

T. T. SHIELDS THE FUNDAMENTALIST: MAN OF CONTROVERSY¹

by
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Beginning in the late nineteenth century, conservative Christian leaders became alarmed over persistent attacks by liberal activists on the Bible as the inspired infallible Word of God and those fundamental teachings of Scripture which comprise the Christian evangel. Liberals were claiming to be evangelical,³ but fundamentalists believed this was only a subterfuge cloaking apostasy. To them, liberalism was not a modern form of Christianity; it was an entirely different religion altogether, as foreign to the Christian faith as Buddhism or Confucianism.⁴ But fundamentalists took their case one step further: liberalism was not only non-Christian; it was anti-Christian in that it denied Christianity's basic tenets.⁵ Liberalism was sometimes difficult to detect because of the clever use of equivocal language which

¹This article is to be included in a forthcoming book edited by Michael Haykin, titled *T. T. Shields: Reflections on the Legacy of a Baptist Fundamentalist*.

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³Taking their cue from Schleiermacher, liberals believed they were Christian on empirical grounds. To them, the ultimate test of Christianity is experience, or as president Nathan Wood of Newton Theological Institution called it, "the affirmation of Christian consciousness" as opposed to the objective criteria of a verbally inspired Bible ("Movements of Baptist Theological Thought During the Nineteenth Century," *A Century of Baptist Achievement*, ed. A. H. Newman [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1901], pp. 430–31).

⁴Even liberals admitted that "Christianity according to fundamentalism, is one religion.... Christianity, according to modernism, is another religion. There is a clash here as profound and as grim as that between Christianity and Confucianism. Amiable words cannot hide the differences" (Charles Clayton Morrison, "Fundamentalism and Modernism: Two Religions," *Christian Century*, 3 January 1924, pp. 5–6); according to J. Gresham Machen, liberalism is rooted in naturalism and "not only is a different religion from Christianity but belongs in a totally different class of religions" (*Christianity and Liberalism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923], pp. 2, 7).

⁵T. T. Shields declared, "Modernism is not Christianity diluted; it is Christianity denied. It is not a modification of the New Testament religion; it is absolutely anti-Christian from top to bottom!" (cited in Leslie K. Tarr, *Shields of Canada* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967], p. 94).

appeared to exalt Jesus. Fundamentalists, on the other hand, sought to be univocally precise in theological expression. Certainly, the conflict was not merely semantical, nor was it a matter of confusion versus clarity (the liberal retort was often, "You misunderstand me."), but it was a battle for truth against falsehood, a true gospel versus another gospel. Clark Pinnock comments that

Conservative churchmen were therefore outraged by what appeared to be a revolution in theology which had the effect of a complete sell-out of the biblical message. When one considers the enormous difference in outlook between these two mentalities it is easy to understand why any struggle between them is not easily resolved, and why the debate often gets very bitter and unpleasant.⁶

Undoubtedly, historic fundamentalism's chief hallmark has been militancy. As the editor of the *Watchman-Examiner* proposed in 1920, "fundamentalism" would be the term used to describe an alignment of conservative nonconformists in the Northern Baptist Convention who would do "battle royal for the fundamentals."⁷ This is the language of war! Rhetoric was uncompromising and unrelenting. It reflected a battle for the very soul of Protestant Christianity.⁸

Sharing with his American counterparts a mutual concern to defend the faith against modernist assaults, Canadian fundamentalist Thomas Todhunter Shields (1873–1955) engaged the enemy in his own denomination, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and its principal institution, McMaster University. My purpose is to show that T. T. Shields was a competent and courageous apologist/polemicist in rightfully attacking the errors and hypocrisies of modernists, eventually advocating ecclesiastical separation from denominations overcome with liberalism, and exposing the political inequities and doctrinal corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. However, his caustic manner of personal retaliation over non-essentials often brought reproach upon the worthy causes he represented. Because of his outspoken militancy, Shields evoked pronounced feelings of intense like or dislike from those acquainted with him. This is perhaps best illustrated by two ladies observing Shields seated on his church's platform. In commenting on a shaft of

⁶Clark Pinnock, "The Modernist Impulse at McMaster University, 1887–1927," in *Baptists in Canada: Search for Identity Amidst Diversity*, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: G. R. Welch, 1980), p. 195.

⁷Curtis Lee Laws, "Convention Side Lights," *Watchman-Examiner*, 1 July 1920, p. 834.

⁸At the height of his ministry, T. T. Shields wrote, "I find myself referred to in the press as 'the militant pastor of Jarvis Street Church.' I should like to enquire, what other sort of pastor is of any use to anyone?" ("Contending for the Faith," *Gospel Witness*, 22 June 1939, p. 5).

morning light illuminating his countenance, “one was impressed by the angelic look of her pastor’s face.... The other was certain that she saw traces of the demonic.”⁹ Most would agree, even after all of these years, that he was a remarkable man, one of the most colorful and controversial Baptist leaders in history. Michael Haykin writes, “Although ...fifty years have gone by since Shields’s death, evangelical Baptists in Canada, whether they know it or not, are still being shaped by his life and ministry.”¹⁰

Shields’s primary weapons in his opposition to modernism were the pulpit and the pen, and he utilized both of them eloquently and forcefully. Shields wrote what many thought to be ironic—“I have no love for contention,” since he seemed to have mastered the art of verbal pugilism. But he had no use for soft preachers who refused to take a stand against evil: “A lot of preachers are...too eminently respectable...that even the devil himself can find no fault in them and would not criticize them for anything they say for the good and sufficient reason that they never criticize him.”¹¹ Men would disagree with Shields’s theology and his methodology, but no one denied his spiritual gifts as a powerful preacher and an articulate spokesman for fundamentalism. As the “‘Spurgeon of Canada,’...he...[stood] as the exponent of evangelical truth in a period of theological and religious controversy.”¹²

T. T. Shields’s accomplishments are legion. For forty-five years he was pastor of the largest Baptist church in Canada. He edited the *Gospel Witness*, a weekly paper sent to over thirty thousand subscribers in sixty different countries. He served on the board of managers at McMaster University from which he received one of two honorary doctorates.¹³ He presided over the international Baptist Bible Union for seven years, founded Toronto Baptist Seminary, headed for a short

⁹Cited in J. D. E. Dozois, “Dr. Thomas Todhunter Shields (1873–1955): In the Stream of Fundamentalism” (B.D. thesis, McMaster Divinity College, 1963), p. 57.

¹⁰Michael A. G. Haykin and Robert B. Locky, eds., *Glorious Fellowship of Churches: Celebrating the History of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 1953–2003* (Guelph, ON: Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 2003), p. 134.

¹¹T. T. Shields, “Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Service” audio recording, 13 May 1945, Jarvis Street Baptist Church Tape Archives, Toronto.

¹²Ralph G. Turnbull, *A History of Preaching: From the Close of the Nineteenth Century to the Middle of the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 329–30. According to H. C. Slade, Shields’s successor to the Jarvis Street pastorate, “the Canadian Spurgeon” was first attributed to Shields by his long time friend, A. C. Dixon (“Declaration of Policy and Programme,” *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 21 April 1955, p. 1).

¹³The second doctorate, granted in 1917 by Temple University, was bestowed by the school’s president and Shields’s good friend Russell Conwell.

time the ill-fated Des Moines University, and started the Canadian Protestant League. He wrote the doctrinal statement for and served as a vice-president of the International Council of Christian Churches. And he was a major force in the separation of evangelical Christians from the three major Canadian Baptist conventions (Ontario Quebec, Maritime, and Western), all this in addition to his normal pastoral duties, pulpit supply and Bible conference work, and voluminous correspondence.

Having been born in Bristol, England in 1873, the fifth of eight children, Shields came with his family to Canada when he was fifteen. His father, Thomas Sr., an Anglican minister who later became a Primitive Methodist then Baptist pastor, was a dominant influence in his son's life. Young Tod, as his father affectionately called him, never received a formal education beyond high school. Early in his ministry Shields proudly related that, as his pastor and theological professor, his father taught him "nearly all I have learned."¹⁴ It was the ambition of the young Shields to eventually become pastor of two eminent Baptist churches, Toronto's Jarvis Street and England's Metropolitan Tabernacle, whose famous preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon was Shields's foremost hero.¹⁵ His first aspiration was realized in 1910 when he assumed the pastorate of Jarvis Street, a name that became inseparably linked with his. Shields is remembered by historians for good or ill as primarily a controversialist, once known far and wide as the "Batling Baptist."¹⁶

DOCTRINAL CONFLICTS

As a fundamentalist, T. T. Shields waged attacks upon theological liberalism, which had infiltrated the ranks of the major North American Baptist denominations. Between 1919 and 1927 he was part of an international strategy to expose modernism in Baptist conventions and their institutions, particularly within his own denomination. As a Protestant, he fought both a moral and political battle from 1936 to 1955 against what he perceived to be a Roman Catholic threat to religious freedom in Canada. Perhaps the most intense dispute of his ministerial career was with McMaster University.

¹⁴T. T. Shields, *Other Little Ships* (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1935), p. 79.

¹⁵Shields filled Metropolitan's pulpit in 1915 and again in 1918 on behalf of pastor A. C. Dixon.

¹⁶During the first half of the twentieth century, Shields's name made the headlines of prominent secular and religious periodicals across the nation. Today, he is all but forgotten by the evangelical youth. While doing research in the Shields's archives at Toronto Baptist Seminary, I was asked by a second year student, "What are you studying?" I replied, "The life of T. T. Shields." He replied, "Who is he?" "Why," I said, "he is the founder of your school."

The McMaster Controversy

McMaster University was founded in Toronto in 1887 as the flagship institution of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. Over the years it has had a major influence upon Baptist life throughout Canada. But the question still remains as to whether the school in its early days was as theologically conservative as its charter indicated.¹⁷ For example, W. G. Carder takes the view that “in Canada...liberalism made little progress within Baptist circles.... Canadian Baptists were...extremely conservative.... Generally,...the [McMaster] controversy was more dominated by personalities than by issues.”¹⁸ W. E. Hodgson, president of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec in 1927, contended that Shields’s fear of modernism capturing McMaster was without foundation, that anyone who disagreed with him was considered a modernist.¹⁹ However, Clark Pinnock disagrees, suggesting that in spite of its orthodox origins a “modernist impulse” began entering McMaster long before the controversy erupted in 1919 with Shields’s attack of the university’s doctrinal views. This occurred when William Newton Clarke (1841–1912) began teaching New Testament interpretation in 1883 at Toronto Baptist College, the school which gave birth to McMaster four years later. Clarke was a thoroughgoing modernist who wrote *An Outline of Christian Theology* (1898), America’s first systematic theology written from a liberal perspective.²⁰ Therefore, Pinnock writes that “the modernist impulse was not only present at McMaster University from the very first, but actually predated it.... [Thus] it seems quite fair to conclude...that the modernist directions initiated by Clarke twenty-five years earlier were being pursued by his students at

¹⁷McMaster’s original deed of trust specified that those involved with the school were to be members in good standing of Regular Baptist churches and be in substantial agreement with the fundamental doctrines of the faith, including “the divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and their absolute supremacy and sufficiency in matters of faith and practice” (cited in G. A. Rawlyk, “A. L. McCrimmon, H. P. Whidden, T. T. Shields, Christian Education, and McMaster University,” in *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk [Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988], p. 33).

¹⁸W. G. Carder, “Controversy in the Baptist Convention” (B.Div. thesis, McMaster University, 1950), pp. 84–85.

¹⁹John D. E. Dozois interview with Dr. Hodgson, former pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Toronto, in Dozois, “In the Stream of Fundamentalism,” p. 135.

²⁰Among Clarke’s students is numbered the notorious Harry Emerson Fosdick who considered Clarke as “guide, philosopher, and friend” (Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity 1900–1950* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003], p. 359).

McMaster in the later period.”²¹ This news certainly lends credibility to the charges Baptist conservatives leveled against the school in the early 1900s.²²

The controversy with McMaster actually surfaced shortly after Shields became Jarvis Street pastor in 1910 when staunch conservative Elmore Harris, founder of Walmer Road Baptist Church and Toronto Bible College, accused professor I. G. Matthews of “teaching...[what] was disturbing and destructive of the historicity, truthfulness, and integrity of the Word of God.”²³ The convention passed a conciliatory resolution, seconded by Shields (an action he later regretted), which obligated university leaders to ensure that whatever was taught there would be in harmony with the Bible. The question still lingered as to Matthews’s orthodoxy, but when he resigned in 1919, the issue became a moot point.

Shields’s fight with McMaster began in earnest when he lashed out at the *Canadian Baptist* for an editorial published in 1919 titled the “Inspiration and Authority of Scripture.” The unsigned article was critical of scriptural inspiration. The indignant Shields fired off a letter to the editor promising to “avail myself of the first opportunity of testing the attitude of the Denomination toward the position taken in your article.”²⁴ That opportunity came at the 1919 Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec when Shields offered a resolution disapproving the editorial. The convention overwhelmingly passed it. The gratified Shields appeared to have won the first round for orthodoxy. However, not overlooked by Shields was another move away from biblical evangelicalism and toward liberalism: the appointment of Howard P. Whidden as McMaster’s chancellor in 1922. Whidden, graduate of the University of Chicago and acknowledged social gospel theologian, had already come under criticism for heterodoxy at Brandon College.²⁵ According to a close friend, “Whidden had been

²¹Pinnock, “Modernist Impulse,” pp. 198–99. William Brackney suggests that it is overstatement to call Clarke a liberal during these early years (“William Newton Clarke: A Canadian-American Cross Cultural Experience,” *McMaster Journal of Theology* 3 [Spring 1993]: 62–81. Jeffrey Straub argues from Clarke’s own reminiscences that he had already embraced liberalism at the time (“The Making of a Battle Royal: The Rise of Religious Liberalism in Northern Baptist Life, 1870–1920” [Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004], p. 130, n. 51).

²²For a helpful treatment of conservative opposition to liberalism’s development within McMaster, see Janet E. M. Horner, “A History of the Trans-Canada Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches” (M.A. thesis, Wheaton College, 1964), pp. 25–75.

²³“Dr. Harris on the McMaster Case,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 November 1909.

²⁴Cited in Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, p. 67.

²⁵John S. Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 72.

chosen...because of his administrative gifts and not because of his spirituality.”²⁶ For Whidden, the “newer sciences,” not the Bible nor Christ nor fundamentalism, had produced the modern “emancipation of the mind.” G. A. Rawlyk states that Whidden’s insensitivity to the fundamentalist criticism of McMaster’s apparent move towards modernism in the 1920s undoubtedly played a key role in bringing about the bitter split in the convention.²⁷

The second round of controversy occurred in 1923 when McMaster awarded Brown University president and well-known liberal W. H. P. Faunce (1859–1930) an honorary doctorate. The incensed Shields criticized the episode in no uncertain terms resulting in the 1924 Baptist Convention resolution that the university senate “exercise care that honorary degrees are not conferred upon religious leaders whose theological views are known to be out of harmony with the cardinal principles of evangelical Christianity.”²⁸ Again, Shields and his fellow conservatives seemed to have scored another victory for fundamentalism.²⁹ However, an increasingly impatient establishment condemned Shields’s abrasive manner of expression “without answering his charges.”³⁰ The convention attempted to simply placate the opposition rather than correct inherent causes of liberal trends. Spending time criticizing the “vitriolic” fundamentalists, commentators have missed the real cause of denominational disunity—the failure of institutional leaders to offer its proper remedy: acknowledging liberalism and ridding themselves of it. There was an inherent sympathy with unbelief that they were unwilling to admit. A pattern was emerging of deflecting blame to accusers who were attempting to “undermine Baptist unity.”

The third round of the controversy, referred to as “the great conflict,” was both explosive and divisive. During the summer of 1925, McMaster’s board of governors announced the appointment of Englishman Laurence H. Marshall (1882–1953) to the chair of practical theology. Shortly after, Shields received correspondence from British pastor W. M. Robertson of Liverpool accusing Marshall of holding liberal sentiments. Robertson warned that “if this appointment is

²⁶This was the estimate of Sherwood Fox, president of the University of Western Ontario (cited in Rawlyk, “McCrimmon, Whidden, and Shields,” p. 51).

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 51, 53.

²⁸*Gospel Witness*, 6 November 1924, p. 10.

²⁹Even Shields himself relented: “Since that [1924] Convention we have felt under obligation to assume that the University would stand uncompromisingly for the fundamentals of the faith” (*Gospel Witness*, 23 April 1925, p. 10).

³⁰Leslie K. Tarr, “Another Perspective on T. T. Shields and Fundamentalism,” in *Baptists in Canada: Search for Identity Amidst Diversity*, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: G. R. Welch, 1980), p. 212.

confirmed, Modernism has gained a great victory.... I...sincerely hope that something may yet be done to frustrate such a colossal blunder."³¹ After receiving such news, Shields requested delay of the appointment until Marshall's beliefs could be more thoroughly scrutinized. He wrote, "My only desire is to safeguard the denomination against the possibility of admitting to the teaching staff of the University one whose views are in variance with the things commonly believed among us."³² Shields was certainly well within his bounds to request a further investigation according to McMaster's own Act of Incorporation. Section four stated that "[the] Board of Governors shall have the right to require such further or other tests as to religious belief, as a qualification for any position in the faculty of theology."³³ He was even conciliatory: "In the event of this report of Mr. Marshall's position being proven without foundation, and if from his own lips we learn that he is true to the faith once delivered, it will be my pleasure to do everything in my power to make his ministry in this University a success."³⁴ However, refusing Shields's request, the school's dean advised proceeding with the installation of Marshall, "believing he is in harmony with our [Baptist] position."³⁵ After further objections and often bitter debate, the 1926 convention passed a resolution demanding an apology from Shields without which he would be fired from McMaster's board of governors and barred from future conventions.³⁶ The Jarvis Street pastor countered that he considered it an honor to be opposed in such a manner and left the hall. As insurance against Shields's further meddling, convention leaders requested and received a parliamentary directive allowing the convention to expel anyone not in harmony with its aims. This allowed the 1927 convention to permanently oust Shields and his followers.³⁷ Here is an

³¹These letters along with Shields's written appeals to the university senate are published verbatim in "The Tragic Story of McMaster's Drift Toward Modernism," *Gospel Witness*, 14 October 1926, p. 7.

³²*Gospel Witness*, 23 April 1925, pp. 13–14.

³³Cited in Rawlyk, "McCrimmon, Whidden, and Shields," p. 41. Rawlyk states that Shields was attempting to destroy McMaster by his charges (p. 49). However, it appears that just the opposite was the case. There is every indication that he was trying to *save* it from liberalism.

³⁴*Gospel Witness*, 23 April 1925, p. 14.

³⁵J. H. Farmer, *Gospel Witness*, 29 October 1925, p. 11.

³⁶The entire conflict is rehearsed in a special edition of the *Gospel Witness*, given the inflammatory title "Ichabod! McMaster's New Name," 4 November 1926.

³⁷For an even-handed and detailed account of Shields's controversy with the convention, see W. Gordon Carder, "Controversy in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1908–1928," in *Foundations* 16 (October–December 1973): 355–76.

instance where intolerant liberals practiced ecclesiastical separation! This forced resignation precipitated the creation of a new mission agency (the Regular Baptist Missionary and Education Society of Canada), Toronto Baptist Seminary, and the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec—all designed as conservative alternatives to the Baptist establishment's liberalism.

Shields's biographer, Leslie K. Tarr, raises some reasonable questions about the Jarvis Street pastor's intense campaign against liberalism at McMaster. Conceding that the controversial Shields could be virulent in his denunciation of opponents, Tarr suggests that "the historian can hardly accept the contention that the rightness or wrongness of a position is determined by" the source's gentleness or abrasiveness. "By that standard, a convenient answer to any indictment would be to vilify the messenger." So what about the serious charges made by T. T. Shields against McMaster University and an equivocating Baptist convention? And what of their response to his charges? "Those two issues are more crucial than the question of Dr. Shields's temperamental traits."³⁸ Yet Shields usually receives the brunt of historical criticism as the divisive firebrand who unfairly castigated honorable and orthodox men loyal to the convention. "McMaster [on the other hand] is often depicted...as conservative theologically, unfairly set upon by some ultra-conservative malcontents."³⁹ However, examination of arguments on both sides yields evidence to suggest that Shields was basically correct in his accusations while the McMaster coalition were condescending, erroneous, and even deceptive. Fundamentalists have often received unfair treatment at the hands of a biased media who would deflect attention from sound moral and theological arguments to the fundamentalists's ostensibly clamorous behavior. But the question at hand is this: was T. T. Shields factually correct in his attacks? His demeanor may be open to question, but what of the substance of his arguments? Since Marshall's views were the focus of attack, I will treat only that evidence relevant to them.

Coupled with the Robertson letters, information of Marshall's liberalism came from two of his students who took meticulous notes of class lectures and personally verified them with Marshall.⁴⁰ Additionally, Marshall's own public sermons highlighted a liberal bias even though he adamantly defended himself as orthodox. These three

³⁸Tarr, "Another Perspective," pp. 209–10.

³⁹Pinnock, "Modernist Impulse," pp. 193–94.

⁴⁰These students were W. Gordon Brown and W. S. Whitcombe. Brown perhaps did not use the best judgment in editing a student paper critical of the University while a resident in one of its halls; he nevertheless provided considerable ammunition to use against Marshall.

corroborating testimonies all confirmed Shields's suspicions: McMaster was harboring a liberal professor and virtually endorsing his views. In the famous "Ichabod" issue of the *Gospel Witness*, Shields drew upon these sources to affirm that Marshall taught a moral influence theory of the atonement, denied a bodily resurrection, rejected moral depravity in favor of a "divine element" in the human soul, explained away miracles as the operation of an "unknown law," and held a "loose view" of inspiration (e.g., only the religious content of the Bible is infallible, the apostle Paul was unaware that he was writing Scripture, and the book of Jonah is merely an allegory).⁴¹ Marshall would often disguise his heresies with evangelically pious language,⁴² but the cumulative evidence was fairly conclusive. Added to this was a colleague's verification. Writing to the *Canadian Baptist*, T. S. Campbell, professor of Greek at McMaster, stated that

I am convinced...that Professor L. H. Marshall, whose attractive personality all recognize, is a supporter of modernism. His sermons and personal talks he has given to the press and others, clearly show that he is a modernist. His appointment must, therefore, be regarded as a decided gain for modernism.⁴³

Yet in the face of such evidence, McMaster's response was that Marshall "stands foursquare upon those essentials of the Gospel of Christ"⁴⁴ and that "neither Professor Marshall [is]...dishonest nor did we misrepresent his views."⁴⁵

The public press had a heyday with the whole affair, blasting Shields as a troublemaker. Yet it was the Jarvis Street pastor who initially wanted to avoid such notoriety by privately pleading with the university senate "to take such steps as will obviate the possibility that a mistake be made" in hiring Marshall without a thorough

⁴¹ According to Brown, Marshall explained the demoniac's healing as the dispelling of a delusion and that Jesus walking on water was possibly a form of levitation ("Ichabod," p. 50).

⁴² Other Baptist pastors endorsed Shields's charges after hearing Marshall. One example is George W. Allen, "The McMaster Calamity," *A Message Delivered in Ossington Ave. Baptist Church, Toronto*, 3 January 1926, Shields papers, Jarvis Street Baptist Church archives, Toronto. Allen agreed that "we have to remember that frequently statements are made by modern scholars that carry double meanings" (p. 5).

⁴³ Letter to the editor, *Canadian Baptist*, 18 March 1926, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ J. H. Farmer and John MacNeill, "Statement By Professor Marshall," n.d., p. 2, located in the Canadian Baptist Archives, McMaster University. Dr. Shields did make a crucial mistake in accusing Marshall of teaching baptismal regeneration and open church membership. Marshall's words were evidently misinterpreted, yet Shields would not acknowledge that he had made a mistake (see *ibid.*, pp. 3–5).

investigation.⁴⁶ Significantly, a book by Marshall, published in 1946, raises the question of his integrity in the McMaster Controversy. In this work, Marshall takes the idealistic view of Adolf Harnack that Jesus was merely an ethical teacher whose principles rested on the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.⁴⁷ A biographical note in a second work published in 1954 makes it clear that Marshall was a modernist who saw his role at McMaster as one of “championing the new theology against a confederacy of [fundamentalist] prejudice and suspicion.”⁴⁸ Pinnock surmises that Marshall would have held these views while teaching at McMaster. If so, it suggests that he “was far less candid when he assured the committee of the university on the matter of his own conservative theology.... [But] the impression was allowed to stand that there was no truth to Shields’s allegations about Marshall when in fact there certainly was. In part, the defeat of Shields was achieved through deceit, either on Marshall’s part or on the part of those who defended him.”⁴⁹ It is clear that the leadership of the university wished to continue steering it in the same liberal direction that William Newton Clarke had set for it much earlier. According to Pinnock, himself a former McMaster professor, it is troubling to note the

failure of the university to be open and candid about what was going on there theologically, and the failure of *The Canadian Baptist* to bring out the truth by means of creative investigative reporting. The impression one gets just because the leadership of the university and the denomination remained so secretive and uninformative on this issue is that the charges brought against the school were very nearly right.⁵⁰

Placing the McMaster controversy in perspective, we may logically conclude that Shields was justified in his charges that the university was “drifting from its well-defined evangelical moorings.”⁵¹ Shifting

⁴⁶*Gospel Witness*, 15 October 1925, p. 15.

⁴⁷L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 14, 18.

⁴⁸Pinnock, “Modernist Impulse,” p. 202, citing L. H. Marshall, *Rivals of the Christian Faith* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1954), pp. 10–13.

⁴⁹Pinnock, “Modernist Impulse,” pp. 201–2.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 203. Shields had justly argued that any theology advocated in the classroom at variance with the university’s stated doctrinal principles must not be tolerated. Commenting on the Charles A. Briggs case of 1891, Harold Lindsell observed, “For anyone...to stay in a school or denomination when he disbelieves the standards the institution or church teaches is unethical.... And any church or school that has a commitment to a confession of faith but does not live up to it is hypocritical” (*Battle for the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], p. 198). The same could be applied to Marshall and the McMaster administration.

⁵¹Tarr, “Another Perspective,” p. 218.

the blame for the whole unfortunate episode to Shields's abrasive conduct fails to recognize that a heated battle will often produce inflammatory rhetoric which is evident from *both* sides of this issue. More importantly, the refusal of the establishment to answer Shield's specific charges justified his public outcry against McMaster.

Finally, I should like to point out that, as a result of the McMaster controversy, T. T. Shields became an ecclesiastical separatist when most fundamentalists at the time were nonconformists. This was somewhat by default, since he and his church were forced out of their denomination. But the experience caused him to realize that the proper biblical course of action regarding institutional apostasy was removal from it. Charles Haddon Spurgeon's departure from the downgraded British Baptist Union in 1887 supplied the example, and 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 provided him the scriptural mandate. Earlier, when the Canadian branch of the Baptist Bible Union (BBU) was formed under Shields's leadership in 1924 at Hamilton, the group resolved to "function within the bounds of the...Ontario and Quebec Baptist Convention."⁵² But after 1927, Shields recognized the futility of such a strategy and became an outspoken advocate of separation from denominations that had embraced liberalism. It is interesting that Shields took this position several years before American fundamentalists began forming national separatistic associations, such as the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in 1932.⁵³ Shields believed there was strength in unity, but a unity realized in like-minded New Testament assemblies. His grounds for separation, then, were based on scriptural principle, not mere expediency, certainly not jealousy. By forging in 1927 a new conservative coalition of separatists, the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec,⁵⁴ he and his co-belligerents confirmed a genuine desire to advance the cause of fundamentalism through local

⁵²"Enclosure No. 1," copy of letter dated 30 December 1925, attached to circular letter of 3 March 1926, Shields papers. It is significant that the Canadian branch of the BBU was made up of local churches, unlike its American counterpart which consisted of individuals. See Robert Delnay, "A History of the Baptist Bible Union" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1963), p. 160.

⁵³Shields's position on separation influenced fundamentalists such as Oliver VanOsdel of Michigan and Robert T. Ketcham of Ohio to form associations on a regional level separate from the Northern Baptist Convention. Shields wrote Ketcham, "You need to cut entirely clear of the old Convention" (Shields letter to Ketcham, 28 September 1928, Shields papers; cf. J. Murray Murdoch, *Portrait of Obedience: The Biography of Robert T. Ketcham* [Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1979], pp. 125–26, and Delnay, "Baptist Bible Union," pp. 172–73).

⁵⁴For information regarding the formation of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, see Dozois, "In the Stream of Fundamentalism," pp. 86–87.

churches.⁵⁵ From his warfare with modernists we turn now to another controversial battle Shields waged.

Denunciation of Roman Catholicism

Beginning in the mid-1930s, T. T. Shields concentrated his attention on another foe of evangelical Christianity—the Roman Catholic Church. As a staunch Protestant and committed Baptist, the Jarvis Street pastor was personally opposed to Catholicism for doctrinal reasons. In a 1936 *Gospel Witness* article he listed six:

1. It exalts the authority of the Church and its head, the Pope, above the authority of divine revelation.
2. It arrogates to itself, and to its priests, absolute authority over the souls of men.
3. It interposes the Church and its ministers between God and the individual soul.
4. It nullifies the whole scheme of redemption by its doctrine of the Mass.
5. Whereas the gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of grace, Roman Catholicism offers one wholly wrought by works.
6. It adds to its people's enslavement by its doctrine of purgatory.⁵⁶

However, in the public arena, Shields waged his battle with Catholicism not on a purely doctrinal but on a politico-religious front, in defense of the principle of separation of church and state.⁵⁷ Catholics, he said, could believe anything they want, but when their beliefs threatened the liberty of Canadian Protestants, that was a different matter. Undoubtedly, his British nationalism was aroused at what he believed to be a conspiracy to make Canada predominantly a Catholic nation, which several prominent politicians appeared to be supporting.⁵⁸ But when asked by a fundamental pastor why he took on a political issue, Shields responded, "Because the major factor in Canadian politics is religious."⁵⁹

During World War I, Shields had denounced the Catholic Church of Montreal for encouraging resistance to Canada's

⁵⁵ Delnay, "Baptist Bible Union," pp. 163–68.

⁵⁶ *Gospel Witness*, 3 December 1936, pp. 5–6.

⁵⁷ *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 24 February 1944, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Dozois, "In the Stream of Fundamentalism," pp. 105–9.

⁵⁹ *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 27 April 1944, p. 1.

conscription policy.⁶⁰ With the advent of the second World War, he continued to attack this policy as part of what he considered the Catholic plot to dominate provincial and national education.⁶¹ One reason for Shields's attention being drawn to Catholicism was the decision in 1936 of Ontario Premier Mitch Hepburn, "to amend the assessment act to give separate [i.e., Catholic] schools a larger share of corporation taxes."⁶² Later, in 1945, Ontario Premier George Drew proposed an increase of separate school grants and the introduction of religious instruction into the public school system. These actions were discriminatory and undermined national solidarity, according to Shields.⁶³ Any political collaboration between the Catholic Church and Canadian government he firmly opposed. "We must insist on a free church in a free state, each independent of the other,"⁶⁴ he declared; otherwise, the government can become the creature of a false church. Consequently, he campaigned against government subsidy of parochial or separate schools. For Shields, the issue was whether Canadian citizens, the majority of whom were British Protestants, should be forced to pay taxes for religious indoctrination they conscientiously opposed.⁶⁵ He felt so strongly about this that he led Jarvis Street

⁶⁰T. T. Shields, *The Plot That Failed* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1937), p. 49. In 1942, when Prime Minister King proposed a plebiscite on the question of compulsory military service, Shields considered this move another example of pandering to Quebec Catholicism (Donald A. Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League, 1941–1950" [M.A. thesis, University of Guelph, 1971], pp. 49–52).

⁶¹Robert David Blackaby, "Baptist Approaches to the Issue of Church and State in Canada: Contributions and Evaluation of William Aberhart, Thomas Clement Douglas, and Thomas Todhunter Shields" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), p. 117.

⁶²Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," p. 13. Discussion of Hepburn's policies may be found in Neil McKenty, *Mitch Hepburn* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), pp. 76–81, 96–99. Even though this bill was passed in April 1936 and repealed a year later, Hepburn had established a pattern of favoritism toward the Catholic Church.

⁶³"Watchman, What of the Night?" *Gospel Witness*, 31 August 1939, p. 1.

⁶⁴"The Menace of Present-Day Roman Catholicism," *Gospel Witness*, 10 December 1936, p. 1.

⁶⁵T. T. Shields, *The Hepburn Government's Betrayal of Its Public Trust by Diverting Public School Revenue to The Support of Roman Catholic Separate Schools* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1936), p. 14. In addition to the Hepburn critique, Shields disseminated several other anti-Catholic pamphlets, e.g., *The Papacy in The Light of Scripture* (Toronto: Canadian Protestant League, n.d.); *The Roman Catholic Horseleach* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1936); *Three Addresses: A Challenging Answer to Premier W. L. M. King and Other Parliamentary Critics, Shall The Dominion of Canada be Mortgaged for The Church of Rome? An Answer to The Roman Hierarchy's Attempted Refutation of "Life's" Article on Quebec* (Toronto: Canadian Protestant League, 1943); and *Will Manitoba Taxpayers Consent to Pay for Roman Catholic Separate Schools?* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1952).

Church to voluntarily pay taxes totaling over twenty thousand dollars, adding, "I do not believe in the exemption of church property from taxation."⁶⁶

What was of particular concern to Shields was what he considered the Roman Catholic Church's threat to Canadian democracy and freedom of religion. Donald A. Wicks, in his treatment of the Canadian Protestant League, describes the historical background of this threat as one of antagonism between eighteenth century British Loyalists and French Catholics. The Protestant Orange Order, founded in Ireland in 1795, was well enough established in Canada by the early nineteenth century to warrant the Lord Durham report of 1838 which documented clashes between Irish Catholics and Orangemen in both Lower and Upper Canada. British Protestants developed politically active organizations such as the Protestant Protective Association (1896) to assure fair elections at all levels of government. Its attention was drawn especially to Quebec where the Catholic Church was profoundly influential from the time of its confederation in 1867.⁶⁷ Clearly, by the time of Shields's controversy with the Catholic Church, a long tradition of British anti-Catholic sentiment had already been established.⁶⁸

The Jarvis Street polemicist took full advantage of that sentiment when he and other Ontario Protestants launched the Canadian Protestant League in 1941. The immediate catalyst for this new organization was commemoration of Canada's second anniversary of entry into the war with the celebration of a public mass on Ottawa's Parliament Hill. Shields immediately sent out a call to Protestant ministers to join him

⁶⁶"Separation of Church and State," *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 24 February 1944, p. 13. For a discussion of Shields's opposition to the Social Gospel, see Blackaby, "Baptist Approaches," pp. 120–26.

⁶⁷Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, and Jean-Claude Robert write that "the areas placed under provincial jurisdiction were to a large extent those in which the church was interested,...the areas that most immediately affected people's daily lives" (*Quebec: A History, 1867–1929*, trans. Robert Chodos [Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983], 198–99, 460–61, cited in Blackaby, "Baptist Approaches," p. 136, n. 99). Blackaby concurs by adding, "Under [Quebec's]... new constitution, the church exercised tremendous control through an assembly elected by a population that was more than eighty-five per cent Catholic.... By 1929, the church was a formidable entity in Quebec, drawing its strength not only from religious belief but also in large part from the near-monopoly it held over a number of services that were indispensable to Quebec society, such as health, public charity, and education.... With the dawn of the 1930s, the control of these services by the Catholic Church did not demonstrate any weakening. Rather, the church was reinforced in the foundation of power it already exercised" (ibid.). For confirmation of this view, see Sheilagh H. Milner and Henry Milner, "Authoritarianism and Sellout in Quebec in the 1930s," in *Religion in Canadian Society*, ed. Stewart Crysdale and Les Wheatcroft (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), pp. 161–72.

⁶⁸Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," pp. 1–2.

in a protest rally at Jarvis Street on September 12, 1941. Meetings continued for the next four days with representatives from five denominations and over two thousand in attendance. The reason for the rally was obvious: the provincial government “which is representative of all the people” should not “show partiality to any class, or group, or race, or religion.”⁶⁹ Because the celebration of mass, the most significant of all Catholic ceremonies, gave the appearance of governmental sanction, the assembly resolved to “earnestly protest against this Roman Catholic violation of our national unity.” J. B. McLaurin, secretary of the Baptist Convention’s Foreign Missions Board, added to the resolution a reminder that Protestants should not be satisfied to oppose such inequities, but that they needed to establish a league that would uphold spiritual freedom based on the Lordship and Saviorhood of Jesus Christ: “This resolution calls upon us not to make protest merely,...but to go forward to a new place of Christian living.”⁷⁰ McLaurin’s proposal was put in the form of a motion to create a Protestant league. After the motion’s acceptance, plans rapidly followed. Starting in Toronto but spreading throughout Ontario and the rest of Canada, the organization would implement a two-fold purpose: (1) promote an evangelical revival in local churches (the only real hope for Canada), and (2) sponsor a program of vigilance “against the encroachments of Rome.”⁷¹ A month later, after approving a constitution, the Canadian Protestant League was officially established with Shields as president. Under its auspices, Dr. Shields immediately set out traveling the country holding rallies to alert fellow Canadians to the dangers of Roman Catholic impingement on civil and religious liberties.⁷² Typical of his comments are those he made at Massey Hall, Toronto, on November 20, 1941:

Protestants deny and repudiate the blasphemous claims of the Papacy... We avow our supreme allegiance, as Protestants, to the Lord Jesus Christ...the one and only Mediator between God and men. And in temporal and national affairs, we owe our primary and supreme allegiance to his British Majesty, King George VI.⁷³

⁶⁹“Pontifical Mass on Parliament Hill,” *Gospel Witness*, 18 September 1941, pp. 1–8.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷¹“A Canadian Protestant League,” *Gospel Witness*, 18 September 1941, p. 16.

⁷²So devoted to the issue of anti-Catholicism was Shields that he changed the name of his weekly paper to the *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate* with the 22 October 22 1941 issue. This move made the paper the unofficial organ of the Protestant League. For a list of specific anti-Catholic issues Shields addressed, see Wicks, “T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League,” pp. 76–79.

⁷³“The Protestant League in Massey Hall,” *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 20 November 1941, p. 12.

Another Protestant principle that resonated with Baptists was soul liberty. Shields believed this doctrine was also under attack by the Catholic system, and he based this on its policy of hierarchialism as opposed to individualism in matters of conscience:

The Roman Catholic Church is the original fount of the doctrine of Totalitarianism, and Authoritarianism. In its claim to temporal power it is the supreme example of collectivism as opposed to individualism.... We Baptists are at the opposite pole.... The Baptist position is that we are responsible for our own thinking.⁷⁴

Shields explained that an authoritative church tradition which denies the right of private judgment “nullifies the authority of Scripture by interposing its own interpretation thereof between the Bible and the individual soul.”⁷⁵ This principle is likewise applicable to Catholics holding a political post. “I would never vote for a Roman Catholic for public office,”⁷⁶ he thundered, [because] he is the subject of another power,” namely, the Roman pontiff. Such a public official would not be the conscientious servant of the people, but a slave of the Vatican. Therefore, Shields concluded, “I insist...that any theory of statehood which would ignore, or compromise, or impede, or imperil, the full and free and unfettered discharge of one’s conscientious...duty...must be opposed.”⁷⁷ He singled out Quebec as being an impediment to national unity because Roman Catholic interests separated this province from the rest of the nation.⁷⁸ Comments by Catholic officials gave justification for such opposition. For example, Archbishop Antonuiti, Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, spoke to a large gathering in Quebec, asserting that “the great enemy of Christianity and of all that we call Christian civilization, has always been and is yet, individualism.”⁷⁹ The archbishop went on to challenge Catholics to combat individualism by helping to establish “a social order in full accord with the doctrine and directions of the Church.” In reaction to the speech, the Protestant League resolved that, by condemning individualism, the archbishop was declaring himself an opponent of constitutional and traditional rights of all Canadians, of personal

vocate, 20 November 1941, p. 12.

⁷⁴*Gospel Witness*, 4 April 1940, p. 8.

⁷⁵*Gospel Witness*, 17 October 1940, p. 3.

⁷⁶“Can the Pope and Mussolini Make Peace?” *Gospel Witness*, 4 January 1940, pp. 4–5.

⁷⁷*Gospel Witness*, 16 January 1941, p. 1.

⁷⁸Wicks, “T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League,” p. 23.

⁷⁹Cited in “Another Protest Meeting,” *Gospel Witness*, 2 October 1941, p. 8.

liberty in thought and speech, in action, and worship. Consequently, the government was advised that the archbishop's "departure from Canada should be facilitated without delay."⁸⁰ After learning that a Protestant bookstore was forbidden to use the government postal system to convey its religious materials, the League passed more resolutions condemning the practice as symptomatic of a more widespread attempt to suppress non-Catholic opinion.⁸¹

Shields repeatedly maintained in the pages of his paper and frequent speeches on behalf of the Protestant League that his contention was not with individual Catholics but with the Catholic system. Every individual, whether he be Catholic, Protestant, Jew, or whatever sect, had individual freedom of conscience, but Catholic *policy* undermined individual freedom. He declared,

I would contend for the religious liberty of my Roman Catholic fellow-citizens as earnestly as I would my own.... People who are wrong religiously...have the right to be wrong if they want to.... But it is to Roman Catholicism as a political system we are especially opposed, a political system that claims religious sanction and special privileges because it is religious.⁸²

However, in spite of Shield's assurances, it was difficult to make such a fine distinction between persons and policies. Understandably, many Catholics were personally offended and some Protestant missionaries in Quebec objected, complaining that Shield's strident rhetoric made it difficult for them to win Catholics to a Protestant gospel. A Brethren missionary wrote, "In those days [the 1940s] the Catholic Church was very anti-evangelical and Protestant leaders needed to be on their guard. But Dr. Shields's fulminations made it appear that all Gospel activity was decidedly anti-Catholic, and this made it all the harder to reach Roman Catholics for Christ."⁸³ Shields's defense was an agreement that Roman Catholicism as a religion was

entitled to the utmost freedom of exercise. I believe in absolute liberty of conscience.... I would contend with the utmost earnestness for the freedom of Roman Catholics to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.... But Roman Catholicism differs essentially from pure

⁸⁰Cited in Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," pp. 34–35.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁸²"The Pope's Fifth Column—Everywhere," *Gospel Witness*, 8 August 1940, p. 3.

⁸³J. M. Reynolds letter to Donald Wicks, 20 March 1970, cited in Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," p. 58, n. 28.

Christianity in that it is a religio-political [*sic*] system.⁸⁴

There is no question that Shields and the Protestant League had an impact on Canadian politicians. Blackaby writes that by the mid-1940s, the Toronto pastor's attacks on Ontario premiers Mitch Hepburn and George Drew, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Quebec, and the Roman Catholic Church became so outrageous that Shields was condemned in parliamentary debates.⁸⁵ King fumed, "I wish to say that I have the utmost contempt for Shields and all the utterances he can make."⁸⁶ Shields's reaction was defiance:

I stand on my rights as a British citizen, and contend that it is an element in the principle of religious freedom that I have a right to believe in and to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, and an equal right to denounce the blasphemous presumptions of the Papacy as representative of that "continuous person," the Antichrist. For that I stand, and shall continue to stand; and I challenge the Premier of Canada, his Minister of Justice, and the Attorney-General of the Province of Ontario, to dare to try to stop me.⁸⁷

Both the secular and Roman Catholic press excoriated Shields. In 1942, the *L'Action Catholique* described him as the "prototype of the fire-brands of discord in Canada" and declared his words to be "unworthy and infamous." *Le Canada* called him a demoniac and an idiot, and *L'Union*, an evil mole, putrid beast, professional clown, an insect, and the *ad hominem* list goes on! Some groups wanted an outright public condemnation of the controversial man. The Quebec Municipal Executive Committee approved a resolution to imprison Shields. The Toronto *Evening Telegram* threatened him with a lawsuit for libel. One nationalist paper actually demanded the hanging of Shields! Hostile readers threatened to smash his face, pull out his tongue, and warned him to "leave the Catholic religion alone if you want to stay alive."⁸⁸ However, some of the media sided with Shields. A. J. Wilson, editor of the United Church *Observer*, wrote, "I am all for a united front against the present unprecedented Roman Catholic Propaganda."⁸⁹ The *Presbyterian Record* also took issue with certain

⁸⁴ Shields, *The Hepburn Government's Betrayal*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Blackaby, "Baptist Approaches," p. 131, citing David R. Elliott, "Three Faces of Baptist Fundamentalism in Canada: Aberhart, Maxwell, and Shields," in *Memory and Hope: Strands of Canadian Baptist History*, ed. David T. Priestly (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), p. 179.

⁸⁶ "Rouser Without Rabble," *Newsweek*, 1 January 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁷ T. T. Shields, "A Challenging Answer to Premier W. L. M. King and Other Parliamentary Critics," *Three Addresses* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1943), pp. 5-6.

⁸⁸ All of these reprisals and more are cited in Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," pp. 83-88.

⁸⁹ Letter dated 16 January 1943 and cited in *Gospel Witness*, 21 January

claims of the Catholic Church. And while the secular press did not agree with Shields's views, several papers did uphold his right to express them.⁹⁰

While interest in the Protestant League began to wane somewhat after the war,⁹¹ Shields continued to issue warnings about Roman Catholic advances, defended outspoken Protestant ministers, such as Perry Rockwood of Nova Scotia and Baptist street preachers arrested in Quebec, and upheld all the while the principle of religious liberty. In exercising his own freedom, Shields felt it his duty to expose the errors of Romanism as he had been doing with Protestant liberalism.⁹² Even after his resignation from the presidency of the Protestant League in 1950, according to William Kilbourn, Shields "still thundered against French Canadian popery from his Jarvis Street pulpit, as if the fires of the Inquisition had but recently been lit."⁹³

After examining Shields's denunciation of Catholicism, Wicks writes, "Had he confined himself to a doctrinal attack upon the Roman Church, Shields may not have aroused the feelings of both Protestants and Catholics to the same degree that he did."⁹⁴ Wicks believes that Shields embodied a contradiction: "while advocating separate spheres of action for church and state, he, at the same time, involved himself and the bodies he represented in political crusades."⁹⁵ However, while Shields addressed political issues from his Jarvis Street pulpit, he firmly believed he was fighting a moral war for which the church must contend. He repeatedly reminded his readers

1943, p. 2.

⁹⁰The *Toronto Evening Telegram* (1 October 1941), the *Globe and Mail* (30 March 1943), the *Oshawa Times-Gazette* (3 April 1943), the *Port Arthur News-Chronicle* (23 July 1942) all supported Shield's right to voice his convictions (cited in Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," pp. 103–5).

⁹¹Wicks lists several reasons for this decline: Shields's personal illness in 1947, loss of support after the split within the Union of Regular Baptist Churches and his ouster as the Union's president in 1949, the menace of Communism receiving more attention, and Shields's own resignation from the League in 1950 (*ibid.*, pp. 126–28). John G. Stackhouse adds that the League's agenda was tied to wartime issues; after peace was declared, interest slackened (*Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993], pp. 32–33).

⁹²Sermons and literature by Shields did condemn Roman Catholic teachings. One example was a widely-circulated booklet, *The Papacy in The Light of Scripture* (Toronto: Canadian Protestant League, n.d.).

⁹³"The 1950s," in *The Canadians, 1867–1967*, ed. J. M. S. Careless and R. Craig Brown (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967), p. 312.

⁹⁴Wicks, "T. T. Shields and the Canadian Protestant League," p. 18.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 13.

that

this paper [*Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*] would very gladly refrain from any mention of political matters were it not that the deplorable state of political morals in this country is a menace to the whole moral life of the nation, and distinctly threatens our civil and religious liberties.⁹⁶

And so it was that Shields felt compelled to “denounce every impious usurper who would take the place of a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ whether it be Modernism in McMaster, or Popery in Quebec, or Roman Catholic supremacy in the Canadian House of Commons.”⁹⁷

CHURCH CONFLICTS

Perhaps the most remarkable irony associated with T. T. Shields is how he could denounce the high-handed authoritarianism of liberals and Romanists, and yet himself be given to dictatorial traits as pastor of his church and the other ministries which he led. The evidence is simply too abundant to overlook or excuse. Dr. Shields, according to his own testimony, “ruled his church,”⁹⁸ and he jealously guarded it against any hint of opposition to his authority. The discrepancy can be seen in how he heroically defended certain Baptist distinctives, such as soul liberty and separation of church and state, yet practically disregarded others. For example, as a Baptist church, Jarvis Street was technically congregational in polity, but it often seemed episcopal (some suggest papal!) because of Shield’s refusal to relinquish any control. His dogmatic pronouncements tended to polarize and alienate, making schism inevitable and irreconcilable.

The Jarvis Street Split of 1921

In print, Shields advocated a well-defined ecclesiology that a committed Baptist would find hard to fault. The Jarvis Street pastor considered the local church a sovereign institution, free of “any hierarchical form of government.... I believe the New Testament churches were autonomous, independent, bodies.... 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.”⁹⁹ The minister,

⁹⁶ *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate*, 22 July 1943, p. 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁸ At a public service in 1940, Shields is reported to have said, “God Almighty made man superior to woman, and superior he must always be. I’ll have no ‘Women’s aids [or] Women’s auxiliaries’ in this church—I rule this church—and no woman shall ever dictate to me” (cited in C. Allen Russell, “Thomas Todhunter Shields, Canadian Fundamentalist,” in *Ontario History* 70 [December 1978]: 266).

⁹⁹ Shields, *The Plot That Failed*, p. 167.

Shields explained, is first “a servant of God before he is a servant of the church.” He made it clear that if there are any superior officers in the church, they are not the deacons. “There is no scriptural, or practical, warrant for regarding the deacons” as such. “In the average church the deacons arrogate to themselves the function of directors and managers, to whom the pastor,... must be in... subservience.... If there is any precedence between the two, scripturally it belongs to the pastor, and not to the deacons.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, in 1921, when unresolved conflict over church programs developed between the Jarvis Street deacons and the pastor, Shields was determined to win the day. The dispute arose when Shields complained to the choir leader and organist over the number and length of the anthems during church services. When the pastor did not receive necessary support from the deacons, he submitted his resignation. In a unanimous vote, the church refused to accept it, but instead relinquished entire control of the services into Shields’s hands.¹⁰¹ However, other disagreements began to surface, resulting in the resignations of the associate pastor and church clerk. Shields’s demand for a \$2,000 increase in salary coupled with his “eighty minute sermons and... dictatorial pretensions,”¹⁰² and especially his series of messages against worldly amusements, produced seething resentment among the deacons. They were offended at what they believed were false accusations of doctrinal error, worldliness, and disloyalty when the real concerns for them were Shields’s egotism and vanity. “The issue in Jarvis Street,” they argued, “is not a spiritual one, does not in any way concern Doctrinal issues but is purely a personal one. Dr. Shields’ ways do not appeal to a quiet, peace loving people such as we are. He is a fighter all the time.” Consequently, these disgruntled deacons drafted a letter publicly citing several instances of unfair treatment by Shields, concluding that “he ignores every rule that does not suit him and invokes them all against his opponents.”¹⁰³ A men’s committee of the church took their complaint to the newspapers. Under the heading, “Jarvis St. Committee ‘Knocks’ Rev. Shields,” they demanded Shields’s resignation: “For years there has been a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with Dr. Shields.... If... [he] wants to carry on a religious controversy, we insist that he must do it in some other capacity than as Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church.”¹⁰⁴ After protracted meetings and heated discussions,

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁰¹Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, p. 73.

¹⁰²Dozois, “In the Stream of Fundamentalism,” p. 71.

¹⁰³“The True Story of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church Trouble—by its Retired Deacons,” pamphlet in the Canadian Baptist Archives, McMaster Divinity College: Toronto: n.p., 7 October 1921, pp. 2, 3, 7.

¹⁰⁴Cited in Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, pp. 79–80.

Shields again promised to resign if he did not secure a two thirds percentage of the church vote. However, when the balloting came up short, he declined to step down. Even after a second vote against him, he announced that he had no intention of resigning “for the sake of a 28-vote majority.”¹⁰⁵ After some maneuvering, he finally gained a majority in his favor and forced the malcontents out of the church.¹⁰⁶ In all, 341 members left to organize the Park Road Baptist Church in Toronto. Stackhouse observes that “it is this schism...that marks the pattern for the results of Shields’s subsequent efforts to lead pure, orthodox institutions.”¹⁰⁷

Schism in the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

It has been the common conception among evangelicals that T. T. Shields was an amillennialist, that he was in the minority among early fundamentalists who were usually premillennialists. Therefore, to enlist his leadership as president of the Baptist Bible Union, premillennialism was disavowed as a prerequisite for membership. However, in a 1931 lecture on the Second Coming, Shields pronounced, “I confess myself a pre-millennialist.”¹⁰⁸ Somewhat ambivalently he described his view of eschatology, allowing for a future judgment followed by a millennial “golden age.” Yet he identified the kingdom as spiritually present, not future: “As a matter of fact, the kingdom is set up now. I am not a futurist in the sense that the kingdom of God is something that is literally to be established.... Jesus Christ already sits upon a throne. He is even now King.” But then he adds, “I do differ between a kingdom that is spiritual...and the manifestation of the kingdom with the King when Jesus Himself shall come again.”¹⁰⁹ Stackhouse calls this view simply quasi-amillennialism.¹¹⁰ Shields

¹⁰⁵ Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ Later he would say, “I got rid of those deacons!” (“The British Government’s Attempt to ‘Appease’ Hitler and Mussolini,” *Gospel Witness*, 3 March 1938, p. 12). Shields’s elaborate defense may be found in *The Plot That Failed*, pp. 185–365, wherein he lists his reasons for the deacons’ dissatisfaction with him: their failure to support his position on reducing the musical portion of worship services, resistance to preaching against worldly amusements, and their support for McMaster in the controversy over modernism. For an abbreviated explanation favoring Shields’s position, see Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, pp. 72–84, and T. T. Shields, *The Inside of the Cup* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1921).

¹⁰⁷ Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁸ T. T. Shields, *The Doctrines of Grace* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, n.d.), p. 201.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹¹⁰ Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, p. 30.

himself confessed that “I know little about it [the millennium], and will leave the explanation to my wiser friends.”¹¹¹ What we can say unequivocally is that Shields was not a *dispensational* premillennialist; he despised the dispensationalism of the Scofield Reference Bible as a fanciful imposition on Scripture.

Shortly after the founding of the Union of Regular Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, two loosely connected groups emerged whose membership had evidently been attracted to Scofieldism.¹¹² These were the Fundamentalist Baptist Young People’s Association (FBYPA) and the Women’s Missionary Society (WMS). Shields’s objections to these groups centered on their independent nature and financial policies rather than their eschatological preferences, but the latter may have been an underlying factor in his opposition to them. What we do know is that Shields precipitated a division both within his church and in the Union when he spoke against these groups. After one hundred members left Jarvis Street in July to form Faith Baptist Church, Shields refused to acknowledge their legitimacy as a Baptist congregation. Dozois writes that two factors produced the split: (1) the “refusal to bend the knee to the wishes of the Doctor” by Mrs. C. J. Holman, president of the WMS, and (2) Shields opposition to the FBYPA.¹¹³ Led by Shields, a meeting of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec convened on June 16 in the Jarvis Street Church. The predominantly pro-Shields group passed three resolutions expelling anyone who would not abandon these “irregularly constituted and conducted” agencies. Nine dissenting pastors who were named and dismissed at the meeting shortly after resigned their Union membership and two years later (1933) organized the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches of Canada. J. H. Watt recorded that the division “was a trying experience for the evangelical Baptists, who, with their predecessors, had struggled valiantly for the truth of God’s Word,...[and saw their] families and friends, churches and youth groups, divided over issues other than the fundamentals of the faith.”¹¹⁴

One can argue that defense of vital doctrine demands rigidity. Those who have rejected scriptural truth have already proven themselves schismatic; therefore, an adamant and outspoken denunciation of apostates is necessary to show that they are the real propagators of

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 207.

¹¹² Walter E. Ellis, “Gilboa to Ichabod: Social and Religious Factors in the Fundamentalist-Modernist Schisms Among Canadian Baptists, 1895–1934,” *Foundations* 20 (April–June 1977): 123–24; Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, p. 31.

¹¹³ Dozois, “In the Stream of Fundamentalism,” p. 92.

¹¹⁴ J. H. Watt, *The Fellowship Story: Our First 25 Years* (n.p.: Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada), p. 34.

dissension. In contests with gospel opponents, Shields proved himself a valiant and articulate defender. He demonstrated that no compromise is acceptable when eternal verities are at stake. Also, Baptists concerned with adherence to congregationalism may sympathize with Shields's concern over parachurch organizations which carried on their programs independent of local churches and "diverted Regular Baptist energies and resources without effective church control and direction."¹¹⁵ However, Shields's inflexible, even hostile, *manner* in deciding the less weightier matters of polity and procedure forced expulsions in which fundamental Christians had to take sides against one another, thus splintering Canadian fundamentalism into factions. Eminent leadership carries with it the responsibility of wise discretion, a quality that seems to have often eluded the "Battling Baptist."

PERSONAL CONFLICTS

As a fundamentalist leader Shields was a man of great zeal and personal strength, but could be obstinate and defensive, especially when threatened. He also had a liability of raising an arbitrary issue to the level of dogma. As we have noted, his fight for doctrine was commendable and necessary, his attacks on liberalism and Catholicism defensible. But when he made of personal offenses matters of public contention, he ruined his reputation in the eyes of those who would have remained his friends if he had been forgiving or at least forbearing. There are two significant events, or series of events, which illustrate these deficiencies of character. They were dreadful experiences for him which left deep and bitter wounds. But they were tragedies that, by and large, could have been avoided if Shields had been more tactful and had heeded wise counsel. We can only touch upon what has already been more thoroughly treated elsewhere: the Des Moines University debacle of 1927–1929 and the Toronto Baptist Seminary disruption of 1948–1949.

The Des Moines University Disaster¹¹⁶

In 1927, Shields's ministry seemed to be at its apex of success. Jarvis Street's membership was 2,219, almost twice that of the church before the 1921 schism, Shields presided over the newly formed Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, and he had just opened a new Bible college—Toronto Baptist Seminary.¹¹⁷ As president of the Baptist Bible Union (BBU), he believed it to be in

¹¹⁵ Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, p. 96.

¹¹⁶ For the most thorough and well-balanced treatment of this whole affair, consult Delnay, "History of the Baptist Bible Union," pp. 180–236.

¹¹⁷ Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, p. 29.

the best interests of the organization to purchase the Northern Baptist affiliated but hopelessly bankrupt Des Moines University as a bastion for Baptist fundamentalism.¹¹⁸ Shields believed that “we shall have at Des Moines a university that will stand for the principles upon which practically every Baptist educational institution in the land was founded,”¹¹⁹ “a great Christian school of higher learning which will be absolutely free from the taint of modernism.”¹²⁰ Funds were raised for the purchase and the project showed initial promise, but within a few short years proved a total failure due to a series of unfortunate circumstances involving the school’s personnel. Unable to subscribe to the new doctrinal requirements, several of the Des Moines faculty left and inadequate replacements were hastily found; after a few months, it was discovered that the newly-acquired president Harry Clifford Wayman possessed bogus academic degrees; and rumors circulated that Edith Rebman, the school’s secretary-treasurer, was having an affair with Shields. The board exonerated them both and agreed with Shields that the staff slate be wiped clean by firing and then re-hiring only those faculty which passed Rebman and Shields’s inspection. Wayman and most of the faculty resented Miss Rebman’s manipulative ways and officious attitude.¹²¹ Moreover, the students sided with the popular Wayman against the “pompous” Shields after the board’s suspension of campus sororities and fraternities and expression of disappointment at having the Star Spangled Banner sung in chapel.¹²² Bad feelings erupted into a campus riot when students heaved eggs and rocks, assaulted the administration building, and sought to kidnap Shields who hid in the building’s washroom. The fiasco continued when Wayman refused to resign and presided over the 1929 commencement under armed guard. Shortly after, Des Moines University, in complete disarray, closed forever. Shields blamed

¹¹⁸ Shields’s decision was opposed by his attorney, C. J. Holman, who listed nine reasons why the Des Moines purchase was a bad idea. Prophetically, Holman wrote, “I do feel that this Des Moines proposition will simply manacle your Bible Union energies and that in the end there will come disappointment” (cited in Delnay, “History of the Baptist Bible Union,” p. 189).

¹¹⁹ *Gospel Witness*, 23 June 1927, p. 11.

¹²⁰ Des Moines University *Bulletin*, 1927–1928, p. 4, cited in George S. May, “Des Moines University and Dr. T. T. Shields,” *Iowa Journal of History* 54 (July 1956): 200.

¹²¹ May, “Des Moines University,” p. 212.

¹²² Evidently contributing to the already strained relations between Canadian and United States factions in the university, Miss Rebman refused to stand during the playing of America’s National Anthem (Billy Vick Bartlett, *A History of Baptist Separatism* [Springfield, MO: Roark and Son, 1972], p. 17, n. 39; Delnay, “History of the Baptist Bible Union,” p. 204).

Wayman's devious behavior for the school's demise.¹²³ The newspapers laid the school's failure upon Shields. Even a fundamentalist observer wrote that "the two year history of Des Moines University is a history of the blunders of Shields."¹²⁴ This is perhaps an overstatement, but Shields was to blame for not heeding the advice of reliable friends, such as William Bell Riley (1861–1947), vice president of the BBU and pastor of First Baptist Church, Minneapolis. Riley had cautioned against the school's purchase to begin with,¹²⁵ and with no abatement of hostilities in sight, he advised removing Edith Rebman,¹²⁶ whose divisiveness Shields simply refused to acknowledge.¹²⁷ He would not fire the loyal secretary under any circumstances, and he considered Riley's suggestion a personal insult which he never forgave.¹²⁸ Rebman's domineering ways alienated her, and consequently Shields, from the university students and staff. It appears that, in her own way, she was as much responsible for the collapse of the school as Wayman's deception and Shields's mismanagement.

Shortly after the campus riot, the embarrassed Shields admitted to mistakes, "and our mistakes in Des Moines have been costly. But the greatest mistake we ever made was that we did not, before inviting Dr. Wayman to become President of De Moines, thoroughly investigate his academic record." He lamented, "[I have] wished a thousand times that [I]...had never heard of Des Moines University. It has cost

¹²³ T. T. Shields, "Des Moines University Riots," *Gospel Witness*, 23 May 1929. This widely circulated issue focuses almost entirely on Wayman, his bogus degrees, and deceptions. In subsequent issues of the *Gospel Witness* and in correspondence, Shields expressed the utmost contempt for the "traitor" Wayman, referring to him as "the most unmitigated and outrageous and infamous liar whose feet ever cursed this earth" (Shields letter to Riley, 4 April 1930, Shields papers).

¹²⁴ Bartlett, *A History of Baptist Separatism*, p. 17.

¹²⁵ Riley letter to Shields, 10 April 1930, Shields papers.

¹²⁶ Riley letters to H. C. Wayman, 8 and 10 May 1929, Shields papers; Riley letter to Shields, 10 April 1930, Shields papers.

¹²⁷ *Gospel Witness*, 23 May 1929, p. 29; *Baptist Record*, 18 May 1929, p. 3, cited in May, "Des Moines University and Dr. T. T. Shields," p. 222. When the riots broke out, Riley left the BBU for good (Delnay, "History of the Baptist Bible Union," p. 200).

¹²⁸ Shields was livid over Riley and J. Frank Norris's faulting him for the Des Moines debacle: "Both you [Norris] and Riley take the same ground in this respect, and I am frank to say that no two men of my acquaintance have made more mistakes in their judgment of men than yourself and Riley" (Shields letter to J. Frank Norris, 14 June 1929, Shields papers). His friendship with both men came to an abrupt and bitter end. After Riley resigned from the BBU, Shields terminated his membership in Riley's World's Christian Fundamentals Association, and demanded that Norris cease publication of his sermons and even "refrain from mentioning my name" (*ibid.*; Riley letter to Shields, 13 May 1929; Riley letter to Violet Stoakley, 24 May 1929, all letters in Shields papers).

[me]...much labour and time and energy."¹²⁹ But the price of his mistakes went beyond the hiring of Wayman and expending personal effort; in the end, it cost him a school, contributed to the downfall of the BBU, and forfeited him the friendship of men he once admired—W. B. Riley and southern fundamentalist J. Frank Norris.¹³⁰

The Disruption of Toronto Baptist Seminary

Another personal conflict which had enormous consequences for Baptist fundamentalism in Canada involved T. T. Shields and long time associate W. Gordon Brown (1904–1979).¹³¹ As a McMaster student at the time of the Marshall Controversy, Brown accused the modernist professor of “terminological inexactitude.” For this remark and his editing a fundamentalist student paper (*The Prophet*) from his university residence he was evicted by chancellor Whidden.¹³² After his graduation and the founding of Toronto Baptist Seminary in January 1927, Brown was hired as a teacher and later was made dean. It is significant that the school was started as a ministry of Jarvis Street Baptist Church. Its board was comprised of the church’s deacons; the school president was Shields. The seminary was not meant to be interdenominational nor separate from a local Baptist church ministry; this arrangement allowed Shields direct control of the school.

Gordon Brown was an articulate defender of fundamentalism and showed great promise as a leader in the movement.¹³³ Understandably, these qualities attracted him to Shields, who felt that Brown would be an excellent addition to the new college. However, tensions between the two appear to have developed early on. Shields was critical of Brown’s course work at Southern Baptist Seminary, stating that “its degrees do not rate very high academically” preferring instead that Brown work toward a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto.¹³⁴ Also, in

¹²⁹ “Des Moines University Riots,” p. 34.

¹³⁰ These two leaders, along with Shields and John Roach Straton (Calvary Baptist, New York City), fundamentalist historian George Dollar called the prima donnas of fundamentalism (*A History of Fundamentalism in America* [Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973], pp. 105–43).

¹³¹ Biographical information on Brown may be found in Gary W. McHale, ed., *The History of Central Baptist Seminary* (Gormley, Ontario: Central Baptist Seminary, 1993).

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 10; Howard P. Whidden letter to Brown, 31 March 1926, Shields papers.

¹³³ Brown helped Shields edit the famous “Ichabod” issue of the *Gospel Witness* (*By His Grace to His Glory: 60 Years of Ministry, Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, 1927–1987* [Toronto: Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, 1987], p. 22).

¹³⁴ Shields letter to Brown, 11 April 1931, Shields papers.

the early 1940s, Brown complained to Shields about his desperate financial situation, due to the church's delinquency in paying him.¹³⁵ He also wanted to purchase a used automobile from the church for travel to work. In these matters, Shields seemed to express little sympathy. Nevertheless, years later, Brown could reminisce fondly of his mentor:

Naturally, Dr. T. T. Shields had a great influence on me. I was with him for 25 years. I hardly ever come to any event...or topic of importance where I can't remember one of his stories. I often sat in his house till 3 o'clock in the morning listening to him talk. At one time he wanted me to go and live at his house.¹³⁶

By the year 1948, Brown had achieved an influential position in Toronto Baptist Seminary and had cultivated friendships with both Union and Independent Baptist ministers.¹³⁷ It also appears that he desired changes in the seminary he believed would facilitate growth, namely, less of an attachment to Jarvis Street and more interdenominational involvement.¹³⁸ Shields saw this as a threat by Brown to take over the school, and demanded his resignation.¹³⁹ Initially, Brown refused to leave and sent a letter to convention churches informing them of the problem. Shields then retaliated with a pamphlet defending his course of action. The issue forced convention members to take sides. In a formal letter dated March 30, 1949, forty-nine Union members expressed deep "regret that they find it necessary to express their profound disagreement with him [Dr. T. T. Shields] in his recent dismissal and official denunciation of Dean Brown, and discover that their confidence in him as a leader, and as President of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, has been destroyed."¹⁴⁰ Two pastors met with Dr. Shields in his Jarvis Street office and pleaded with him: "Dr. Shields, don't do it! Don't lead us into another battle like this. The issue isn't worth it." But Shields was

¹³⁵ Brown letters to Shields, ca. 1938 and 1941, Shields papers. Some financial relief came to Brown when he assumed the pastorate of Toronto's Runnymede Baptist Church in 1946. This also contributed to the tension with Shields who considered this additional position in conflict with Brown's seminary duties.

¹³⁶ McHale, *History of Central Baptist Seminary*, p. 14.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹³⁸ "Battle Lost, But War Not Over—Pro-Shields Pastor," *Toronto Daily Star*, 13 October 1949.

¹³⁹ Shields stated that he knew Brown had been opposing him for ten years, but that Shields had to "bide his time.... I knew Mr. Brown was working for the capture or destruction of this church [Jarvis Street], the seminary and the union" (*ibid.*).

¹⁴⁰ "A Communication from Jarvis St. Baptist Church Toronto," 26 April 1949, pamphlet located in Shields papers, p. 5.

adamant: "Brown must go."¹⁴¹ Most churches in the Union sided with Brown and elected a new president over Shields at its October 1949 meeting.¹⁴² In a Toronto *Telegram* editorial, Brown is reported to have said, "It's just another round Dr. Shields has been fighting for years with all who dare to oppose him. This time he lost."¹⁴³ Shields responded that his opponents were "little men. Tiny midgets of men," and that Brown was "an ambitious man.... He is responsible [for the whole episode]." As for the newly-elected Union president, E. C. Wood, Shields said that "he could hardly be better named. Wood. That's what his head is. He can't think with it."¹⁴⁴ In a desperate attempt to regain control, Shields and ten other pastors formed an Emergency Committee of the Regular Baptist Convention. At the 1950 Union convention the Shields's contingency "left in disgust" after a resolution was passed forbidding membership to anyone affiliated with the Emergency Committee.¹⁴⁵ Shortly after they formed a new separatist group, which became the Association of Regular Baptist Churches. After leaving Toronto Baptist Seminary with 50 of its 80 students, Brown helped in the founding of a new school, Central Baptist Seminary, in 1949.

This division in Canadian fundamentalism revolved around the conflict of two strong personalities—Dr. T. T. Shields and Dean Gordon W. Brown. Perhaps the full truth will never be known regarding the charges and counter-charges between them. But the expression of great bitterness is obvious, with Shields imagining a conspiracy against him by the Brown faction, and Brown accusing Shields of abusive treatment. If, indeed, Brown was attempting to steer the seminary in a direction unintended by its board, and there is evidence to suggest that he was, then he was deserving of censure. What made the entire affair so tragic is that not only did Shields make no attempt at reconciliation, he published instead a blow-by-blow account of private, sometimes unauthorized, information for the whole

¹⁴¹ Watt, *The Fellowship Story*, pp. 38–39.

¹⁴² Amazingly, the *News Bulletin* of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec reported in its November 1949 issue nothing negative, stating that "Our retiring President, Dr. T. T. Shields gave the presidential address the first evening and this was a message from the Word of God which stirred many hearts" ("News from the 22nd Annual Convention," *News Bulletin*, November 1949, p. 2). Obviously, the sermon did not convince many minds to retain Shields as their president.

¹⁴³ "Feels Baptist Union Will Be Better Off Without Dr. Shields," *The Telegram*, 13 October 1949.

¹⁴⁴ "Baptists Topple T. T. Shields From Long Presidency," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 13 October 1949.

¹⁴⁵ "Statement of Jarvis Street Baptist Church Toronto," 26 April 1950, pamphlet in Shields papers.

world to see. This served only to inflame passions and further polarize factions.¹⁴⁶ And from its perspective the public saw only an in-house brawl of two bickering men, which brought discredit both to Shields and to the fundamentalist movement which he led.

CONCLUSION

When battling the opposition, a vocal protagonist will inevitably make enemies. T. T. Shields certainly had his share. Historians relate, however, that it was not only the method of his polemics but the manner in which he pursued his opponents that engendered hatred of him. In reading Dr. Shields's critics, one finds some very scathing indictments of his character, such as the following:

Shields had a mean spirit. He maligned and defamed the character of almost everyone who crossed his path, many times only on the basis of inaccurate newspaper stories.... He was a religious anarchist, accepting the authority of no one. His extreme individualism led to paranoia. He saw conspiracies behind others' failures and mistakes, never giving them the benefit of the doubt.¹⁴⁷

David Elliott, former professor of Francis Xavier University (Nova Scotia) penned this comment in 1996, long after Shields's death, of course. Therefore, his highly inflammatory statement describes someone he only read about and never knew. This in itself should not prevent him from giving an opinion, however. That is what historians do: they study archival data and draw conclusions. But Elliott's comment is highly prejudicial and somewhat arbitrary. For example, he writes that Shields "had the potential of becoming one of Canada's greatest Baptist ministers; his 1923 sermon, 'Other Little Ships,' demonstrated that potential. But after he had sunk himself in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy, his pastoral ministry was weakened."¹⁴⁸ Others who knew Shields and sat under his ministry would give an entirely different estimate: that he indeed *was* a great Baptist minister of Canada in part *because* of his entry into the fundamentalist movement. Shields believed that the exigencies of the times demanded an uncompromising polemic. He agreed that "it is a most unseemly thing for professed Christians to be found contending with each other, yet there are times when it is necessary to take a stand

¹⁴⁶ Personal charges were published from both sides in an "Official Report of Dean Brown's Dismissal from Toronto Baptist Seminary Issued by the Trustee Board of Toronto Baptist Seminary, January 18, 1949," and Dean W. Gordon Brown, "The Truth Is..." Both pamphlets are located in the archives of Heritage College and Seminary, Cambridge, Ontario.

¹⁴⁷ Elliott, "Three Faces of Baptist Fundamentalism," p. 180.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

for what one conceives to be the truth.”¹⁴⁹

If one is to be true as a man of principle, and to stand for what he believes to be right...he is likely to discover that he has few with him—and occasionally he may have to stand alone. And the man who stands alone is looked upon as being rather peculiar, as being unfitted for social relationships, as one who fancies he is superior to others. But...the men who have made history...who have originated reform movements...who have wrought...the betterment of their fellows, have been men who have been willing to stand alone.... I have lost my reputation as one who agrees with the majority quite awhile ago, and have been free ever since.¹⁵⁰

Some critics, taking a psychoanalytical approach, have attributed a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde complex to T. T. Shields.¹⁵¹ In 1931, a magazine reporter attended a Jarvis Street service and expressed “puzzlement at the disparity evident in his [Shields’s] preaching and week-day actions.”¹⁵² She wondered,

Could this gentleman of benign countenance and mellifluous voice be the turbulent pastor who hated his enemies and loathed his theological opponents until he became wrathful and violent and longed for the Lord to destroy them? Surely there must be some mistake. As the sermon progressed the bewilderment increased. It was what would be called a simple gospel sermon, with no reference to modernists or other monstrosities.... During the week following he appeared to go on a rampage of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Who is the true Dr. Shields? Is he the kindly Christian or the peevish propagandist who has broken up as fine a congregation as a Toronto church has held? In the pulpit on that Sunday night in June he seemed as kindly a speaker as one could hear. During the days that followed he seemed to have no object in life save to make the maximum trouble in the minimum of time.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ T. T. Shields, *The Inside of the Cup* (Toronto: Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 1921), p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ “Quebec Quislings and Their Papal Masters,” *Gospel Witness*, 28 May 1942, pp. 1–4.

¹⁵¹ Russell, “Thomas Todhunter Shields, Canadian Fundamentalist,” pp. 276–78, reproduced in *Foundations* (January–March 1981). John Stackhouse takes issue with this approach in his *Canadian Evangelicalism*: “To justify the psychohistorical judgment that Shields’s criticism of professors at McMaster, the founding of his own seminary, and his takeover of Des Moines University probably were compensations for his own lack of high education (Russell, 277)” is a stretch. “Too many fundamentalist leaders (many of whom did have substantial formal education) also opposed what they saw to be hopelessly compromised schools and set up alternative institutions.... J. Gresham Machen...is only one conspicuous example challenging Russell’s supposition” (p. 212, n. 11).

¹⁵² Dozois, “In the Stream of Fundamentalism,” p. 130.

¹⁵³ Jean Graham, “Among Those Present,” *Saturday Night*, 11 July 1931, p. 11.

The mistake was in the reporter's misunderstanding of her subject. Shields was not a malevolent villain bent on destruction, but a militant defender of principles he considered important. It was not "another" man who preached and printed "The Prodigal and His Brother" and "The God of All Comfort." The *same* man could also be a compassionate pastor¹⁵⁴ who at the height of his battle with liberalism enjoyed remarkable revivals, noted hundreds of conversions, and realized increased church membership. He was an active correspondent with persons from all over the world who sought the counsel of one who evidenced a deep concern for their spiritual needs. The Jarvis Street pastor was kindly disposed to those he believed to be faithful Christians, but to his enemies, he was unrelenting even appearing ruthless in his attacks. He allowed them no quarter and rarely apologized. In this respect Shields resembles Martin Luther, whom nescient critics, reading the following dissimilar statements by the great reformer, would wonder if they could have possibly been written by the same person:

If God has given us a precious faith and we therefore live in strong confidence of the fact that we have a gracious God through Christ, we are in paradise.¹⁵⁵

What then is this, to say something is not heretical, not scandalous, not false, but yet is offensive? So then, you impious and insensate papist, write soberly if you want to write. Whether this bull is by Eck or by the pope, it is the sum of all impiety, blasphemy, ignorance, impudence, hypocrisy, lying—in a word, it is Satan and his Antichrist!¹⁵⁶

How, then, can one account for Shields's apparent disparity of character? In the same way one would account for Luther's. They were complex men, personally pugnacious at times, pastorally sympathetic at other times, but possessing remarkable genius, spiritual insight, and personal courage. Every age desperately needs a prophetic voice to boldly proclaim God's righteousness in the face of great spiritual and moral decay. In his day, T. T. Shields was such a prophet, contending, frequently contentious, and always controversial. To be intolerant of evil is to be inevitably controversial. To not be controversial would be to say and do nothing in defense of the truth.

¹⁵⁴ The author had the privilege of briefly interviewing older members of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church who expressed great affection for their former pastor.

¹⁵⁵ Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, 8 vols., ed. and trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 2:37.

¹⁵⁶ Martin Luther, "Against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist," cited in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), p. 126.