, someone's heart has responded, saying, "I do not understand it, but I have looked to Christ, and have found salvation", if that be so, let me tell you that, as God's elect, you will not be allowed to have an easy life. There are those who will lay some charge against you as God's elect.

There is, first of all, *the great adversary who is described in the Word as "the accuser of the brethren"*. He is a self-appointed prosecutor of the saints, always seeking to lay some charge against God's elect. In the Old Testament we read that Joshua the high priest stood before God, and that Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. You remember, too, how, when the sons of God came together in Job's day, "Satan came also among them." Whoever else neglects attendance at church, the devil never does. He comes rain or shine. He is always present where the saints of God are. It is his special function, his chosen sphere, to be our adversary, the "accuser of the brethren".

He exercises his dreadful power through many instrumentalities. *He employs many worldly adversaries to lay charges against God's elect.* You must not expect to find this vile world a friend to grace, to help you on to God. Our Lord Jesus Himself said, "The whole world lieth in the wicked one"—not in wickedness, but "in the wicked one". He warned us that the world would hate us. No wonder—since it lies in the lap of our great enemy.

Worldly adversaries very often lay charges against God's elect. The standards and habits of life in the world of men, the aims and ambitions of worldly men, are so alien to the life of God's elect, that in contrast therewith the people of God are frequently accused of being peculiar. Some young woman here is troubled, perhaps, because her conscience objects to her presence at questionable places of amusement, the dance-hall, the theatre, or somewhere else. She is troubled because the people with whom she works, or with whom she consorts in one way or another, point the finger of scorn at her and say, "You are fanatical and old-fashioned, and entirely out-of-date. Why do you behave like that?" I beg of you to recognize in all these criticisms the disguised voice of the great adversary of your soul. He is but instrumentally laying charges against you, that he may visit you with some kind of tribulation or persecution.

Not only so, but *he specially employs false religions* in his attacks upon the saints. And how many modern cults have no foundation in the Word of God, but are absolutely without divine authority, and are nothing more than human imaginings! And because we hold to that which is contrary to these false cults, and abide by the revelation of God in Christ, we are said to be

hopelessly out-of-step with our age. These cults are the spawn of the accuser of the brethren, and assist him in bringing a charge against God's elect.

Sometimes *he makes use even of the heart and conscience of the believer.* It is possible for the heart of the believer to condemn him when there is no sound reason for his being condemned. It is possible for men to be troubled within themselves about matters concerning which their minds ought to be at rest. How many of the saints of God allow themselves to be brought into some form of legal bondage. Instead of recognizing that they are saved by grace alone, they begin to persuade themselves that their salvation is dependent upon their doing. They build up a legal framework, and shut themselves within the confines of that, saying, "If I am to be saved I must stand here." It is a device of the devil to trouble people, to trip them up. That was the error of the churches of Galatia. They were comprised of people who had believed on the Lord Jesus, who had been quickened by the Divine Spirit—and filled by the Spirit of God. Then there came Judaizing teachers who said, "It is all very well for you to believe, but you must not fail to keep the law; you must observe the ceremonies of the law or you cannot be saved." It was to them Paul said, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In other words he said, "Abide by the principle that you are saved by grace alone, by the sovereign will of God, and not by your own will; by the obedience of Another, not by your own."

It is a great comfort to know our salvation is for ever settled, that there is no possibility of a change in the divine mind, that "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end". Beware of these charges brought against the people of God, directly or indirectly, by the accuser of the brethren; and remember that if your heart condemn you, God is greater than your heart.

How many people have been brought into bondage and despondency, and almost into despair, because they have listened to the whispers of the accuser of our souls—becoming filled with doubt and trouble because of the charge which he has laid against God's elect.

I have said enough about that to indicate the principle of the text: you must amplify it, and apply it to yourselves.

Some of you may say, "The preacher did not name the charge the devil brings against me." You name it, then! We each have our own peculiar experiences. The tempter of our souls will rob us of our peace if he can; but thanks be to God, he cannot rob us of our salvation. He may rob us of our peace and joy sometimes. He thus troubled poor Job. But the enemy learned that God had set an hedge about Job, and that He did but lengthen the tether, so that he was forbidden to touch his life. Job survived notwithstanding the devil's efforts to destroy him. So shall we all be in spite of the accuser.

## III.

In the third place, I would have you notice THE DIVINE CHALLENGE TO OUR ACCUSER. The Lord undertakes for us. He says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" What is the answer? Let us remember that God will plead, not only His own cause, but our cause, too. He will vindicate His own course.

He will be glorified in everything He wills to do, and in everything which, by the exercise of His will, He sovereignly accomplishes. He says, "It is God that justifieth."

*What is justification?* Volumes have been written upon that subject, but I can only indicate it in a word or two, and point out to you that when God calls to Himself His own elect, He is not content with pardoning their iniquities, nor with freeing them from the consequences of their sin, nor with giving them a new nature so that they shall be like Christ; but, judicially, He justifies them, gives them standing in His holy presence as though they had never sinned. One of the Deacons said to me, and to one or two others standing by, on New Year's morning, "What a marvel of grace that God is able to forget, that He blots out the remembrance of our sins!"

When we get to heaven, I believe every mark of sin will have been obliterated from the redeemed soul. The only mark of sin in heaven will be in the Lamb that once was slain. So completely did He identify Himself with us, and take our sins away, imputing to us His righteousness, that when God brings us to Himself, He clothes us with the absolutely perfect—I use two strong words in conjunction; I know of no stronger terms—the absolutely perfect righteousness of His Son, so that we wear robes in His presence that have no flaw, no spot or stain, so that we shall be the envy of the angels for the splendor of our apparel. No prisoners on parole shall we be, but justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Oh marvellous salvation, not only to save us from hell, and from the consequences of sin, not alone to have brought us to the felicity and security of heaven, but to have removed every spot and stain, and to have provided for our standing fully justified in His holy presence! No one but God could do that.

Nor could we ever be sure of it were it not exclusively dependent upon, and resident in, the sovereign will of God Who always has His own way.

My text not only speaks of the justification of the believer, but *the special emphasis is laid upon the Justifier rather than upon the justification.* "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is God that justifieth*", and in contrast therewith: "Who is he that condemneth?" What does it mean? That the Supreme Court of the universe has delivered judgment. The sinner's case has been taken to the Highest Court, from the decisions of which there is no possibility of appeal. And in that Highest Court the vilest sinner, having been elected by His sovereign grace, is justified; the verdict is in his favour. He has nothing to fear. "Now", saith the Lord, "who is he that shall dare to condemn the one whom God justifies?"

It makes no difference though the adversary himself, or the world, or our own hearts, condemn us, if we are justified by God's grace. If God justifies us, let the world say what it will. Let the enemy lay charge against us: What of it? "It is God that justifieth."

"What though the accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done;  
I know them well and thousands more,  
Jehovah findeth none."

*That is faith, to recognize that in the word of God we have the final verdict, from which there is no appeal in time or in eternity.* The devil always loses his case

when he lays a charge against God's elect: "It is God that justifieth."

#### IV.

Nor is that all! **THE COURT SETS OUT THE GROUND OF THAT JUSTIFICATION.** When a judge, or a group of judges, delivers or deliver judgment for the plaintiff or the defense, as the case may be, the court sets out the reason for its judgment. We have it here. "It is God that justifieth." He is the supreme Judge. On what ground? It is thus explained: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." That is the ground of our justification.

What does it mean? That Christ bore our sins? Yes. That He was crucified in our behalf? Yes. That He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities? Yes. But let me make it simple and plain. Here is a man charged with a capital offence, accused of murder. The prosecution presents its case, and piles up evidence against him. There is no doubt about his guilt. There seems to be no possible escape for him. But as the case is about to go to the jury, *the person who was murdered walks into court, and pleads in behalf of the accused!*

Do you see it? You crucified Christ. I crucified Him. Our sins nailed Him to the tree. We were guilty of His murder, and ought to have been condemned to the everlasting burnings for our rejection of Him. But He is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God making intercession for us, pleading the merit of His own wounds; for when the catalogue of our sins has been fully recited, notwithstanding the prisoner at the bar pleads guilty to every accusation made against him, He offers as satisfaction to the divine law His own perfect atonement. He has paid for it all. And on the ground of that, Himself being God, He demands the sinner's acquittal. We have won our case. No; He has won our case for us.

I have spoken for the comfort of believers. Is it a comfort to you that we may come to the Table of the Lord this evening certain that our sins are put away?

But I have thus spoken also in order briefly to set forth the whole scheme of redemption. Is there an unsaved man here? If there be a moving in your heart toward Christ this evening, it is an indication that the Spirit of grace has already touched you, bringing you to repentance, and implanting within you a desire for salvation. If that be so, if God has willed it and provided it, and assumes responsibility to the end of the chapter, you have nothing to do but to say, Amen, to His plan. Then wonder of wonders! You are saved by His sovereign grace! May the Lord lead us all to His feet this evening, for His name's sake.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we pray that by the illumination of Thy Spirit, and by the power of Thy will, the word of Thy grace may be made effectual to the salvation of a multitude of people this evening. May some who have sat by their radios be enabled to see Jesus, some who perhaps have been troubled in heart, and long for the confidence they once enjoyed. May they differentiate between the voice of the accuser and the voice of the Spirit, and rest upon Thy word for peace.

If there should be any who are not Thine, who have listened to Thy word, who have not yet yielded themselves to Thee, work in them a deep concern for their soul's safety. Do Thou lead to Thyself those whom Thou hast chosen. Bless us all for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

# 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 IX.

Again I was driven to enquire of the Lord, and after much thought I decided to write a letter to the Board of Governors on the subject, through the Chancellor of the University, Dr. A. L. McCrimmon. At that time, as I had been for several years, I was Vice-Chairman of the Home Mission Board. There had been a good deal of complaint from the churches as to the character of the teaching given by some students of McMaster University. It had been for years the practice just before the summer vacation, for the Superintendent of Home Missions, and Dr. Farmer, the Dean in Theology, to come together and assign the ministerial students of McMaster to various "summer fields". And it was from these summer fields that the complaints had reached us.

I proposed in the Board the appointment of an Examining and Stationing Committee of the Home Mission Board, and wrote the constitution of that Committee. The proposal was adopted by the Board, but was vigorously opposed by McMaster University. The function of the Committee was not in any way to interfere with the churches, but as the Home Mission Board was the administrator of trust funds, I felt it should assure itself of the theological soundness of those whose stipends it paid for the summer months, that the Board owed it to those who entrusted them with their money to see to it that the money was rightly invested.

The plan was for this Committee, instead of the Home Mission Superintendent alone, to take the responsibility of interviewing every one of the ministerial students from year to year before he went to his field, to find out from each one personally whether he was going out with the intention of preaching the gospel of grace, or otherwise, what he had in his mind. The further duty of the Committee was to assign the students to the various fields. The "stationing" part of the Committee's duty related exclusively to student fields. In the constitution of the Committee, I provided for the attendance at the meeting of one or two professors of McMaster, who should be there for the purpose of giving information, but who should have no vote as they were not members of the Home Mission Board.

I recall that about a year was spent in the discussion of this matter, but the Committee, and the principle for which it stood, were strongly resented both by the Chancellor and Dr. Farmer. I mention this fact to show that I was fully apprised of the influence Professor Matthews' teaching had had upon the students, and of the danger to the future evangelical soundness of the Denomination, resident in the fact of Professor Matthews' continuance as a professor at McMaster.

Having sent the letter to which I have alluded, to the Chancellor of the University, I conferred with Mr. Christopher Cook, a Deacon of First Baptist Church, Brantford, who was also a member of the Home Mission Board. Mr. Cook suggested that if a favourable reply was not received from the Governors, and if there were

indications of their persisting in the plan to appoint an out-and-out Modernist, the letter should be printed and sent to all the Pastors, Church Clerks, and as many more individuals in the Denomination as could be reached by mail. Mr. Cook further volunteered to pay the entire cost of such circularization.

In due course I received an acknowledgment of the receipt of my letter, from Chancellor McCrimmon. Somewhere among thousands of other letters, that letter is on file; but I have not troubled to look it up to give the exact text, because its substance burned itself into my soul. It was to the effect that the Chancellor hoped that an appointment would be made that would prove satisfactory to all parties in the Denomination!

Mr. Cook and I felt that this reply was wholly unsatisfactory, and that the letter should be sent out as proposed. He had the letter attractively printed in large type on a four-page folder about ordinary letter size. He then proceeded to have envelopes addressed, so as to have everything in readiness for mailing.

I left for England, where I was to supply during August at Spurgeon's Tabernacle. One morning, I am not sure whether it was the first Sunday or not, I found a cablegram in the vestry at the Tabernacle, from Mr. Cook, informing me that announcement had been made of the appointment of Rev. H. S. Curr, M.A., of Scotland, as Professor Matthews' successor, and requesting me to make enquiries as to his theological position. Mr. Cook said he would refrain from mailing copies of my letter until he should hear from me.

That morning Dr. McCaig, who for years had been Principal of Spurgeon's College, was in the congregation, sitting either with the Deacons or near by. At the close of the service I went to him and showed him the cablegram, enquiring whether he had any knowledge of Mr. Curr's position. He said he knew his position well, and that he believed he could pass Mr. Moody's test—which, I understand was to the effect that Mr. Moody said he could determine any man's attitude toward the Bible by his attitude toward the Book of Jonah. Dr. McCaig further informed me that he had been consulted by McMaster authorities on the subject, and had most cordially recommended Mr. Curr.

I do not know that I have ever had an interview with anyone which made me happier than Dr. McCaig's report of Mr. Curr's standing. I immediately cabled Mr. Cook the result of my interview, and the letters consequently were not mailed. Later, on my return to Canada, the parcel of letters was sent me by Mr. Cook, and they are still in my possession.

I may add here that on my arrival in Toronto from England in late September, 1919, I learned that the new Professor Rev. H. S. Curr had reached Toronto earlier, and had preached in Jarvis Street pulpit the preceding Sunday, and that the members generally were loud in their praises.

The letter which was thus printed, and prepared for circulation but never mailed, was as follows:

"Toronto, May 3rd, 1919.

"Chancellor A. L. McCrimmon, M.A., LL.D.,  
McMaster University, Toronto.

"My Dear Chancellor McCrimmon:

"I am venturing to write to you with respect to a matter which has long exercised my mind. It appears to me that the authorities of McMaster University have now before them an opportunity to place the University in such relation to the Denomination, as a whole, as would enable many who, for a long time, have been compelled conscientiously to refrain from a full and unreserved support of its work, to devote themselves to its interests without the least reservation, and with the utmost possible heartiness.

"But before I come to the subject I have in mind, let me clearly define my own position in relation to the University. I am deeply convinced that no department of our work more profoundly affects the life and character of the Denomination than that of McMaster University. For years I have longed to feel at liberty to give it unreserved and enthusiastic support. I am aware that no reasonable man will condition his support of an institution upon his being able, in all particulars, to agree with its administration; and I hope you will acquit me of any such opinionated intolerance as an attitude so conditioned would involve. But if, and when, the teachings of even one professor in an institution infringe, or, at the very least, compromise principles which a man holds to be vital to Christian faith, it is impossible for him to give indiscriminating support to such institution without compromising his own conscience.

"At the Convention held in the Bloor St. Church in 1910, at a critical juncture in the discussion of the Chancellor's report, fearing a split in the Convention, I accepted the responsibility of seconding an amendment to the report in the following terms:

"The Convention approves of the statement touching the attitude of the University to the Bible presented to the Senate on the 15th November, 1909, by the members of the Theological Faculty and relies on the Senate and Board of Governors to see that the teaching in the Institution is maintained in harmony therewith."

"This amendment, the Year Book for 1910 says, was 'carried by a large majority.'

"The excerpts from the statement touching the attitude of the University to the Bible—by the members of the Theological Faculty, which were embodied in the Chancellor's report, are as follows:

"The divine inspiration of the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, and their absolute supremacy and sufficiency in matters of faith and practice."

"The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience."

"The divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as a complete and infallible rule of faith and practice."

"That McMaster University should be organized and developed as a permanently independent Christian school of learning, with the Lordship of Christ as the controlling principle."

"In Christ all things consist."

"The paragraph of the Chancellor's report following these excerpts reads:

"These statements refer to fundamental doctrines, and indicate the attitude of the people of our Baptist Churches, as well as the attitude of the University, towards the Bible."

"I have quoted the terms of the Amendment, and the excerpts from the Theological Faculty's 'Statement' at length, that you may have them before you for convenient reference. They are taken from pp. 29 and 135, respectively, of the Baptist Year Book, 1910.

"The responsibility I assumed in seconding the Amendment referred to, at the Convention of 1910, compels me to address you now. For in that action, I assumed that the resolution was designed to avoid the disruption of the Convention, and to effect, at a not distant but convenient date, a vacancy in the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis. And while the date of that vacancy, as events have proved, was more remote than I then expected, it has at

last occurred; and it is with respect to that vacancy I now write you.

"During the interim I have been greatly perplexed as to what was my own duty in the premises. Students have on several occasions come to me with their complaints of the teaching of the Chair of Hebrew, and others have urged that some action should be taken. I have patiently waited, however, recognizing the difficulties in which the situation involved the Governing Bodies; and have tried to allay the fears of some by the expression of my own hope, that the undoubted and uncompromising loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God of other professors in the University, must be relied upon, until a change could be effected, to counteract, in some measure at least, the teachings of the Chair in question. But from all that I have heard from many quarters, and from witnesses of undoubted reliability, I am profoundly convinced that the Senate and Board of Governors, in respect to the Chair of Hebrew, have not justified the Convention's reliance, as expressed in the resolution I had the honour of seconding at the meeting held in the Bloor Street Church, October, 1910. And I am bound to confess, that in no other act of my public ministry have I found it so difficult to keep pace with my own conscience, as in refraining from protest against a situation which the resolution I supported was intended, as I supposed, conveniently to remedy, but to the continuance of which situation my own action had rendered me an unwilling accessory.

"And now, Mr. Chancellor, I write to you as the head of McMaster University, as I feel under the circumstances I am in honour bound to do; respectfully to remind you, and through you, the Governing Bodies of the University, of the position to which the Convention by solemn resolution stands committed. That there has been no recession by our people from the position taken by the Convention in 1910 is abundantly evident; for whatever else the Conference held in the Jarvis Street Church in February last may have meant it provided unmistakable and overwhelming proof that the Denomination as a whole still holds the conviction of 'the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, and their absolute supremacy and sufficiency in matters of faith and practice;' and the Convention has strictly enjoined the Senate and Board of Governors 'to see that the teaching in the Institution (McMaster University) is maintained in harmony therewith.'

"I am not authorized to express anyone's views but my own; but I am firmly of the opinion that it would be little short of disastrous for the Senate and Board to appoint to the Chair of Hebrew a professor holding views on that subject similar to the views held by the professor retiring. Hitherto those of us in the Denomination (and I believe they are overwhelmingly in the majority) who hold the historic Baptist view of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, have had no quarrel with McMaster University as a whole, but only with an individual professor. But if another man holding similar views to those held by the professor now retiring were deliberately appointed by the Senate and Board of Governors, in spite of the Convention's expressed conviction on this subject, and in disregard of the Convention's instructions to the Senate and Board of Governors in respect to the same, such an appointment would, in the nature of the case, compromise the entire University as an institution; and in such circumstances, acquiescence, or even neutrality, for a great multitude of people, in which I should certainly be included, would longer be absolutely impossible.

"On the other hand, if it were announced, perhaps even in advance, that the Governing Bodies would not consider the appointment of any man who was not avowedly and unmistakably in agreement with the Denomination's expressed convictions; or, if such an announcement could not wisely be made in advance, but the appointment being made, if it could be given out that the appointee had been selected, not alone for his scholarship, but for his uncompromising loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God, such an announcement would rally the whole Denomination to the University's support as nothing else could do. And let me add: the radical teachings of many theological seminaries are driving many young men to the short-course Bible colleges because of the well-known loyalty of these colleges to the Bible as the Word of God. I therefore believe that if McMaster University, now that opportunity offers, places herself strongly and openly on the side of the historic Baptist view of the Bible, she will almost certainly attract many students from the

United States; and may easily become in a few years, one of the most influential of the theological institutions on this continent.

"I offer no apology for this long letter. It deals with a subject of tremendous importance; and is the culmination of more than eight years of disquietude and deep dissatisfaction and concern in respect to the matter of which it treats. Moreover, I repeat, I have written because I conceive my action at the Convention of 1910 to involve an obligation, in view of the prospective vacation of the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis by the present occupant, to remind the Senate and Board of Governors of the Convention's solemn pronouncement on that occasion.

"If, as I hope, and shall earnestly pray, such an appointment as I have ventured to suggest, and such as I believe the Convention will expect, is made, I beg to assure you Mr. Chancellor, that McMaster will find no truer friend, and no more loyal supporter, than I.

"With much respect, I beg to subscribe myself,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) T. T. SHIELDS.

"P.S.—As this letter is not in any sense confidential, I have read it to a few friends, one of whom suggests that I should make it clear that the letter is not intended to be personal; but is written with a view to its presentation to the Senate and Board of Governors; I beg to request therefore, that it be so regarded.

T. T. S."

## THE BIBLE AND BRITAIN'S FOREIGN POLICY

It may seem presumptuous to some minds for a layman to express an opinion on so abstruse a subject as the foreign policy of the British Empire. Notwithstanding, of ancient time prophets of Jehovah often gave wise counsel to the king; and when Elisha was dying, the king of Israel exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." He recognized that the prophet's supernatural wisdom had been to the nation a greater defense than all the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

We have no inside information upon which to base a judgment of the wisdom of Britain's foreign policy, but on broad principles we have this criticism to offer. It seems to us that Mr. Anthony Eden has determined Britain's course solely on the ground of physical considerations. History abounds, however, with proof of the fact that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; that other than physical considerations must be taken into account if the problems of life are to be forecast with even approximate accuracy.

The Bible abounds with historical incidents in which forces of righteousness, though overwhelmingly out-numbered by the forces of evil, were victorious, for the simple reason that God was with them. The history of the British Empire is not without examples of the same principle. Wellington, in Spain itself, is said to have defeated a hundred thousand of the enemy with a small force of ten thousand men. We believe the cynical saying that God is on the side of the big battalions is not true. On the contrary, whoever is on God's side can confidently assert in respect to the enemies of righteousness, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them."

It seems to us that the British Foreign Office must have forgotten that there is a God, and that only righteousness is invincible and exalteth a nation.

In the civil war in Spain, notwithstanding the apparently Communistic complexion of the present Government of the country, the Government against whose rule Franco rebelled, was the constitutionally-elected Government of the country, and was supported by eighty-five per cent. of the people, and was far from being wholly Communistic. Why should the British Government have declared its neutrality in respect to a constitutional government to which it is diplomatically related? Our historical knowledge is not sufficiently extensive to warrant our saying that such a course is without precedent. Notwithstanding, we seriously doubt whether a precedent for such an unusual course can be found.

We can see no just grounds for Britain's neutrality in such a crisis. She ought to have been whole-heartedly sympathetic toward the constitutional Government of Spain. And if that Government had been permitted to obtain the necessary supplies, beyond question, Franco would have been driven from

the field long ago. The magnitude of the Spanish disaster, it seems to us, must be laid to Mr. Eden's ineptitude; for it appears to us that if there is a possible wrong way of doing anything, Mr. Eden is sure to find it.

Britain's neutrality in respect to the Spanish civil war served the same purpose as the ridiculous "sanctions" imposed on Italy by the League of Nations, and the League's neutrality respecting Ethiopia. It made it impossible for Ethiopia to arm, while it enabled Mussolini to get all he wanted from Germany through Austria—and oil from everywhere. The Neutrality Pact respecting Spain has largely shut off supplies from the Loyalist forces, while Italy and Germany have taken advantage of it to send, not only provisions, but men, to Franco's aid.

What are the indisputable facts of the case? So far as we can see, there is nothing to choose between Hitler and Mussolini. They are both such liars as would almost bring the blush of shame to the cheek of Beelzebub. They are robbers and murderers, who should have been outlawed by all law-abiding nations. And yet we have to suffer the humiliation of seeing Britain refuse to take the hand of a constitutional Government in Spain fighting for its very life, while entering into negotiation with such outlaws as Mussolini and Hitler, for the preservation of the world's peace!

Armed bandits consent to peace only on condition they are given freedom to get away with their plunder. If such terms are denied, the police must fight. For Britain to have permitted the rape of Ethiopia and the remilitarization of the Rhineland was to embark upon a course for which ultimately we shall have to pay a terrible price in blood and treasure. Long ago we said—and wrote—that Germany was in the position of a bandit with a few dollars, who debated the question as to whether he should spend what little he had on food or on arms, but who decided to buy a revolver and a supply of ammunition, and to go without his dinner—in the hope that he would be able to shoot himself out to liberty. By so doing, however, he puts himself in a position in which, having no food, quick decision was indispensable to his safety; for he had no resources with which to stand a siege. So was it with Germany. Germany, economically, is as hollow as a drum. She cannot possibly have food sufficient to maintain her for any length of time.

We believe that Britain and France should have thrown down the gauntlet when Hitler marched his troops across the Rhine. Premier Baldwin said that Britain's frontier is no longer the Channel, but the Rhine. If that be true, Hitler was permitted, in violation of treaty obligations, to establish himself on our Eastern frontier. If it be objected that Britain was not ready, it may be answered that she was probably relatively as ready then as she is now; for while Britain has been rapidly re-arming, in the same time Germany and Italy have been piling up armaments too.

We are greatly disturbed by the company Anthony Eden is keeping. It is a new day in British diplomacy when the British Government must consort with common murderers whose hands are dripping with blood. We are sure that God still reigns, and that if the British Foreign Office would take account of moral forces as well as of material forces, it would find a solution to the world's present problems. Meanwhile, lovers of righteousness must sit in sackcloth and ashes, and pray that Anthony Eden may see the light.

One cannot help wondering where the Spanish rebels are getting the money for their campaign. Can there be any reasonable doubt that the practically illimitable financial resources of the Vatican are supporting Franco? And why is Britain's official sympathy, so thinly disguised as to amount to a benevolent neutrality, leaning toward Franco?

An emasculated, devitalized Protestantism has permitted Romanism to make great headway in Great Britain—in Scotland as well as in England. The displacement of the Bible both by many in the Church of England, and by many in Non-conformist denominations, has removed the barriers to Rome's progress. Indeed, it has given rise to the destructive, and virtually disguised anarchistic doctrines of religious and political pacifism. These so-called pacific principles have stripped both the church and state of their defenses, and has encouraged the rampant growth of every conceivable religious and political poison, to the world's impoverishment and confusion.

Does Anglo-Catholicism, which is but Romanism disguised, so dominate the National Government as to determine its sympathies in the Spanish crisis? We wonder.

## THE PAPACY IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Thursday  
Evening, December 17th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

We ought not to approach a subject like this lightly. However greatly men may differ from one another in matters of religion, and however strongly they may speak—and sometimes they must so speak—in reference to such subjects, we should at least discuss them in a spirit of reverence; for even people who are in great error, often are profoundly sincere, and to make light of matters which others hold to be true, even though they hold them in error, is only to offend, and can accomplish no good.

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest body in the world bearing the Christian name. That, in itself, is enough to challenge attention, and to merit careful examination. The Roman Catholic Church does not apologize for its existence; it never compromises its position; but boldly declares its own convictions as to its mission; and endeavours to convert others to an acceptance of its teaching. With that attitude I am in full accord. A man ought not to be ashamed of that which he professes to believe. If we believe we have the truth, we should hold it fast without apology or compromise. We should "buy the truth, and sell it not." No one need be ashamed of believing the truth. Truth is never hurt by discussion. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The Roman Catholic Church does not call itself one of many churches: it claims to be the one and only holy apostolic church. It calls itself the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church. It calls itself "Catholic" in the sense that it claims to be the whole and only church, having universal sovereignty over the souls of men. It goes so far as to say positively that there is no salvation outside of the Roman Catholic Church; and that submission to the Roman Pontiff is absolutely indispensable to salvation. Whether its claims can be justified or not, a church that so boldly makes such extraordinary claims for itself, should certainly be examined, and studied carefully.

Nor can our Roman Catholic friends—I would suggest to you that it is never appropriate to speak of the Roman Catholic Church as a Catholic church without the qualifying adjective "Roman"—making such claims, reasonably object to anyone's investigating as fully as may be possible the validity of that church's contention. It is never profitable to discuss any religious subject merely for the sake of disproving it. It is well always, if you would understand a subject, having divested your mind so far as is possible of all preconceptions, to come to a study of it with an open mind, and without prejudice. That is a difficult task. Sometimes we think we are without prejudice when really we come with a very settled attitude were we able to discern it.

There is a way to study all such matters, and that is in the light of Holy Scripture. Every religion should be tested by the standards of the word of God. It is possible to discuss many things that are unscriptural, in such a way, and in such a spirit, as to do ourselves and others more harm than good. I believe, for the Christian, it is never wise to consider any such subject apart from the light of Scripture itself. It is impossible to

bring any disputed subject to the touchstone of the Word of God without deriving profit therefrom: one either learns the subject under consideration to be untrue, or, finding it to be scripturally established, one is confirmed in belief of it.

Some people face the religious problems of the day by buying as many books on the subjects as possible; and by reading them to the utter exclusion of the one supreme authority, the Bible itself. They form the habit of reading books about the Bible, and never give the Bible an opportunity to speak for itself. We have read of scientists who, in the endeavour to isolate the germs of certain diseases, have fallen victims to the plague they hoped to banish. For the Christian there is only one safe way to discuss any religious subject, and that by comparing it with the teaching of the Word of God: in that light is our only safety.

When examining a subject like this, it is important to let people or institutions speak for themselves. If I were a Modernist, and were to write a book, I should not object to people's reading my book, and judging me by what I have written. Were I a Roman Catholic, I should not object to anyone's studying Roman Catholic books, and learning what the Roman Catholic Church teaches. It is easy to set up straw men, and to appear very heroic in knocking them down. I know a certain man, a very likeable man, but a Modernist to the core, who is fond of speaking after this fashion of the Evangelical or Fundamentalist position: describing some absurd idea which no sane Evangelical ever believed, he exclaims: "If I had to believe that"—and forthwith describes some still more absurd position to which, as an alternative, he would be driven. But nobody ever believed what the gentleman imagines. So that his vaunted heroics are quite unnecessary. He does not know what orthodoxy is. He sets up a view of the atonement which nobody ever conceived, even in a nightmare. His knowledge of evangelical orthodoxy has been derived from a study of its caricatures.

It would be possible, thus, to take a fling at the Church of Rome—or for the Church of Rome to take a fling at us, and while doing so for each to misrepresent the other. The best way to study the Roman Catholic Church is to let it speak for itself, and to judge it out of its own mouth; and see wherein the Roman Catholic Church differs from positions commonly held by Protestants.

I have here a Roman Catholic work entitled, "The Papacy". It is not the book from which I quoted last Sunday; but it consists of "papers from the Summer School of Catholic Studies held at Cambridge, August 7th to 10th, 1923"—not quite so recent as the essays from which I quoted in my Sunday evening sermon, and which you will find in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. But it is a work only thirteen years old. These addresses were delivered at a Summer School in Cambridge University, England. The one from which I quote is by Rev. Hugh Pope, Doctor of Sacred Scripture. He begins with this simple statement:

"For a Catholic, the Papacy is the key to the whole religious question. For—to put it concisely—we believe the doctrines of our faith, not because we fancy we discover them set forth in the New Testament, nor because a vague entity called 'the Church' has held them, but because the visible teaching Church—the *Corpus Christi*, or Body of Christ—has taught them, and continues to teach them, through its Head on earth, the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ."

We are here told the Papacy is the cardinal matter, the key to the whole religious question. That is why,



when entering upon a discussion of religious authority, in relation to the Roman Catholic Church, I begin with a study of the claims of the Papacy in the light of Holy Scripture.

I quote again from the same authority:

"Now, if the Catholic doctrine of the Papacy is true, it must find solid justification in the New Testament—the charter of Christianity."

Personally, I did not know it was there! I have read the New Testament a great many times, and for myself I never found anything remotely suggestive of the Papacy. But here is a great scholar, who tells us the Papacy is taught in the New Testament. I feel therefore that I have read the New Testament to little purpose, if this Roman contention be true, since I have failed to discover even a suggestion of this claim. I turn to this Roman Catholic author to discover the grounds of the Papacy as set forth by Roman Catholics themselves, and am told "it must find solid justification in the New Testament".

We shall, I trust, all say, Amen, to that. That, of course, brings us immediately to the New Testament, to see what it has to say about the Papacy. I shall examine the various texts which this authority quotes.

He begins with Matthew. If you have your Bibles, will you turn to the sixteenth chapter. I shall read from the thirteenth to the nineteenth verses:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

You will see that this Roman Catholic author does not begin with a definition of the church as such: he begins with the Papacy, for we are told that "the Papacy is the key to the whole religious question". Naturally, if you are going to describe a house, you will begin with the foundation upon which it rests. This author insists that when our Lord said to Peter, "Thou art Peter"—and, as you know, the word means rock—"and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", that He there intended to teach that Peter is the rock upon which He will build His church. That is the Roman Catholic interpretation. They go farther and insist that Peter was given a peculiar and special revelation: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Let us examine that for a moment. Surely no one can fairly contend that there is any implication here of a peculiar and special revelation to Peter, a revelation not given to all who recognize in Jesus the Son of God: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." There is no knowing God by any mere rational processes. God is not discoverable to the human mind. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." All spiritual truth, the

New Testament teaches, comes to us by revelation. It is not something that can be discovered by a test-tube, nor be discerned through microscope or telescope. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Whatever we know of God, we learn by revelation from Heaven.

That is all our Lord intended to say to Peter when he acknowledged Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God: "You have not discovered that for yourself. You could not possibly know that great truth, except God reveal it unto you." And that is true of everyone who recognizes in Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

The language of the text itself, its grammatical construction, cannot fairly be made to yield the interpretation which our Roman Catholic friends put upon it. "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock"—not upon *thee* as the rock, but "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We shall later see what that Rock was.

Peter has just proclaimed the doctrine of the essential Deity of Christ, the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus; and He has said, "You did not learn that for yourself: it was revealed to you; and upon this rock, upon that revealed truth, will I build my church."

And let me anticipate later studies by saying that this same Peter, when preaching on the day of Pentecost, led his hearers up to that magnificent conclusion, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." It was when he thus proclaimed the Lordship, the Deity, of Christ on the day of Pentecost, that the people were cut to the heart and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? We have been mistaken. If that be true, that the Jesus we crucified is none other than the Son of God, how shall we adjust ourselves to that great truth?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." That was the only way by which they could come into right relation to God.

Again: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." What do we mean by the "keys of the kingdom of heaven"? Are we to suppose that the Lord did select an ordinary mortal, a man, and hand over to him absolute authority under the figure of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven", and say, "It shall be for you to say whether a man shall enter or stay without"? That is the teaching of Rome, but apart from that particular text, for the moment, can anyone who has even the most superficial knowledge of the New Testament, contend that that strange doctrine finds any support anywhere in the New Testament? "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." We shall come later to consider what the early disciples, and the apostolic church, understood by these sayings of our Lord, but I anticipate that later more thorough investigation by making that enquiry.

Many of you have at least a general knowledge of the text of the New Testament: you can think through it at a glance. When that doctrine is proclaimed, that the Lord God did select a particular man, other than the Lord Jesus, to whom He committed the destiny of immortal souls, instantly you will rebel against it, saying,

"I never saw that in the New Testament." That, in general. But we must come to particulars.

What did He mean by "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"? You may recall one place in Luke where our Lord spoke to the lawyers who were before him—and they were not lawyers in the sense in which we use that term to-day: They were men who were learned in the law of Moses—saying, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." He spoke of the knowledge of God's law as a key of which the people had been deprived. What did our Lord mean when he spoke of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven", more than that to the apostles—and to all others who should yield themselves to Christ, and should constitute the spiritual body of Christ, and who should be put in trust with the gospel, to whom the gospel should be committed for proclamation to others—what did He mean more than that a key was entrusted to their charge wherewith to unlock the kingdom of God?

Everybody who has the gospel, has the key to the kingdom of God. How often those of you who have had some experience have found one who was anxious to be saved, but who had no knowledge. He did not know where to begin. He was like a man fumbling at a door, not knowing how to open it. You have come with your Bible and sat down with him, and quoted, perhaps, John: three, sixteen, and other verses, pointing out the way of life, until the man has said, "I see it now. I believe." He has been born again, and entered into the kingdom. Everybody who has been put in trust with the gospel, and whose mind has been enlightened by the Spirit of God, and is competent to teach His Word, has, in a sense, the "keys to the kingdom of heaven", in the key of knowledge.

Once more: "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." That word was not spoken exclusively to Peter. Turn to the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, verse eighteen, and read this: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If you say, "That only transfers from Peter to the Church collectively the same authority", I would have you observe that it is surely not without significance that the very next verse, spoken almost in the same breath, reads as follows: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Undoubtedly the prayer of faith of any believer can loose things in heaven—and bind them; and can loose things on earth, and bind them. Our Lord said to His disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Surely the loosing and binding do not imply some judicial, official, authority which a man exercises by virtue of an official position he holds. It is a spiritual authority, exercised by those who agree in faith, and who petition Heaven—and whose prayers are heard.

This Roman Catholic author labours to show that Peter is frequently mentioned first among the disciples. That is not extraordinary. Select any dozen men, and there will probably be some distinguishing quality about

one of them which will secure his primacy among the group. It may not be that he is personally superior to the others, nor that he is officially the first, but that he is more aggressive, has more initiative, is more outspoken. For example, I should not like to distinguish between various members of this church, but I have known occasionally of someone's saying that people are not very sociable in Jarvis Street Church. I heard of a man who said that recently—and he always sits in the back seat, and is out of the door as soon as the benediction is pronounced. There are many who are naturally of a retiring disposition, but who are in no sense inferior. But there are other positive characters. In their daily occupation they take the initiative, they must do so; and whenever you meet such characters you become conscious of the presence of a positive personality.

If I were to ask you after a service in this church, "Who was present?" you would instantly name someone first—but it would not mean that you think he is the Pope! Or that he was superior to anyone else. He was himself. He could not help it. But you could not look upon the congregation without recognizing such a man was there, or such a woman. After the service is dismissed, I can think of some immediately, and some come more slowly to mind. But to say that because Peter is occasionally mentioned first is to imply that his primacy was recognized among the disciples, proves nothing so much as the want of a better argument.

Peter's confession is given us not in the Synoptic Gospels alone, but is set out in John's Gospel as well, though under other circumstances. Only in Matthew are these special promises associated with it. I was interested to observe that this Roman Catholic authority explains the absence of any reference to Peter's primacy in Mark's Gospel. He says—and I think in that he is probably correct—that Mark received much of his information from Peter, and that there is a very distinct Petrean influence observable in Mark's Gospel. For that reason, words or incidents which would appear to give more importance to Peter than to others are omitted—because this first Pope was so modest that he refrained from telling Mark anything that especially applied to himself!

He attributes Mark's silence in respect to some of these matters to the alleged fact that he obtained his information from Peter, and that Peter was too modest to tell him. If it be true, that modesty was a distinguishing characteristic of the first Pope he certainly discovered some way of avoiding its transmission to all his successors. No Pope who ever succeeded to the throne of Peter—if that could be allowed for a moment—was ever noted for his modesty.

I am glad to observe little things like that, for it is quite obvious that this was written, in part, with the hope that it might reach the eye of Protestants, and that evangelicals would naturally make their appeal to the Scripture. So this controversialist wisely, from his point of view, endeavours to take all objectors on their own ground by beginning with the New Testament. I presume he has made the best of it. I have read many books on this subject, and have examined not a few Roman Catholic authors, and they all labour that passage in the sixteenth chapter of Mark. That is their great charter. I am constrained to say to them, "If that is the best you can do; if it be so that the Roman Catholic Church is the one and only church, and that the Pope is the supreme head of the Church, and that there is no salvation apart from the Church, or without submission

to the Pope, is it not strange that it should require such great ingenuity to establish your position?"

I need not quote the passages which speak of the confession of Peter in Mark, Luke, and John. But in John, chapter twenty-one, verses fifteen to seventeen—this author calls attention to the fact that John's Gospel was written to establish the truth of the Deity of Christ; and of course that is generally recognized: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Those of you who are familiar with John's Gospel will have recognized that the twenty-first chapter is a kind of postscript. The Gospel seems naturally to close with the verses I have just quoted: "These are written, that ye might believe." Then the writer begins again, and adds the twenty-first chapter. This Roman Catholic author quite ingenuously imagines that the special reason for the addition of this chapter was that the author, by the Holy Ghost, desired to set forth the primacy of St. Peter!

Let us look at it:

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto Him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

Three times Peter was here commissioned as a shepherd of the sheep, to feed the lambs and the sheep of the flock. And on this authority our author assumes Peter to have been made the supreme shepherd!

A Sunday School boy in the Junior Department ought to know better than that. Everyone knows that Peter three times had denied his Lord, and that subsequent to the resurrection he had had a private audience with his Lord—and this scholar tries to make something of that. "He appeared unto Simon." The Lord has a way of doing that with backsliders, dealing with them privately, giving them a chance to repent. To me, it is significant that there is not in Scripture a word recorded of that interview. There is no Oxford Groupism there. Peter alone settled that matter with his Lord, and was forgiven. Then the Lord gave him an opportunity for a threefold public declaration of his love for Him. But who would ever imagine, reading that, apart from the pretensions of Rome, that it was designed to exalt Peter?

On the contrary, Peter was humiliated by it, almost as though he would say, "O Lord, do not remind everybody of my fall. I have said I love Thee:" "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me." He would not have been grieved had he interpreted it after the fashion of the Roman Catholic Church—but would have been proud of the special distinction accorded him by this alleged threefold commission.

The Modernists tell us that it is very dangerous to endeavour to support a given position by citing texts of Scripture in proof. They tell us, for instance, that it is useless to endeavour to establish the truth of the Deity of Christ by quoting Scripture. I grant you that

a doctrine is not established by the citation of a single scripture, to the exclusion of the general teaching of the Word. A text may be wrested from its context, and made to convey something opposite to the primary meaning which may be read on the face of it when considered with its context. The way to study Scripture is to compare spiritual things with spiritual. Hence it is not enough to study these particular scriptures to which I have referred, and to which we are referred by our Roman Catholic author.

If the Roman Catholic contention be true, and Peter was really accorded the primacy, and was by divine intention exalted above all his brethren, then the first people to understand that would be the people who were Peter's contemporaries. And certainly of all people, Peter himself should have understood it. He should have known he was a pope, and should have acted as a pope. James, John, and the early church, should have known and recognized it, and accorded him the first place.

Did they? Can that contention be supported? Take for example the first passage quoted, in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Later in the chapter it says, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter—you are mistaken, Your Holiness"? Oh, no. "Get thou behind me, Satan." I think at that point Peter did resemble some of the Popes! Said our Lord, "Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God."

Our Lord did not recognize Peter as being superior to the other disciples when, having just made his confession, he showed that he was not immune to the attacks of the evil one by objecting to the programme that the Lord had just announced. Christ did not then, or at any other time, accord the primacy to Peter. Someone has remarked that the only time Peter acted like a pope was when he drew his sword and cut off a man's ear; but there is nothing to indicate that our Lord accorded Peter the first place.

Furthermore, *Peter did not claim it for himself*—and Peter was not particularly reluctant to claim anything; he was never backward in coming forward. I think the true interpretation of these passages in which Peter appears so prominently is that he was naturally a man of initiative, a man of positive conviction, a man of impulse, a man who was a born leader of men; and when there was anything to be said, he said it; where there was anything to be done, he did it. We have all met people like that. Very naturally, they are mentioned first. There was all that about Peter, but he never claimed superiority over his brethren.

There were three whom our Lord took with Him on several occasions. To the mount of transfiguration He took Peter—but He took James and John as well. Into the room where lay the body of the ruler's daughter, he went, excluding everybody except the parents, and Peter, James, and John. When He went to the garden, not all the disciples followed Him closely; but He did take Peter, James, and John—not Peter alone. Those three were close to Him, but Peter never assumed, before Pentecost or afterward, the position of one who had

been appointed by the Founder of the church as its supreme visible head.

We have two epistles written by Peter, as well as the record of his missionary endeavours in the Acts of the Apostles, and we have several references to him in Paul's epistles, notably Galatians and First Corinthians; but in none of these does it appear that either Peter or the other disciples recognized that Peter had been given a place superior to that of the other apostles.

With two or three simple observations, I must close for to-night. Peter was the preacher, on the day of Pentecost. Peter preached, but he "stood up with the eleven". It was very natural that Peter should speak. When a députation waits upon the government, or any public body, someone is usually appointed to speak for the group. Peter very frequently did the speaking, and on the day of Pentecost, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he "stood up with the eleven". But when they were asked, "What shall we do?" Peter said nothing to indicate that membership in a particular human society, or submission to a particular human authority was a term of salvation. He said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . . then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

In the eighth of Acts we read that "Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Then follows an account of the blessing of God upon His word and we read again: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent forth Peter and John." Think of it, "The apostles which were at Jerusalem"—"sent Peter." Peter did not remain in Jerusalem, sitting upon a throne, "reigning" over the church: he was commissioned by the church, and he went down to add his testimony to that of Philip, and to confirm the saints. Then you will recall how he was specially commissioned to go to Caesarea, and how he preached the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile. Thereafter the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had received the word of God—you have the account in the eleventh of Acts—those who were of the circumcision contended with Peter saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." And Peter explained and justified his conduct. But at that day no one believed in Peter's infallibility. Later (Acts fifteen), there was a discussion as to circumcision, and at that assembly, not Peter, but James, presided. At the conclusion, it was James who summed up their findings; and they commanded the people to abstain from blood and certain other things.

We see therefore that the apostles called Peter to account. They did not regard him as a "holy father", who, speaking, *ex cathedra* was infallible. Although he had been the church's mouthpiece on the day of Pentecost, he was still required to give an account to his brethren and explain his conduct.

Later Paul writes in Galatians, and records how Peter behaved himself rather strangely, and states, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." He read the "holy father" a lecture! Not privately but "before them all". Think of any Roman Catholic doing that to the Pope! But Peter was blameworthy.

In the same epistle Paul speaks of "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars"—but he did not call

Peter the pope. He was one of three "pillars", but not the head of the church. Then again to the Corinthian church, Paul writes in his first epistle, chapter three, saying, "One saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos." That was tantamount to saying, according to our Roman Catholic friends, that there were some who preferred Paul and Apollos to the Pope! But Paul said they were but ministers by whom they had believed. It is true Paul did not mention Cephas when he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase", but the implication of equality was there.

Paul said of himself—and he wrote the greater part of the New Testament—"I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." Paul did not recognize the supremacy, the primacy of Peter.

I am sure the contention of our Roman Catholic friends cannot be supported by Scripture, but we shall pursue our study further in a later lecture.

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 First Quarter Lesson 3 January 17th, 1937

DR. T. T. SHIELDS, EDITOR

### ASSURANCE OF SALVATION THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Lesson Text: John 3:1-19.

Golden Text: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."  
—John 5:24.

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 18:10-14; John 6:37-40, 47, 48; John 10:27-29; I. John 1:8-10.

I. Make it clear that the answer to our faith is anticipated in the promises of God's Word. A dollar-bill is the Government's promise to pay. Having issued the bill, it does not need to employ the newspapers and radio to assure people that the Government's word will be honoured. The bill is not intended to be framed as an ornament, nor to be examined by a microscope to afford a subject of discussion: it is intended that whoever has the bill should estimate it at its face value, and use it to buy what is needed.

So the promises of God are like money, bearing the signature of the President of Heaven's bank, God Himself; and He expects us to use His promises as we use money, to obtain that which our souls desire. Therefore, desiring salvation, we should ask for it, and, on the ground of the face value of the promises, believe that we have received it.

II. We should make it clear that faith is a more enduring foundation upon which to base our hope of eternal life, than feeling. Faith relates us to God: feeling only to ourselves. Our moods change with the weather, and our feelings are affected by circumstances, by one's own physical condition, by one's age. But the word of God is independent of our feelings, and it does not change with the years. Therefore, when we believe the word of God, faith anchors us to something which does not change, but remains the same whether we are sick or well, poor or rich, young or old, happy or sad. Emphasis therefore should be laid upon the absolutely dependability of the word of God. The promises of God are our assurance of salvation.

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