

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

"THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 7th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

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"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
—II. Corinthians 4:6

How far man, in his own wisdom, has departed from the ways of God, may be observed when men's conception of the requirements of salvation, of what salvation really is, are compared with God's plan of saving men as revealed in His Word. Salvation is usually construed in terms of human effort; through ordinances, through institutions, through prayers and alms-giving, through some form of duty-doing—by works of righteousness which men themselves may do—men hope to find standing before a holy God.

But the text before us lifts the whole matter out of the sphere of human thought and endeavour, and sublimates it to the height of a creation which in the nature of the case is exclusively the work of God Himself. We are taken back, not only to the beginning of things, but to the Beginner. We are told that the same Person Who operated in the creation of this ordered universe, operates in the soul when a man is saved; that the work of salvation is not the work of men, but the work of God; and an analogy is here instituted between the creation of the physical order and the recreation of the soul.

Man's utmost effort is directed toward the understanding of the material universe about him, to a study of its laws, the operation of its hidden forces, to discover how he may adjust himself to natural laws, and how he may use these natural superhuman powers for his profit. No wise man presumes even to try to re-make the universe. He will do well if he understands even a little of its operation, and learns how to adjust himself to it. We shall be wise too if we abandon all efforts to invent a new gospel, or to amend the old. It will be our highest wisdom to

discern the principles of the gospel which the grace of God has provided, and conform to them, that thereby we may be saved.

Let us look into our text, although it is too profound for adequate exposition in the time at our disposal. I often long for heaven, literally. I think it will be one of the joys of heaven to talk with each other about the works of God, and about our glorious Lord Himself. Then we shall not be troubled by the clock, for "time shall be no more". I often tell you Jarvis Street people that here in this workshop we are trying to get ready for that heavenly condition!

I.

So then to the fundamental principle of the text itself. WE ARE REFERRED TO THE INITIAL ACT OF GOD IN THE MATERIAL CREATION. We are told that "God commanded the light to shine out of darkness". That is to say, the original condition was one of unrelieved darkness. There was no sun to shine, no star to twinkle in the firmament—nor was there indeed any firmament; only dense, universal, unrelieved, darkness; and upon that scene of darkness God came and, like a good workman, before He went to work, turned on His light. He began the work of creation by saying, "Let there be light." All light is from God, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

It is a simple statement of truth that the order of nature began with the giving of light. Even before sun or moon was created, or the myriad stars were flung into space, light, in some mysterious way, pervaded that

scene which had formerly been nothing but darkness. God said, "Let there be light"—"And there was light."

We are reminded that *light was created by the word of the Lord*. I do not understand it, neither do you—nor can any man of science explain it. Indeed, I do not know that we are yet aware of what light really is. We may labour to define it, but all such definitions are inadequate. But the Bible tells us that when God said, "Let there be light", "there was light". I shall not go into that physical phenomenon. I am not a scientist, I know no more about science than do many preachers who talk much about it, and attempt a reconciliation between science and revelation. It is far better that we should take the Word of God as it stands, and frankly confess that there are some things in it we do not understand. Then the only difference between us and some who loudly profess to be able to explain everything, will be that we shall be telling the truth.

God said, "Let there be light", and somehow light was created by His almighty fiat. You cannot tell me how the thunder of Niagara is converted into the music of this organ; nor how the might of the waters expresses itself in the light which shines here upon my desk, and illumines this room. But such is the fact, that somehow that power is converted into light. If once we postulate God; and admit that God is infinite in all the qualities of His being, and that therefore He must be infinite in power as in holiness, then behind His every word, and resident in it, is the almightiness which is uniquely His; and therefore when God said, "Let there be light", there was light—there had to be light, for the will of God was in that command.

That is enough for the physical basis of our argument. We know that from the Old Testament, which has the endorsement and approval of the New.

II.

We are told that **THE SAME POWER, THE SAME PERSON, OPERATES IN THE SALVATION OF MAN, AND THAT THE SAME ORDER OF PROCEDURE IS OBSERVED**. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." Or, more emphatically, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is he Who hath shined in our hearts."

Whatever salvation is, it is something which God does; and just as surely as the original creation was exclusively the work of God, without the employment even of human instrumentality, or human agency, as surely as God spake and it was done, and commanded and it stood fast, so we are told that salvation is exclusively the work of God. If we would know what it is to be saved, we must come to God. It is He, my text says, Who does it.

I shall not belittle human learning. I shall not undervalue human investigation; but after all is said and done, is it not better to go to headquarters for our authority? Why listen to the man of science, great as he may be? Why listen to the religious philosopher as he spins his theories? Why listen to anyone, anywhere, as to how to be saved? Our text says it is God Who saves, none other than the One Who created this universe from naught. Therefore He may logically be presumed to be the Person to tell us what is involved in salvation.

I want, as a foundation for your faith, to call you away from trust, or from partial trust, or even limited dependence upon, any and all human agencies, upon secondary causes; and bid you look to God Himself, and

to remember that no one else can possibly save us. The Psalmist said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." I want you to see that it takes no less than the wisdom and power of the One Who made heaven and earth, to save a single soul. If we are to be saved, we must get through all instrumentalities to God Himself; we must know something of His divine power in our own experience.

Our text teaches us that *the heart of man, in its natural state, is comparable to that original condition of unrelieved darkness*. The fact is, men know nothing about God. It would save us from much confusion if we could always bear that in mind.

Suppose there were a subject commanding your attention which is beyond the knowledge of ordinary men, and which can be understood only by someone who is expert in a particular science; let it be meteorology, or astronomy, or biology—something that is not understood by one who has not given study to the particular subject. Whose opinion would you seek on a subject of that sort? To whom would you resort for information? Naturally, you would turn to one who was known to be expert in that department of knowledge.

God knows the human heart—and no one else does. And He says that until He comes, until He touches it into light and life, it is a thing of darkness. Men did not like "to retain God in their knowledge." There is some man yonder in the University who presumes to sit in judgment upon the Bible. He tells us something about the text of it, gives us something of its history, and undertakes to interpret it, to give us something of the grammar of it, and to tell us what it means—but he does not know. You say, "But he is a great scholar, a Greek scholar." I do not exaggerate when I say that it is quite possible for a man or woman who can barely spell out the letters of the English text, to get closer to the heart of Scripture, than the greatest Greek scholar who ever lived if he is without the Spirit of God. The human heart is dark. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

There are thousands of books that are written to-day, and that engage the thought of ministers of the gospel, who waste their time on the opinions of men who discuss a subject of which they do not know even the alphabet. Nobody knows anything about God until God introduces Himself. When men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind". And what did they do? They tried to imagine what God is like. What folly to apply the principle of the evolutionary hypothesis to religious knowledge! This is the record of man's unaided pursuit of religious knowledge: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." They "advanced" to such an extent that they at last compared God to reptiles, and worshipped them as being representative of God. Left to himself, man never discovers God; for the natural heart is darkness itself.

But the text says that when God saves the soul, *He follows the same order He followed in creation*. The Lord did not make the earth to bring forth and bud in the darkness. He did not make the trees to grow, the flowers to bloom, and the fruit to hang in luscious clus-

ters from the branches, in a world that was wrapped in a midnight pall. First of all He said, "Let there be light"; and afterward went to work.

There are forms of religion to-day which not only consist in dressing up a Christmas tree, but in dressing it up in the dark, and its votaries do not know what they put on the tree. The order of the new creation is the order of the old. God begins with light, and the "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness", is He Who has shined in our hearts. HE does it. I affirm there is no knowledge of God—there can be no knowledge of God, no understanding of God in the mind of any man, until it is divinely and directly communicated. God shines into the human heart.

There is someone here to-night who told me a few weeks ago the story of her conversion. Listening to a friend preach from this pulpit, she said that even as he spoke something happened in her soul. She knew she was different. The next night another friend spoke, and even as he spoke the word of the Lord, the light broke upon her soul, and she knew that she was saved. It is God Who does it—not the church, or its ordinances, the priest or the preacher; but God only shines into our darkened hearts.

How does He do it? As He did in the beginning. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness." *He does it through His word.* I cannot tell you how it is that, hearing the word of God, shows a man he is a sinner; but I know it does. I cannot tell you how it is that "the entrance of (his) words giveth light"; but it does.

A friend of mine, whom I visited in the country some years ago, asked me if he might show me a curiosity. "I want you to come", said he, "down to the four corners, and have a talk with the blacksmith, a man of about forty years of age. He has never been at school in his life, but was converted four years ago. He did not know the alphabet, but he got his little girl, who was attending school, to teach him to read. Little by little he learned, and as soon as he was able to do so he turned to his Bible. He will tell you how often he has read the Bible through. But talk with him on any subject, and you will find him an intelligent man.

We went down to the blacksmith shop, and talked with this man. I said, "Your Pastor tells me you have taken to the Bible, and that you find delight in it." "It is the chief delight of my life to study it," he said. "Tell me how far you have gone." "I have been through the entire Bible several times, and have just finished the fortieth journey through the New Testament—and I find it more interesting each time." I discussed with him subjects that were not strictly religious, and I discovered that keeping company with the Word of God, entertaining God's thoughts, had sharpened his faculties so that he was able to form an intelligent opinion on any subject with which his mind dealt. He was in the truest sense, though but four years a Christian, an educated man—not of the largest knowledge, but of disciplined powers, able to take hold of any subject.

The entrance of God's word giveth light. The man who has learned to think God's thoughts after him, and has opened his mind to the word of the Lord, will be able to view with an enlightened and sanctified intellect the whole realm of truth, in every department of human knowledge; and will be able to hold his own with anyone.

I am to speak Thursday evening about Mr. D. L. Moody, who began as an unlettered man; the man who had very little schooling, who as a young man knew very, very little, but who was saved, and who yielded himself to God, and kept company with God's Book, until at last, a man of one Book, he was the peer of princes, and the equal of the greatest men of all the earth. The man who lives in daily converse with the Son of God as He communicates Himself through the holy Word, need never be ashamed to keep company with anyone, however learned he may be.

I remind you then that the light that comes from God, comes always through the Word of God. It is seldom our comment on the word: it is the Word of God itself that does the work. And when it appears to be our comment, it is always the truth of the Gospel in our comment which proves effectual. It is the Word that has in it the divine dynamic, the power of the divine will that brings things to pass. Always when God says, "Let there be light", there is light.

May I throw some of you back upon your own experiences, that you may recall how at some time you have spoken to someone about the things of God, only to discover that you were speaking a foreign language, the person to whom you spoke being utterly ignorant of the idiom of your speech. He did not know what you were talking about. The conceptions of your language transcended all his experience, and you felt you were feeling your way in darkness.

Did you ever drive all night by motor-car? I have many times. I have watched the road by the lights of my car, until by and by I saw the first gray streaks of dawn. Imperceptibly the morning came. At last I said, "What is the use of my lights? I do not need them"—and switched them off. When I turned them off, I lost nothing. The road was clearer and brighter even by the dim light of the dawn than it was by my brightest light.

Have you tried to guide someone to Christ by your wisdom, when a light from heaven shone down upon that darkened conscience, and the morning broke? The person said, "Yes, sir; I understand now." What was it? "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness", had shone in that heart. Let us learn that there is no substitute for that heavenly Light. You cannot force people into the kingdom of God. It is He Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, Who must shine in the human heart, or men will never know what it is to be saved.

I repeat: that shining comes by the Word of God. Do not be afraid to quote Scripture. That is old-fashioned to-day. They tell me that it is vain to invoke the testimony of the Lord Jesus in order to establish the authority of Scripture. Let them say so. I do not care what *they* say. I prefer what God says. And He says that whenever a soul is saved, God Himself intervenes; and until He does, there is no salvation. After He had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, there followed the beauty, the fruit, and all the loveliness of a paradise aglow with the divine presence. But He always begins by saying, "Let there be light."

III.

WHAT IS THAT LIGHT? HOW IS IT DEFINED? "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What effect has that light? *That light introduces us to the Creator, to the Maker of all things.*

We are given "the light of the knowledge"—knowledge is light—"of the glory of God." What is the "glory of God", "No man hath seen God at any time." What do you know about the glory of God? Nothing. What does anyone know? Nothing. We talk about human glory, and sometimes we mean merely that circle of praise and adulation in which some famous or popular man moves. When we speak of a man's glory we frequently mean his reputation. That is not what the Bible means when it speaks of "the glory of God". The glory of God is not His reputation: it is His character. It is not what men think God to be: it is what God really is. But where may we see the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God"? "In the face of Jesus Christ."

If you would know who the Creator is, you must come to the Lord Jesus Christ, for "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." No one who turns his back upon Jesus Christ can have any true conception of the glory of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

IV.

Before I send you away, I would have you LOOK FOR A MOMENT INTO THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST, and tell me what you see? You cannot find God through a microscope. You cannot see God through a telescope. You may see His works, and understand something of the qualities of His nature, His wisdom, and His power; but you cannot really see God until you see Jesus Christ. He is revealed "in the face of Jesus Christ".

What do you see in the face of Jesus Christ? Did you ever see a picture of Christ that satisfied you? I am glad there is no portrait of Christ. No one could ever paint His portrait. But what is your conception of the face of Jesus Christ? We could go through the Gospels, and imagine how He looked as He gazed with tenderness upon the children, how perhaps He smiled upon them at their play; how He looked with compassion upon the multitude, and with what fierce anger He looked upon those who had made a place of merchandise of His Father's house, as He drove them from the temple. Perhaps you would follow Him to the grave of Lazarus and see the tears upon His cheek, and say, "I love to think of God as represented by the weeping Saviour." Or perhaps looking over Jerusalem as He wept and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

Yes; that is "the face of Jesus Christ"; but there is more of the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ than that. You must go to the cross to see God. We can know God nowhere but at the cross. As He hangs there, suspended between heaven and earth, there are more than tears upon His face. There are the marks of His bloody sweat upon His brow, and, too, the blood-drops from the wounds made by the thorns; and the look of anguish, and, at the same time, of infinite tenderness, which I am sure shone on that blood-stained countenance as He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That is God! Oh that is God! That is

the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. He loves to forgive, He is plenteous in mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

"Would Jesus have the sinner die?
Why hangs He then on yonder tree?
What means that strange, expiring cry?—
Sinner, He prays for you and me:
'Forgive them, Father, Oh forgive!
They know not that by Me they live!'"

The glory of God is seen in the face of Him Who was full of grace and truth: Only as we come to the cross, and behold Jesus there, do we see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

"Nature with open volume stands,
To spread her Maker's praise abroad;
And every labour of His hands
Shows something worthy of a God.

"But in the grace that rescued man,
His brightest form of glory shines;
Here, on the cross, 'tis fairest drawn
With precious blood, in crimson lines.

"Here His whole name appears complete;
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
Which of the letters best is writ,
The power, the wisdom, or the love.

"O the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where Christ my Saviour loved and died!
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From His dear wounds and bleeding side.

"I would for ever speak His name,
In sounds to mortal ears unknown;
With angels join to praise the Lamb,
And worship at His Father's throne."

God give us eyes to behold the face of Jesus Christ.

THE DEATH OF REV. JOHN MacNEILL, D.D.

We have heard with profoundest regret of the sudden death of Dr. John MacNeill, in Hamilton, this (Wednesday) morning. THE GOSPEL WITNESS extends deepest sympathy to Mrs. MacNeill and the family. Dr. MacNeill had a distinguished ministerial career, and his name is well known to all the Baptist world. We reprint below an item from *The Toronto Daily Star*:

Hamilton, Feb. 10.—Rev. Dr. John MacNeill, Principal of the faculty of theology and professor of practical theology at McMaster University, died to-day after a short illness, at the age of 63 years.

Noted Baptist theologian and former minister of Walmer Road Baptist Church, Toronto, the late Dr. MacNeill was born in Paisley, Ont., in 1874. He received his secondary education at Walkerton high school and in 1896 graduated as a bachelor of arts from McMaster University in Toronto. He received his D.D. degree from the same university in 1918, and a similar honorary degree from Baylor University in 1928.

From 1896 to 1906 the late Dr. MacNeill was pastor of First Baptist Church, Winnipeg, coming to Toronto in 1906 to take the Walmer Road pastorate.

When McMaster University was moved to Hamilton in 1930, Dr. MacNeill was appointed principal of theology, which post he held until his death.

During the war Dr. MacNeill served overseas with the Y.M.C.A. He was president of the Baptist World Alliance, 1928-1934, and former chairman of the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

He was well known as an author of authoritative books on theology and religion.

McMaster University's entire undergraduate body and faculty to-day took part in a memorial chapel service shortly after announcement of Prof. MacNeill's death. Rev. Dr. H. L. MacNeill, in the absence of Chancellor H. P. Whidden, conducted the services.

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 XIV.

Last week I reached the stage in my record at which the resolution, repudiating the editorial in *The Canadian Baptist*, was passed by an almost unanimous vote, after which the Convention adjourned at seven forty-five, large numbers of people being gathered outside waiting to enter for the evening session. The evening session was not for business, and while I have no reliable statistics on the subject, I am of the opinion that very few who attended the afternoon session were present in the evening. They were scattered in the various restaurants and hotel dining rooms discussing the events of the day.

It seemed to me that at all the remaining sessions of the Convention which I attended the delegates were somewhat subdued. Although a great victory had been achieved, and the enemy had been utterly routed, many of the delegates seemed to be possessed of a feeling akin to that which animated a certain prophet following a great victory by the armies of Israel over the Syrians: "The prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee".

The only other matter of importance decided by the Convention was the adoption of the recommendation to proceed with the Forward Movement. Thus the denomination came into step with all the other denominations—the plan being to raise a certain amount of money for the missionary interests of each denomination, and to conduct a canvass of the entire membership of all the churches in one particular week.

After returning to Toronto I did not even refer to the Ottawa victory in any public way, but quietly resumed my duties, going on with the work of Jarvis Street Church. Committees were organized for the prosecution of the Forward Movement Campaign. I was asked to cooperate with Dr. John MacNeill in effecting an organization of the Denomination. This we did, by means of a tour through the whole denominational constituency, covering the churches in conferences at various centres. By this means we were able to cover the whole Denomination in a month, except the extremities of Northern Ontario, and West to Fort William. These, Dr. MacNeill and I visited later, some time early in January, nineteen hundred and twenty.

The Forward Movement was thereafter carried to a successful issue. We set out with an objective of three hundred thousand dollars, and reached more than twice that sum. The months immediately following the Convention at Ottawa were very fully occupied in organizing for, and executing, the Forward Movement Programme. I joined with Dr. MacNeill on condition we set before the Denomination a programme in harmony with the Ottawa decision. It was agreed that the afternoon session of each conference with the churches be given to organization, and the evening session to two inspirational addresses, Dr. MacNeill concluding the session, as President, with an address on "The Baptist Mission," and I preceding him with an address on "The Baptist

Message"; and further, that the campaign be concluded with a meeting of all Toronto churches in Massey Hall, the same addresses to be delivered, and thereafter printed under the auspices of the Forward Movement, and stamped with the Forward Movement Committee's approval, as representative of the Baptist position. For the information of GOSPEL WITNESS readers the address on "The Baptist Message" is reprinted in this issue.

Baptists who read this story may form their own judgment as to whether there is aught of "fanaticism" or "bigotry" in this message. So far as I am aware, it is a fair representation of the Baptist position as represented by men like Spurgeon and others in England, and men like Gambrell and Carroll in the South, and Armitage, Henson and others in the North, United States; and such men as Fyfe, Davidson, Dadson, Goodspeed, and others in Canada. The message of the Jarvis Street Pulpit has been consistent with this message these twenty-seven years; and so far as I know, throughout the ministry of all my predecessors. I advocated nothing new at Ottawa, and still proclaim the principles of this message.

Some appreciative brethren have enquired as to my reason for going so far back in the telling of this story. My answer is very simple: It is impossible to understand the story without knowing something of the history from which it springs. One cannot explain the fate of those "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness" without the story of Kadesh-barnea. One cannot understand Hosea's pathetic cry: "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off," without going back through Israel's unbroken record of idolatry to the day when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, set up calves of gold in Dan and Bethel, and thus opened the gate for all his successors to walk in "the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." In this controversy, also, questions were at issue which have everywhere been disturbing the Christian world during the same period. In many places differences have been composed, not on principle, nor in conformity with conviction, but on bases of compromise. Calves of gold have been erected to obviate the necessity of the tribes' going up to Jerusalem to the place of sacrifice, and to the ministry of the high priest. It is, perhaps, too early to judge of the effects of the compromising pacificism of so-called Evangelicals. Modernism has come to the churches of Christ as did Ben-hadad to the king of Israel, saying: "Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine". And invariably pacifist Evangelicals have answered as did the king of Israel: "My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have." But each surrender has been followed by a further demand, even as it is written of Ben-hadad: "And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be,

that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away". It is not to be wondered at that the king of Israel "called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not". Nor is it in the least surprising that at length "all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent." The difficulty has been to persuade unto the pacifists that Modernism was seeking "mischief". But now that it has done its work for some years, what follows?

Only to-day I received a letter from England, containing this postscript:

"Last week I casually passed ——— Road Baptist Chapel. As I passed and stood to look at the Chapel, an imposing building, built only fifty years ago, a man approached me and asked if I were interested, and whether I would like to see the Chapel. I said, 'Yes'. He then conducted me all over it. I asked him: 'How are you getting on here?' He replied: 'We are on our last legs, sir. We get only ten or twelve for a Sunday morning congregation. We have no money to pay a minister, so an aged, retired, minister kindly comes and ministers to us free of cost. They can pay me only twenty-five shillings a week to clean and care for this nice large Chapel. I do not know what we shall do except to shut it up, and that soon.' He told me he had been Chapel-keeper for nearly thirty years, and said: 'We used to be full of people. We paid our minister six hundred pounds a year.'

"The Chapel is situated in a fine residential district, thousands and tens of thousands of people within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile. And yet, such a building must soon be shut up."

Our correspondent adds: "If it were not for the Baptist Union Sustentation Fund, it strikes me that scores of Baptist churches would be compelled to close down. In that case, what would become of the apostate Baptist Union? And as I see it, Modernism is the 'enemy' that 'hath done this.'

"Oh, my dear sir, how certain I am that your uncompromising attitude to this 'enemy' is the only right one!"

But we have not to go to England to find conditions like this. Rochester, New York, was once a great Baptist centre, and Rochester Theological Seminary was one of the greatest in the land. About a year ago I conducted a week's mission in an evangelical church in that city, and one morning addressed a meeting of perhaps fifty or sixty ministers, who assembled in conference. They were invited by the minister to ask me questions. I could speak only out of my experience, and not with any authority on many of the subjects. But among the questions asked was: "What do you think of Sunday closing?" I asked for an explanation of the question, assuming that it applied to the closing of theatres, or of bar rooms on Sunday. To my astonishment, my questioner replied that he meant the closing of churches on Sunday, and particularly on Sunday evening. I told them that as I had never been under the necessity of considering such a problem, I had no answer, except to deplore the conditions which could even suggest such a question. Then I was informed that thirty-eight churches in Rochester of all denominations had combined in an effort to hold an evening service. The thirty-eight churches included many of the largest churches in Rochester. The result of their united efforts was a Sunday evening congregation not exceeding two hundred!

Similar conditions obtain in other places. Last summer I motored with some friends through Connecticut, and Massachusetts, Maine, and up into the Province of Quebec. Sunday we parked our trailer outside Augusta, Maine, the capital of the state of Maine. Sunday evening we went into the city to find a service. We discovered a Baptist church, a fine, large, stone building, but all was dark. Inquiring at the parsonage nearby, we learned that the Pastor was not away from home, but was out motoring, and his wife told us that she feared we should not be able to find a religious service anywhere in the city. We made further inquiries, which only confirmed her fears. We motored about to see if, perchance, some little mission was open anywhere. There may have been, but we could not find one. All the principal churches were dark; and so far as the wife of this Pastor could inform us, there was not a religious service of any kind in all the capital city of the state of Maine that Sunday evening. That is what Modernism does.

I recently received word from one of the young men of Jarvis Street, who was in Winnipeg, and who attended a Baptist Church there, not in the evening but in the morning, a church in which in days gone by I had preached to not less than twelve to fifteen hundred people. I was, indeed, told that it seated eighteen hundred, which I thought was possibly an exaggerated estimate. But this young man sent word to me, through his brother, that at a morning service in the Baptist Church of Winnipeg, the entire congregation, including himself, numbered sixteen persons including the preacher; six of whom were in the choir, and nine in the pews. That may have been fifteen too many. Why should people go to church where they are offered stones for bread? Why should people go through a form of prayer if when they ask a fish they are given a serpent, or, asking an egg, are offered a scorpion? The time is rapidly approaching when over the deserted shrines of modernized Christianity the pathetic cry will again be heard: "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off." It is for this reason, and in order that I may lay a sound, historical, and philosophical, basis for my argument, that I have rehearsed this story.

Furthermore, I would endeavour to lead my readers to take such a broad and long view of the religious questions of the day as will force them to an examination of their historical origins. I am increasingly convinced that no man can truly prophesy of the future, who is ignorant of the past. That is to say, history and prophecy go hand in hand; and it is true of more than the physical universe that, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after."

Furthermore, this story is written in the hope that it will be especially useful to ministers. While I count not myself to have apprehended, either ministerially, nor in any other way, and would not presume to any competency to advise my brethren, the inexorable march of the seasons, and the public ringing out of the old years, and ringing in of the new, together compel me

to acknowledge that I have passed the period of my novitiate. I was a minister's son before I became a minister, and have spent my whole life among ministers. Although a happy participant in many of the joys of the ministry, I am, by no means, ignorant of its sorrows, its real heart-breaks, its Gethsemanes and its Calvarys. We have not as many ministerial readers as we had before the depression came. But before that time we had no less than three thousand ministers reading THE GOSPEL WITNESS weekly. Still we have very many hundreds, and if I can say a word that will hearten some hard-pressed comrade in the war, that will lead some sorely-beset contender for the faith to take a fresh hold upon his sword, and with new confidence in the invulnerability of the Christian's armour "to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand", I shall feel that I have not written in vain.

Personally, I have no sympathy with any hierarchical form of government, be it Presbytery, or Council, or Synod, or Episcopate, or what not. I believe the New Testament churches were autonomous, independent, bodies, existing under a form of government suited to a spiritual body; being, therefore, organisms, rather than organizations. And I believe that the prophet of the Lord must be a free man, so conditioned that, when occasion requires, he can call heaven and earth to witness that he has not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

The exercise of such a ministry, however, is not always easy in so-called "free" churches. I have wondered whether these centralized forms of ecclesiastical government may not be the evolution of a human plan to correct obstreperous spirits in the local church. Whether that principle could be historically established I will not presume to say. But I have known from personal observation not a few who have ceased to be Baptist ministers, and have sought refuge in some religious body where the minister would not be absolutely at the mercy of the oligarchs, or plutocrats, in the local church. I have known other preachers who, literally, obeyed the scriptural injunction, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another"; who have spent their ministerial lives packing and unpacking in a vain attempt to flee from the varying moods of the coppersmith-minded Alexanders, and the world-loving Demases. I have known others who have remained in a church just long enough to sweep and garnish the house; but instead of tarrying until the Holy Ghost should come and "fill all the place," they have moved on, with the result that their successor has found the place occupied by seven other evil spirits, the last state of the church being worse than the first.

This story is written to suggest to my ministerial brethren that a minister is a servant of God before he is a servant of the church, and that he owes his first allegiance to the One and only Head of the church; and that, though like his Master, he takes his place among his brethren as one that serveth, he should ever be able to say, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

This story is written in an endeavour to show my brethren that there is no scriptural, or practical, warrant for regarding the deacons of the church as its superior officers. In the average church the deacons arrogate to themselves the function of directors and

managers, to whom the pastor, forsooth, must be in subjection and subservience. True, no pastor can be justified in attempting to lord it over God's heritage; but equally true is it that no deacons can be justified in attempting to lord it over their pastor. The ministry of pastor and deacons should be a mutually cooperative service. But if there be any precedence as between the two, scripturally it belongs to the pastor, and not to the deacons. The pastor is called an "overseer". Believers are exhorted to "obey them that have the rule over you"; and ministers were described to still other Christians as those who are "over you in the Lord." But neither pastor nor deacons exercise authority over each other, nor over the church, by virtue of their office; for if there be any precedence in rank in the Christian church, it must be attributable solely to a superiority in spiritual quality. He who serves best will thus become chiefest of all.

THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

This message was originally delivered during the years 1919-1920, in connection with the Forward Movement of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec; and was published as part of the official literature of the Baptist Forward Movement at the Baptist Church House, 223 Church St., Toronto, Canada.

By some means unknown to the Author, a copy of "The Baptist Message" came into the hands of the late Dr. J. B. Gambrell, the great Southern Baptist leader, who wrote the Author an autograph letter expressing his full agreement with the principles herein discussed, and his hearty appreciation of the message. We hope that that which the great Dr. Gambrell approved will be read with interest by many Southern Baptists.

The Book which, with a positiveness which only divine omniscience can justify, speaks of that which antedates all human history, and of that, therefore, which, in the nature of the case, no mortal could know, challenges our faith by the comprehensive sweep of its first great word, "In the beginning God." And that Book, concerning itself, as it does, with principles which are immutable, describes the order and progress of the first day of God's creation, by saying, "And the evening and the morning were the first day." And the last chapter of the same incomparable Book commands both our faith and our imagination by its description of the shadeless splendor of the Holy City, in the promise, "And there shall be no night there."

And between that first line of the history of the Genesis of things, and the line which predicts the consummation of the divine purpose in glory, you have an epitomized record, historical and prophetic, of the movements of God in all human history until time shall be no more; and everywhere and always, God is moving forward:

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares;
While His eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs."

No one can walk with God and walk backwards; nor enquire as to His dwelling place without receiving His forward-moving invitation, "Come and see." And no one can really and sincerely summon all his powers to an endeavour to achieve a morally worthy purpose without having God on his side; nor without coming, consciously or unconsciously, into the current of that divine purpose which moves forward toward the light of an endless day.

It is important that Baptists should keep the principle of the divine programme always before them. That we may never forget that the message and mission of God's redeemed people are essentially spiritual; for if we fail to keep the spiritual nature of our work clearly in view we are in danger of missing the aim of the church's mission altogether. Of late years, indeed, we have seen this effect an entire change of the accent and emphasis of the church's message,—in the recommendation of godliness chiefly for its profitableness in

"the life that now is." This inevitably leads to the erection of worldly and temporal standards of value by which to appraise the church's ministry and progress, until the church arrives at the condition of the Laodiceans: "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Moreover, if we forget the essentially spiritual character of our work we shall fail to depend upon the only Power by which it can be achieved. The first settlements in this country sprang up on the shores of the lakes, and beside the flowing rivers; because the pioneers were wise enough to drop their mill-wheels into the streams of God's power flowing by. These steel towers, bearing high voltage wires which we now see everywhere, proclaim our more recent discovery that God meant us to live, even on the plane of the physical, by superhuman powers. And in the realm of the spiritual the same principle obtains. The spiritual character of our work precludes all possibility of its being done "by hand"; it can be done only "by power", and that power the Spirit of the Lord. Hence our material gifts, whether of money or of service, must be only as the towers and wires along which the divine energy must flow for the accomplishment of our spiritual service.

The question arises, therefore, whether we, as Baptists, have any special aptitude for the spiritual interpretation of life. While other Christian bodies discuss the possibilities of various forms of organic union, have we still any logical reason for standing apart from such discussions? Have we still a distinctive message for the world? Are we as firmly convinced as ever that the distinctive emphasis of our presentation of the Gospel constitutes a truer interpretation of the evangel of grace than other presentations in which the emphasis is differently placed?

Before we can know clearly how to move forward, we need to enquire as Baptists where we are. I therefore propose to ask you to consider what is the *sine qua non* of the Baptist message. What is the irreducible minimum of revealed truth which a man must believe in order to be entitled to be called a Baptist? Or let me put the matter still more simply: What are the conditions of membership in a Baptist church? This can be answered satisfactorily only by enquiring, What conditions of church membership are set out in the New Testament? What is involved in the confession required of any one applying for membership in the church? If we can get at these simple and fundamental principles we shall know what are the essentials of the Baptist message. And it is of these great principles I now speak.

I.

The first and central truth which Baptists have always firmly held is this: THAT IN JESUS CHRIST GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH. Belief in the essential Deity of Jesus Christ is cardinal to our whole position as Baptists.

We believe that no true conception of God can, by natural processes, be evolved out of a man's own consciousness; that we cannot of ourselves imagine a true picture of God; that unaided human reason cannot discover God. And, therefore, we hold that a man's attitude toward God and his relation to his fellows cannot rightly be determined by his own conception of what God is, and of what He requires of us; but, on the contrary, that any true knowledge of God must be derived from what God reveals of Himself.

Therefore, fundamentally, *Baptists are not rationalists, but revolutionists.* All that we know of God and all that we teach of Him is derived, not from what human reason has discovered, but from what divine revelation has disclosed. And we believe that all earlier and lesser revelations of God, even that which is revealed of God in nature, are summed up and comprehended in the full and final revelation of God in Christ: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

I have sometimes thought that we need a Rescue Mission for fallen words; for words, like persons, do not always

honour either their birthplace or their parentage, but go astray, to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful; with the inevitable result, that, like persons, they lose their proper influence and power. It then becomes necessary, either to turn them aside to some Jericho, where, like David's men, they may recover from the debasement resulting from contact with the enemy; or, otherwise, such words need to be reclothed with ampler definitions.

The word "divinity", has lost much of its original strength of meaning. It is no longer sufficient for us to say we believe in the divinity of Christ; for there are those who say that, who also say they believe in the divinity of all men. We hold that God was in Christ as He never was in any other man; that He was begotten of the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin as no other man was ever born. We believe in the essential Deity of Christ, as the Eternal Son, Who was with the Father before the world was; as the second Person in the Holy Trinity Who, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, is one God. And we worship Him as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Therefore, we set the Lord Jesus Christ in the centre as the Incarnate God in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

As Baptists we readily accord to others that liberty of thought which we demand for ourselves. But though we deny the right of the magistrate or anyone else to fetter another's conscience, we do not, therefore, bind ourselves to have fellowship with principles against which our own consciences revolt. *While refusing to compel, we may with equal justice refuse to concur.* There are some things which are vital to true Christian faith; and one of them is this: a settled conviction of the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. We can have no fellowship with anyone who denies the Godhead of Jesus. I believe I speak for the Baptists of this Convention when I say that there is absolutely no room among us for anything that savours of Unitarianism. Jesus Christ is to us "the only wise God our Saviour, to whom be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

But what are the implications of this position? Our attitude toward Christ will determine our attitude toward many other things—indeed, it will determine our attitude toward everything, toward God above us, and man about us; toward "the life that now is," and "that which is to come."

"What think ye of Christ, is the test,
To try both your plan and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him."

II.

Our attitude toward Christ will determine OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SCRIPTURES.

It must be clear to the mind of every earnest and thoughtful man and woman among us that the time has come when we must clearly define to ourselves what our attitude toward the Bible is to be, if we are to continue our work as a denomination. No family, nor community, nor institution, nor nation, can live a peaceful, progressive, and useful life, without the direction of some recognized authority. And without some such authoritative direction no church nor denomination can exercise a useful ministry to the world about it. Authority must reside in some one. In whom? To whom can Baptists look for direction? We have no bishop; and we refuse to allow any person or collection of persons to exercise spiritual lordship over us. And yet some one must command and direct. Who shall it be?

There can be but one answer: "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." But who is to be the Master's mouthpiece? By what means is His will to be communicated to us? Where shall we find an order bearing His unmistakable signature? Formerly, and historically, Baptists believed that the Head of the church had revealed His will in the Holy Scriptures. To our fathers the Bible was the word of God. Do we still so regard it?

If we do not, if we have no longer a reliable compass and chart, our ship must surely drift from her course; and, defaulting in her mission, disintegrate, and ultimately disap-

pear. No captain would put to sea in a ship whose steering gear was believed to be out of order. And every Baptist movement, if it is to be worthy of the name, must find its direction in the authority of the Bible as the word of God. For when Baptists yield their belief in the authority of the Scriptures they have surrendered the last logical reason for their continued existence.

But how shall the right attitude toward the Bible be determined? Who shall tell us authoritatively whether the Bible is the word of God? Must we not in this matter resort to and rely upon the authority of Christ?

Personally, I have no theory of the inspiration of the Scriptures. But I am sure of ten thousand facts concerning which I am unable to formulate a theory. And it is of the fact of inspiration, not of any theory of it, we must be convinced. We may not know how "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost", and yet be absolutely sure that they were so moved.

The Bible is a human book, written by human hands. It has never been claimed that its manuscripts were magically produced. But the Bible is divine as well as human. This is the claim it everywhere makes on its own behalf. In what proportions, therefore, are these divine and human elements blended? Is it so human as to partake of such imperfection as is common to all things of human origin? Or is it so permeated by the divine as to be saturated with divine perfection?

The Book tells us of a great Personality Who was born of a human mother, but was begotten of the Holy Ghost; and Who was, therefore, both human and divine, like the Book itself. But how were the divine and human elements blended in Him? Which of the two natures predominated? Did His human nature render Him subject to human limitations? Or, the rather, was not His humanity, while still making Him our true Kinsman, by union with His divinity, sublimed to the quality of divine perfection? For if He was limited in one realm of His being, must He not have been limited in all? If He was mentally limited to the measure of the human mind, how can inherent physical immortality, or moral perfection be predicated of Him?

We are thus driven to the enquiry: In what realms of life is Jesus Christ to be Lord? Unquestionably, He is to be Lord of our bodies. And who will dispute His supremacy as a moral and religious Teacher? But what about the realm of the intellect?

Let us hear from one who was widely and deeply learned. No one will question the Apostle Paul's qualification for judging of intellectual matters. And he tells us, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

But after he had seen Jesus he gloried in being the "bond-slave" of Christ. Now to what extent did Paul submit himself to Christ? Did he continue to "think with himself"? And were his thoughts, "contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"? O tell us! thou mighty leader of men, thou man of massive and far-seeing intellect, in the wide realm of thy intellectual activities, hast thou made Jesus Christ thy Lord?

And he answers:
"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And nothing less than that will do. Jesus Christ must be Lord in the realm of the intellect! Imaginations and reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, must, by the power of God, be cast down. A true Baptist, to whom Jesus Christ is the Incarnate God, in the nature of the case, has no "liberty" to entertain thoughts which are "contrary" to Christ. He is "the bond-slave" of Christ, intellectually as well as spiritually; and his "every thought"—his thought about the Bible, and about everything else, in this life, and in that which is to come, must be "brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Now when Christ is so regarded we have an infallible Standard and Authority to Whom all our intellectual problems can be brought. We must consult Him, therefore, about the Bible; for He is the highest Authority in the universe.

Of the Old Testament in general, He says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till

heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." And to this He adds in another place, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Thus this infallible Christ declares He has come to fulfil the law and the prophets, even to the last jot and the last tittle; and having put the seal of His infallible authority on the law and the prophets, He later solemnly avers that His own words shall never pass away. Can language express a stronger claim to infallibility and final authority?

What use can I now make of this divine pronouncement? How is the authority of Christ with respect to the Scriptures to determine my own attitude toward the Bible? Let me give you two or three simple illustrative applications of the principle.

Personally, I am not concerned *per se* about the human authorship of the books attributed to Moses. When I find the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews saying of certain things in Exodus and Leviticus, "The Holy Ghost, this signifying", I could be content to ignore the human author and listen to the divine word. But when I find that the life and times of Moses are so inextricably interwoven with the Pentateuch that it is impossible to eliminate Moses without invalidating the first five books of the Bible, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch becomes a question of vital importance. Therefore I must bring this vexed question to "the author and finisher of my faith" for settlement. And now let us hear Him!

To the Sadducean naturalists of His day, He said: "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? . . . Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake to him?"

And again: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" And yet again, in that most solemn parable which is a prophecy of retribution beyond the grave, in answer to the once-rich man's request, that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brethren, Christ represents Abraham as saying, (and as saying it in the clearer light and fuller knowledge of the life beyond) "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And when Dives replies, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent," He puts into Abraham's lips these terribly solemn words: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

When he has heard these words, surely for the man who acknowledges the Deity and consequent infallibility of Christ, the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is authoritatively and finally settled; and instead of spending time in idle speculation, he will read it to hear what "the Holy Ghost saith" therein.

And this principle of the infallibility of Christ may be applied to all Biblical questions. I am not disturbed by questions as to historicity of the book of Jonah. I should be quite content to learn its religious lessons as allegorically taught, even if the book had no historic foundation, providing there can be found nothing in any other part of scripture requiring me to regard the book as being historically true. An allegorical Jonah, and a parabolic fish, and a legendary gourd, will do no violence to my faith, if I can secure the consent of my one infallible Authority to my holding such a view; for I am not free to form an opinion on the subject: my thought of the book of Jonah must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Therefore, what saith my great Professor of Bible knowledge? Hear Him again:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." And in the same breath He continues: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

By that pronouncement, for me, the question of the historicity of the book of Jonah is for ever settled. I believe the miraculous story to be historically true because the highest Authority in the universe has so declared.

The same rule applies to the question of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures as a whole, and in every part. For myself, this is my confession of faith with respect to the Bible: If this building were large enough to hold all the Biblical scholars of the world, and if they should all unite to tell me that the story of the deluge is unhistoric; that Moses did not write the Pentateuch; that the book of Jonah is not historically true, I would believe Christ's naked word before the contrary judgment of all the scholarship of the world, and stake the interests of my soul for time and for eternity upon the unsupported word of my absolutely infallible Lord; and, if need be, be a fool for Christ's sake. And I then should be much less a fool for His sake, than the contrary attitude would make me for the sake of agreeing with a "scholarship" falsely so-called. For though I thus speak for the purpose of emphasis, I am convinced that the body of thought which is worthiest the high and honourable title of "scholarship", and which represents the findings of disciplined intellectual powers in cooperation with spiritually enlightened and penetrating understandings, will always be found to be in agreement with the word of Him who is Incarnate Truth.

When we thus approach the Bible as being instinct with the personality and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, what a world of intellectual and spiritual treasure it becomes to us! We have walked with Him among the flowers of Eden, and where first the shadow of the curse fell athwart the path of sinful man. We have seen Him walk the waves of the shoreless sea of judgment; and, in the patriarchs' tents, in the voice of angels, we have heard the Word which was in the beginning with God. In the tabernacle of the wilderness, with its crimson ritual, and in all the forty miraculous years, we have heard Him speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. We have followed Him with Joshua in His triumphal progress into Canaan's promised land; we have found Him sitting among Israel's judges; and in the fields of Boaz, near to Bethlehem, we have heard His whispered promise of the marriage of the Lamb. Where, indeed, have we not found Him? Is there a scripture path untrodden by His feet? Is there a valley which has not echoed with His voice? Is there a mountain which has not been transfigured by His presence?—"The voice of My beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." And we have followed Him—through historical wildernesses and biographical mountain solitudes, and through genealogical deserts, only to find that the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for Him; and in His presence the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. In psalmist's melodies; in words of transcendent wisdom; in pregnant type, and glowing symbol; in wheels that are dreadful: in chariots of fire; in seraphic visions of enraptured spirits of prophets, priests and kings, we have seen and heard the form and voice of our Beloved; until, at last, He has come to us from out the grave, being declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, and with perfect knowledge of both worlds, He has joined us on the Emmaus road: where with burning hearts we have heard Him, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expound unto us in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Therefore by the illumination of His presence in its pages; by the seal of His authority upon all its principles, and precepts, and promises; by His own invariable assumption of the Scriptures' infallibility, there is wrought into our deepest spiritual consciousness the unwavering conviction that the Bible is the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever!

"Should all the forms that men devise

Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,

And bind the gospel to my heart."

III.

And now what follows from all this? If we have in the Bible the Book of the Lord, and in Christ the Lord of the Book, we have in Him also THE STANDARD OF INTERPRETATION.

Our Lord Himself promised of "the Spirit of Truth", "He shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself, but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." And the manner of the Spirit's guiding into all truth He clearly predicted when He said, "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The New Testament writers, who claimed to write "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," all made Him the Standard by Whom the values of life must be determined. They claimed to be the inspired exponents of the Gospel He had "revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." And their standard was, in principle, always this: "As the truth is in Jesus." Their identification and appraisal of error was always effected by comparison with the only infallible Standard of truth; as when Paul says: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him."

When I say that Christ is to be our Standard of interpretation, I mean that all the elements of human life can find their only true appraisal in His interpretation of life, as He speaks directly and through His inspired apostles.

For instance: There is a man in the city where I live who is a most exemplary character; a good husband and father, a loyal citizen, and in every respect a worthy man. He is, indeed, a returned soldier. He went "over the top", and was wounded. And in that hour he offered his life upon the altar of his country's service as truly as did the heroic men who will never return.

Now I want someone to tell me how I am to estimate that man religiously; for he is not a professor of religion. Does such an excellent character as he need any religion? And if so, what sort of religion? Does he need salvation? Does he need a Saviour? What should my attitude toward him be? You see, I am looking for a satisfactory, because final and authoritative, *doctrine of man*. For this I must go to the only One who "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

And I find that just such an admirable character as I have described, except that he lacked my soldier-friend's splendid courage, once "came to Jesus by night." And when he had said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," our infallible Authority answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And when Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" this infallible Professor of spiritual knowledge answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

That is equivalent to saying: "Nicodemus, human nature is so depraved that only a spiritual birth can make it spiritually capable of seeing, or morally fit to enter, the kingdom of God. And if you have any doubt as to the finality of this pronouncement, I tell you now that I speak what I know, and testify what I have seen. No one else has ever ascended up to heaven. There is no other authority competent to guide you. I only, of all men, have complete knowledge of the other life, and of the conditions of entrance into the kingdom of God. I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. Therefore, marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

We have now, therefore, a trustworthy doctrine of man. He is so ruined by sin that he can be saved only through regeneration by the Holy Ghost. I must, therefore, go on preaching the doctrines of sin and the new birth; for my great Authority tells me they are still true and necessary. Moreover, I know now the religious message my ex-soldier neighbour needs; and I have learned too, that the first essential to "reconstruction" in any life is regeneration. And as a Christian workman I am no longer in doubt as to my course. I have a platform of certainty on which to stand, and a divinely authorized message to deliver; I can, therefore, address myself to my task as one who has a commission from on high.

What interpretation shall I put upon *the Cross of Christ*? There it stands, the promise and prophecy of it in the Old Testament, and the history of it in the New. What does it mean to a sinful world?

Shall I proclaim its moral influence? Shall I tell men it is the consummation of a sublime example? that Christ died to show us how to die, as He lived to show us how to live? Yes; there is all that in the Cross. No one can really gaze upon it without being moved to nobler living. But is that the full meaning of the Cross? If He who died thereon was but a man, the Cross can mean no more than that. You will remember that Bethmann-Hollweg, the ex-German Chancellor, offered himself to the Allied Governments as a substitute for the former Kaiser. The receipt of his offer was acknowledged; but the Allied Governments politely intimated that they had a little score to settle with him on his own account, and that he would have quite enough to do to answer for his own crimes. And thus the case stands with all men: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother; nor give to God a ransom for him." No man did ever have a surplus of merit wherewith to atone for another's offences; and even if he had, "a life for a life," would require a life of infinite value for the life of the world.

But what if Jesus Christ be God? What if He was "made after the power of an indissoluble life"? What if "He only hath immortality," if His life was eternal in its nature and essence? He said of Himself: "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." And He said also, "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Now if in Jesus Christ, "God was manifest in the flesh", if He was born, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name, Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us", we must find a deeper and richer significance in His blood than is contained in any theory of its mere moral influence. When I know that "the precious blood of Christ" flowed from the heart of Incarnate Deity, I know that His blood was of greater moral worth than all the rivers of human blood which have flowed on all the battle-fields of earth through all human history, since Cain slew his brother Abel. "The life of the flesh is in the blood"; and when I know that the life that was in "the precious blood of Christ" was an "indissoluble life", even the very life-tide of Deity, then I can understand the incalculability of its atoning value; for in that crimson stream, I see the wealth of the universe in solution! And I can sing with renewed fervour, and out of an unwavering conviction,

"Thou dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God,
Be saved to sin no more."

For a spiritually bankrupt race there can be no gospel without a vicarious atonement for its theme; an imputed righteousness for its promise; a throne of grace for its faith; a divine Mediator for its Surety; and a kingdom of grace and glory for its end. And all this we have who believe, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

*Salvation by grace as the message of the Gospel follows as the natural corollary of all this; salvation as God's free gift, not something men can earn for themselves. How sadly that great word "grace" has been neglected of recent years! It needs to be rediscovered, as Hilkiah the high priest discovered the neglected book of the law in the house of the Lord; and to be restored to its place, as the ark of the covenant was brought back from the land of the Philistines. And they who see that all we know of our need of a Saviour and of a Saviour's work for us, has come to us, as it came to Saul on the Damascus road, by light from heaven, will feel the need of that immeasurable word, *grace*—a word as deep as hell, as high as heaven, as wide as human sin, and as lasting as eternity—infinite, indeed, as God Himself.*

Once again. If Jesus Christ be Lord of all, *He must be recognized and acknowledged as the Head of the Church.*

And in that acknowledgment the principle of a regenerate church membership is involved. The church must be a company of witnesses to the grace of Christ: "He gave him to

be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him which filleth all in all." Surely if a member of the church is to be a member of the body of Christ, it follows he must be spiritually quickened. How can Christ be said to be the Head of a church which receives into its membership persons who have not been "born again"? The need of the world is a witnessing church, a church whose members will witness to the grace of the Incarnate God by being themselves the incarnations of the truth of His Gospel. When the poorest and humblest person is put into the witness box to tell what he personally knows of the case before the court, if he is able, even with limping grammar and stammering lips, to tell what he himself has seen of the matter that is before the court for judgment, he is listened to with greater attention than would the most learned scholar who had no personal knowledge of the case. Hence the little church of really converted people will be a mightier power for good in any community than a great congregation of people who in their own experience have no witness for Christ.

We as Baptists, therefore, must learn to measure the progress of our churches by their increasing conformity to Christ, rather than by the number of their members, their social position, or the amount of their wealth.

Years ago there was a case at law in which everything turned on the resemblance of two car wheels, which were put in as exhibits. Webster and Choate were the opposing counsel. When all the evidence was in, Choate addressed the jury, and overwhelmed them with an elaborate address on "the fixation of points"—whatever that may be. I do not know; and the jury did not know either. They may have admired the advocate's learning; but it gave them no light on the question before them.

Webster followed Choate. He fixed his eyes on the car wheels, then on the jury; again on the car wheels and again on the jury; and then, as he pointed to the wheels, he thundered, "Gentlemen of the jury! There they are. Look at 'em!" And that was all he said. But the jury gave him the verdict. Happy the preacher, who, when he has told what Christ can do for a poor sinner, can point to the members of his own church, and say, "There they are! Look at them! Let their lives certify to the efficacy of the Gospel of grace in the lives of men."

The same great principle of the Lordship of Christ determines our teaching with respect to the ordinances of the church. In the symbolism of baptism and the Lord's supper, divine wisdom has wrapped up all the doctrines of grace. In the symbolic death, and burial, and resurrection of the believer, you have life derived from Christ; and in the bread and wine, life sustained by Christ: He is the Alpha and Omega of both ordinances. And whoever observes them in their primitive New Testament simplicity and order, is not likely to lose sight of the great central truth of the Gospel. "Christ crucified," is "the wisdom" of God; and so are the simple ordinances in which that great truth is enshrined.

But rich as is the symbolism of the ordinances, our chief reason for our strict observance of them is that Christ is the Head of the Church; and we recognize no higher law for the believer nor for the Church than His will as revealed in His Word. No one may change what He has ordained.

Clearly, therefore, our whole message hinges upon the Lordship of Christ.

Much has been said in recent years about "union" and "co-operation"; and Baptists are not indifferent to these discussions. When, in March, 1918, the Allied armies were being pushed back upon the Channel ports, no one proposed that the British should become French, or the French British, or that either should become Americans. But the greatest military genius of all the Allied generals was appointed to the supreme command of the Allied forces; and when every individual soldier in all the armies of the Allies became subject to one supreme will, in that hour Germany's doom was sealed! And the forces of darkness will not be defeated by flags of truce; nor by the surrender of vital principles of revealed truth. The need of the hour is the recognition by every Christian of the Lord Jesus Christ as Generalissimo of all the armies of the Lord. And to that recognition our message clearly and uncompromisingly calls.

To Baptists there is a world call to increased effort to bring in the day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. To maintain the integrity of the British Empire, and to secure the liberties of the world, Canada was prodigal of her blood and treasure. But the claim of the kingdom of Christ is a still

higher claim, made by a greater King, and to secure the interests of a nobler citizenship. The cause in which our Lord invested His life's blood is worthy the investment of our all.

I was in Brussels when King Albert, shortly after the signing of the Armistice, made his triumphal entry into his capital after his more than four years of exile. I shall never forget that scene. Hundreds of thousands were assembled to acclaim their returning king. It seemed to them that ages had passed since last they saw him. And during his absence they had been under the heel of the tyrant. Somewhere, without the ring of fire which encircled them, they knew their valiant king and his gallant army were fighting their way back. But it had seemed as though the king would never come again. But at last the happy day had dawned. I was privileged to stand on a balcony on the third story of an office-building at the corner of the street around which the king was to turn. I looked down upon the scores of thousands of loyal Belgians and others who lined the great thoroughfares as far as the eye could reach. Thousands of banners were waving; and the vast multitudes, delivered out of the hand of the oppressor, waited with loyal impatience to express their devotion to the king. No one could look down upon those many thousands of expectant faces without feeling that they all "loved his appearing."

At last the cry was raised, "The king is coming." And in a moment he came into view just beneath my point of vantage, riding a white horse, with his queen, similarly mounted, at his side. Immediately behind him came his children, also mounted. Then followed one of King George's sons, and with him the generals of the British armies and the generals of the French armies. Next in order was a contingent of American troops; then a French unit; then came the British; and at last the Belgian army, thousands strong.

And when the king rode by with his hand at the salute, the people tried to acclaim him. But in the main they succeeded but poorly. They saw him through a mist of tears; tears streamed down many faces; there was a great lump in all throats; and, surcharged with inexpressible emotions of thankfulness, they "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." One Belgian citizen remarked to me that the long agony of the tyrant's rule was swallowed up in the gladness of the king's return.

And as I viewed that never-to-be-forgotten scene, and saw the king ride triumphantly to his throne amid the countless thousands of his happy, welcoming subjects, I thought of that rapidly approaching day when the White Horse and his Rider shall come down the skies, when "every eye shall see him", for He, too, is a Conqueror: "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet."

I have asked; what is the irreducible minimum of revealed truth which a man must believe, in order worthily to bear the name of Baptist? And the answer is: JESUS THE INCARNATE GOD! He is at once the Irreducible Minimum, and the Immeasurable Maximum of a Spirit-begotten faith. We cannot live with less than Jesus; and Heaven cannot give us more; for "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son"! In the certainty of His ultimate triumph, and in anticipation of His coming in glory, the world's great need calls us afresh, as a voice from heaven, to dedicate all our ransomed powers of spirit, soul, and body, to the world-wide proclamation of this message: Christ is the Head of the body, the Church; Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things—He of the manger, of the Cross, of the empty grave, of the opened heavens, of the throne of grace and of glory—that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 1 First Quarter Lesson 8 February 21st, 1937

DR. T. T. SHIELDS, EDITOR

BAPTISM IS FOR BELIEVERS ONLY

Lesson Text: Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16.

Golden Text: "The eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.—Acts 8:36, 37.

One feels like apologising for dealing with such elementary matters as are involved in this lesson. That which is but as the mere alphabet to those who read the Bible, is looked upon as learning of rather advanced order by those who receive their religious instruction from extra biblical sources.

I. Nothing is clearer than that baptism is enjoined upon believers as their own personal act, and that it is designed for believers only. Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:35-39 establish this truth beyond all controversy. Nor is there to be found a single passage in the New Testament anywhere in which there is a record of any but believers being baptized. For that reason we object to the "baptism" so-called of unconscious infants. Baptism was never intended for irresponsible children; but exclusively for those who are of such an age as to be able to believe.

II. It is further to be remarked that in apostolic times all believers were baptized. It was taken for granted that it was the next step in the life of the Christian. In proof of his we quote the following Scriptures: Acts 2:37, 41; 8:12, 13, 35-39; 9:18; 10:47, 48; 16: 14, 15, 30, 33; 18:8; 19: 2-5; 22:16.

III. There was no unnecessary delay in yielding to this ordinance in apostolic times. We believe that sufficient time should be taken to make sure that the candidate for baptism is a fit subject, that is, that he or she believes; and being sure of that, obedience should be prompt thereafter. In Acts 2:41, believers were baptized "the same day"; Acts 16:32, 33 "the same hour"; Acts 8:38, in the midst of a journey.

In order that teachers may be able to supply their scholars with all that the New Testament says about baptism, we here set out every passage in the New Testament relating to baptism. We suggest that these be supplied the scholars in connection with the lessons on baptism, particularly of course, to Christian scholars, that they may study the whole matter.

Every Passage on Baptism in the New Testament is given in order below.

Matt. iii., 6, 7, 11, 13-16; xx., 22, 23; xxi., 25; xxviii., 19. Mark i., 4, 5, 8, 9; x., 38, 39; xi., 30. Luke iii., 3, 7, 12, 16, 21; vii., 29, 30; xii., 50; xx., 4. John i., 25, 26, 28, 31, 33; iii., 22, 23, 26; iv., 1, 2; x., 40. Acts i., 5, 22; ii., 38-41; viii., 12-16, 36-38; ix., 18; x., 37, 47, 48; xi., 16; xiii., 24; xvi., 15, 33; xviii., 8, 25; xix., 3-5; xxii., 16. Rom. vi., 3-5. I. Cor. i., 13-17; x., 2; xii., 13; xv., 29. Gal. iii., 27. Eph. iv., 5. Col. ii., 12. Hebrews vi., 2. I. Peter iii., 21.

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