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T. T. SHIELDS, *Pastor and Editor.*

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE ABUSE OF PRAYER.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 15, 1922.
(Stenographically reported).

"And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."—Psalm 106: 15.



It is profoundly true that salvation is wholly of grace. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, while grace assumes full responsibility for the salvation of the soul committed to its care, it puts upon the individual believer a greater responsibility than ever. If there were an infinitesimal element of works, of human merit, conditioning salvation, it might afford to the spiritually bankrupt soul a semblance of an excuse for continuing in an unsaved state; but inasmuch as everything requisite to salvation is divinely provided, it leaves the rejector of Christ, and of His grace, absolutely defenceless, "condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." And that principle persists through all the stages of the Christian life; and is an element entering into our experience of divine grace everywhere and at all times. The grace that exalts us to high and holy privileges, imposes upon us responsibilities which are incalculably great.

Among the privileges of the Christian life is the privilege of prayer—the privilege of making our requests known unto God; and that privilege carries with it responsibilities that may well make us afraid. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest—there is the privilege—must follow if God hears our prayer.

"He gave them their request." He let them have exactly what they asked of history which records the folly of certain people who did not fully appreciate the principle I have suggested to you—that there is always involved heavy responsibilities where privileges are granted. I think I might entitle my sermon this morning, "The abuse of the privilege of prayer." It is possible to abuse the privilege of prayer; it is possible to ask for wrong things, to pray lightly, and carelessly, without due regard to the consequences which must follow if God hears our prayer.

"He gave them their request." He let them have exactly what they asked for. He heard their prayers, He allowed them to have their own way, "but sent leanness into their souls." And that is still true—that God may hear our

prayer, and send leanness into our soul! When God's children ask for bread, He never gives them a stone; when they ask for a fish, He never gives them a serpent. But if they persist in asking for a stone, He will sometimes let them have it to break their teeth on; and if in desperate rebellion they petulantly cry for a scorpion, He lets them have a scorpion to play with, that He may teach them the folly of self will.

Let us then look into this ancient story, for we have been asking God to teach us how to pray. We have been asking to exercise ourselves in this ministry of prayer; and I want this morning to remind you that it is the most solemn undertaking in which a Christian can engage. It is a privilege which admits us to the possibility of possessing great riches; but let us see that we use the privilege aright.

I. First of all, then, consider HOW THIS REQUEST, "TO WHICH THE LORD" REFERS, WAS PREFERRED. How was the prayer offered? I suppose there are few families in which the children have not at some time or another complained of the food spread upon the table. Hungry as they may be, appetizing as the meals generally are, in most families there is a boy or a girl who is not easily pleased, and who is disposed to complain when the family is assembled about the table—"And why have we got this for dinner to-day?" Well, the Lord has a family of grumbling children. Many of them have a very bad habit of finding fault with the food; and it is to that habit of murmuring the text before us this morning refers.

I would remind you at the outset that these people *did not formally pray at all*. They did not bow their knees and formally and deliberately complain into the ear of God that they did not like this light bread; that their soul loathed the manna from the skies. They did not know they were praying to God. They grumbled to Moses: they said to their human leader, "Give us flesh, that we may eat." But we read that the Lord heard their complaint. They talked into the ear of Moses; but long before the world knew anything of radio, the desire of their hearts went heavenward, and God heard their complaint; and He interpreted it as a real prayer—as the desire of the life.

Thus we may pray in a very orthodox fashion; the words we utter may be an expression of desire which is quite in agreement with the principle of revealed truth: or, we may hear others pray in prayer-meetings; and we may say we greatly enjoyed their prayer—we were able to breathe a fervent Amen to the petition; and yet that may not be the man's real prayer at all,—neither his nor ours. It may be that the prayer he offers when on his feet is far more effectual than the prayer he utters when on his knees. It is the prayer that is an expression of the whole man that God hears; and it may be that we are praying, some of us, in some other way than by the lip. It may be that, unconsciously to ourselves, our whole life is just a cry to God for the things that are not promised us in this Book. It is a terrible responsibility which rests upon us when we come to realize that every expression of life is taken cognizance of by God; and that He may answer the prayer of the life, instead of the prayer of the lip.

These people, I say, whose request with such terrible consequences to themselves was granted, did not formally pray for the things that were given them. Their prayer, or the mood which God recognized as prayer, *was inspired by the lusting of the mixt multitude that was among them*. Did you notice that in our reading this morning, when Israel went up out of Egypt, there went up with them "a mixt multitude"—people who were not Hebrews—people who were not of Israel, and yet associated with them? And when they found themselves in straightened circumstances, they forthwith began to complain, and to hunger for the flesh pots of Egypt, for the things they had left behind. Because of their association with the "mixt multitude," Israel began to pray the same prayer, and to long for the same things.

That principle holds to-day. Certain contact with the world is absolutely necessary to the Christian. We are in the world: we cannot live a monastic existence; we cannot shut ourselves within stone walls, and with firmly bolted doors shut the world, the flesh and the devil without. And yet there is a very real separation possible to the Christian: "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from

the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." But my brethren, if it be so that in our business, and social relations, in our recreations, in our pleasures, in every expression of the life we live, we are not only associated with, but identified with the world, governed by its maxims, our conduct regulated by its standards, our purposes directed toward the same ends—if we are living essentially worldly lives, it does not make much difference how we pray. No one of us has ever asked God, "Let me live a worldly life. Lord, make me successful according to the standards of the world. Give me a place and standing in the estimation of worldly men. Help me to appear great in the eyes of men who know not God. Make me popular with the world which cries, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'" We never pray like that; with the lips—never think of praying after that fashion. We should be shocked if we did; and yet the influence of the "mixt multitude" may be so real in our lives, may be so determining a factor in the moulding of our ambitions, that every throb of our hearts may just telegraph that message heavenward—"Make me a full grown, successful, worldly man." And God may answer your prayer.

If you examine the story you will find that the life they lived was a *protest against divine government*; a protest against the provisions of divine Providence. "And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it." "Man did eat angels' food." And God let down a little bit of heaven for a redeemed nation to live upon, and enjoy. And they rebelled against the divine order; they protested against the provision which God had made. And Moses, interpreting the life of protest they lived, uttered these wonderfully significant words:—listen! "Ye have wept in the ears of the Lord." No, they did not pray, but they wept; and God heard their tears. It was the most effectual kind of prayer.

"Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" said the angel. "Then Sarah denied, saying, 'I laughed not.' 'Nay; but thou didst laugh,' said the angel." He might have said: "Thou hast laughed in the ears of the Lord; thou hast laughed at a promise of grace; thou hast ridiculed the possibility of God's doing what He hath said." "It is all very well for these doctrinaires to talk about the life of faith; all very well for people to say the Old Book is true, and that God will keep His Word in this late day; all very well for these partially educated and stupid preachers, who cannot keep up with the times, to say that God—the God of the Bible—is living to-day! But the thing is really absurd." You never heard a man stand up in a prayer-meeting and say that; or pretend to pray, and say, "O Lord, I do not believe Thy Word; I believe that half the Bible is not true; I do not believe that Thou hast spoken in any reliable fashion; I do not believe that it is possible to-day just to be touched by the finger of God, and to be made a new creature, and to have the whole life revolutionized and transformed." You never heard a man say that in so many words; but that is what the Church of Christ is saying to-day: "It is no use preaching the old gospel. Let us turn as'de to some other thing." And I tell you, my brethren, the councils of the Christian Church which pour contempt upon the word of divine revelation is a cry of unbelief, going up into the ears of the Lord God. And He may give the Church their request—let them have their own way—and send leanness into their souls! O may God preserve us from that!

I point out to you that it is not what we say in prayer-meeting—not what we say in private on our knees; but it is the prayer that has the energy of our whole life behind it—it is what the man really is before God—that He answers.

II. Well, now, OF WHAT DID THAT PRAYER CONSIST? What, in a word, was their request? In the first place, it was a *request to be permitted to return to the old life*: They said, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic—but now, now,—there is nothing but this manna before us. We see nothing but manna—the thing which God gave us; but we remember what Egypt gave us; and if we had our way, we would go back again." And so they asked for permission: in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt.

We never pray, "O Lord, let me live as though I had never seen Jesus; let me live as though I had never been cleansed by the precious blood; let me find pleasure among those who never bow the knee to God." We never pray like that in word; but alas! alas! how many there are who continually remem-

ber Egypt; and whose desires are still on that low plane! And they are making their requests known unto God.

Their request was *that they might be fed with some other than spiritual food*. They said, "We have had altogether too much manna; we should like now to have a change; we want something else than the thing which God has ordered for us." The New Testament is full of that. The multitude gathered around Jesus, and when He said to them, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;" and went on to say, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed"; they said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" "From that time may of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Then said Jesus unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord; to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou hast the manna, and it is the manna we want; and we will stay with Thee for the sake of getting the manna."

Alas! there is a demand to-day for something else than the spiritual food. May I venture to say that a year or so ago, when the pastor was offering the morning invocation—just simply asking the blessing of God, and for the descent of the manna—someone arriving late, but who is not with us now, remarked to one of the ushers in the vestibule, "And what is this? Some more of this spiritual stuff, I suppose?" Ah, yes, there are some who do not want the spiritual "stuff"; who do not want to know what God has said; what God has planned; what God has promised; what God proposes. "O no, let us have something else than the manna." And so they pray, and they get what they pray for in the end.

If you study the narrative of the eleventh chapter of Numbers, which we read this morning—and if you have no other course prescribed, and have leisure this afternoon, it might be profitable to read that chapter over again—if you study the narrative you will find that *their request consisted of a desire to live on the carnal plane*, to just live like natural men, to live on the things that other people lived on, to live without commerce with the skies. "No, none of that manna—give us flesh that we may eat; gratify our carnal desires; let our palates be pleased, even if our souls are starved; let our imaginations be stimulated; let us live in the realm of the temporal and the seen; and do not talk to us about the upper and unseen realm. We will have none of it." That is the way too many have been praying; that is the way a large part of the Christian Church has been praying.

I remember a talk with a friend. He was a godly man, but I think wholly mistaken in his emphasis. He was a leader of one of our missionary enterprises. And he said, "You know, when I was young, I used to hear ministers appealing to their hearers to surrender to Christ, to receive Him, to trust Him, for the sake of being saved for the future life. And I used to hear missionary appeals based on the same ground. We were asked to send the gospel to the heathen in order to save their souls, in order that they might know Christ, with a view to dwelling happily with Him in the future. But," he said, "it always seemed to me that the future was so remote; and that that argument was not the most weighty. Now we urge men to come to Christ because of the profitableness of godliness to the life that now is. We tell young men if they have Christ as their guide and helper, they are likely to succeed; and we appeal to men to give of their means for our educational work, and for the sake of the social uplift it gives. We tell people now, when the gospel comes, they become better clothed, better fed, and better educated, and better citizens." And in half the missionary meetings of to-day you hear men here in Canada appealing for money for the purpose, not of making citizens of the New Jerusalem; but for the sake of making good Canadians. That has its place, and will come as a by-product of the other; for he who is a citizen of heaven will be a good citizen, and subject to the powers that be, that are ordained of God.

But what is our prayer? The prayer expressed by our lives? Is it a prayer that surveys merely the realm of the temporal, of the material? Or is it a prayer which transcends the things of time and sense, which asks, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and

depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

III. THE LORD GRANTED THEIR REQUEST. "He gave them their request." He answers the prayer of the full heart. "He giveth to the beast his food." Mark! "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." And if you want to come down to that plane, and pray like a beast, and cry like a raven; you will get what the beasts get, and you will get what is provided for ravens. It is a solemn truth that God does allow men to have their own way; that He does sometimes grant their request.

And you will notice that this prayer was supernaturally answered. The quails were just as much a miracle as the manna. Moses said, "Shall the flocks and herds be slain to suffice them—six hundred thousand footmen in all—or shall the fish of the sea be gathered together for them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?—thou shalt see whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not." You will remember how the quails came; and how by His outstretched arm, and the exercise of supernatural providential power, God granted their request on the low, material, temporal plane! He gave them flesh to eat. And I suppose in the beginning they would have been inclined to hold a thanksgiving service. "Ha, Ha, Moses, now we have the kind of religion we want. No more of this manna—we have the flesh; and if the God you taught us to trust in can do that for us, very well; we will go on praying to Him."

Here is a man who would not be regarded as an irreligious man at all; he has a deep religious interest, and he prays; and if you talk to him, he says, "You know I put all my business affairs before the Lord; and I have been prospered in my business marvellously. Everything I touch succeeds; and I believe it is because I pray about it. Strangely enough, difficulties are removed; and I have an abundant measure of material prosperity. I am able to send my children to school. I am able to set before them the possibilities of a university education. I tell them that they ought to occupy a more honorable position than their father. I tell you, sir, we are getting on! we are getting on! You ought to hear my boys: they are just fired with an ambition to succeed; and I tell them, 'Go on, go on!' There is plenty of money; and I will help you all the way through.' O yes, sir, I have great reason for thankfulness. My wife and I just pray about these things; and the more we pray, the more material prosperity we have. And we are getting on. The quails are just being piled up all the time, night and day; and we go on gathering them, abundant in labor, and more and more prosperous." But no manna—nothing that belongs to that unseen realm! They ask for none, and none is given.

Do you know what they said of the manna? Do you know what the word means? They gathered, and they said, "What is this?" Ah, there was a bit of mystery about it. It belonged to another realm: it belonged to the spiritual. But as for the quails, they never asked, "What is it?" They knew what it was. "Now Moses, we are at home, if you please; now we are among our own folk. We know all about this."

I would not have anybody be unthankful for material prosperity. I believe it is possible for a man to take Jesus Christ into partnership with him in his business, and in his family affairs; and I believe that the blessing of God does result sometimes, when it is His will that it shall be so, in material prosperity. But I charge you not to assume too readily that you are favored of heaven because you are getting on. It may be that your view of life has been material; the boundaries of life have been temporal; it may be that you have been praying for flesh instead of manna; and it may be that the children of whom you are so proud, by and by will show a stronger appetite for the flesh, and the things of the flesh, than for the things of the Spirit. It may be possible that God is just granting your request, because that is the prayer of your whole life.

IV. BUT WHAT FOLLOWED? He "sent leanness into their soul." For the moment they were satisfied, but only for a moment. They were soon surfeited. What a terrible figure the Lord uses there! He said, "I will give you what you want. You ask me for flesh, you shall have it—ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even for a whole month—I will give you flesh—flesh—flesh—until it comes out at your nostrils. I will let you have enough of your own way"—and He did.

Yonder was the land of promise; yonder the fortresses of the giants; yonder the milk and the honey; yonder the enemies of the Lord, which were to be dispossessed! There was a kind of spiritual strength in the manna that was not to be found in the flesh. And when they ate of the flesh, they had no strength for conquest, for further progress. God gave them their request; and it resulted in spiritual stagnation.

As though a boy should say to his father, "Father, you have ordered me to go to school; but I do not want to go to school. May I stay at home?" "Yes, my son, you may stay home." "You have set me many a lesson; but I would rather shut the book. I do not want to learn the lesson. May I cease from application to my task?" "Yes, if that is what you want." "Father, the boys are playing in the sunshine; may I run out to play instead of applying myself to the work of the day?" "Yes, you may go out to play." The days swiftly succeed each other, and the years roll on, until he comes to manhood's estate, a dwarfed, and stunted, and unenlightened human creature, who has no place among true men.

These are our school days, my brethren. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the bodies of our humiliation, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." And He bids us go to school. He bids us face the hard task, and apply ourselves to difficult lessons; "for precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little," because He would "present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." He would say yonder in the presence of God, "Behold here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given Me." But instead of desiring to "grow up into Him in all things"; instead of praying God to take everything away from me that would prevent my growth in grace, and to deal with me according to His infinite mercy, that I may learn more and more of Christ, and that some day I may meet Him "with joy, and not with grief;" instead of begging, give me strength to say 'No' to the world—"I cannot go out to play with you." Instead of praying, "Give me strength to refuse to respond to all the seductive voices that call me away from the path of duty, and the school of Christ: for I am living for the day when these temporalities shall have gone, and when I shall stand in the presence of the Holy One, like unto Him,"—instead of going to school, some of us say, "Let us play; let us live on this lower plane! Let us alone that we may live according to our own desires." The most terrible judgment that can befall some of us perhaps, would be for God to answer our prayer; to let us have our own way. How terrible that would be! It brought "leanness into their souls."

I remember some years ago a certain church that seemed to be at the high tide of spiritual prosperity. There were in it a body of praying men and women, who had a spiritual conception of the Church's mission. And there were in it, at the same time, a company of men and women who were like unto the "mixt multitude," who had no thought of the spiritual mission of the Church. And in a certain crisis of that church's history the "mixt multitude" prevailed. A certain person wrote to me about their condition—one of the praying women—and I wrote back to say, "You must trust the great Head of the Church, and believe that He will have His way." She replied, "Yes, I believe that Jesus Christ is sovereign; but I have been pondering lately a text in the 106th Psalm: 'He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.'" And she added, "I am terribly afraid that God may grant this church's request." That is many years ago; but He did; and from that day until this it has been continually declining, until it has ceased to be a place where God is glorified in the salvation of souls.

My brethren, as I bring you this message this morning, I confess I am afraid of the operation of its principles; and the only thing that I can suggest to you is that we had better let God choose for us: we had better learn the wisdom of being content with that which He gives.

What is faith? O, says somebody, "I believe God." You believe God? And in what does your faith consist? What kind of God do you believe in? "O, I believe in His power. I believe God can do anything." Yes: what else

do you believe in? "Well, I believe in His willingness. I believe He stands ready to help His children." Faith in power! Faith in the willingness of God to respond to your prayer! "Yes." What else do you believe in, please? "I believe in the love of God. I believe God loves us; and that He loves to enrich His children." Yes: that is very good. Faith in the love of God! But what else do you believe in? "Well, I believe He will do what I ask Him to do." And what do you ask Him to do? "O, I have set my heart on a certain thing; and I put it before the Lord; and I believe He will grant my request." You believe in the power, and willingness, and love, and faithfulness of God? Do you believe in the wisdom of God? If, in answer to your prayer, God emphatically says, "No—not that, but something else,—can you bow and say, "Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight,—I had rather walk in the dark with Thee, than go alone in the light?"

How far does your prayer project itself into the future? Right up to the day of judgment? "I am seeking for grace that I may be right then." Yes? "For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;" and you and I are not competent to pray for to-morrow. Now, mark it! We are not competent to pray for to-morrow; we do not know what the morrow will bring; and the only safe way is to abide by the promises of God—to abide by such a revelation of His will as we have. To leave the choice of the future not only to His love and power, but to His wisdom, too.

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

"Not mine, not mine the choice,
In things or great or small;
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,
My Wisdom, and my All."

A SMALL VOLUME OF SERMONS BY DR. SHIELDS.

A small volume of sermons in paper covers, containing a series on the fifteenth chapter of Luke, entitled, "The Adventures of a Modern Young Man", has been printed. These sermons have been prepared mainly as a premium to be sold with *The Gospel Witness* for one year as advertised below, but enquiries have been received as to how this volume of sermons may be obtained by regular subscribers to *The Witness*: the volume will be sent postpaid on receipt of 50c. The titles of the sermons are: "How He Became Independently Rich"; "A Young Man's Trip Abroad"; "The Use a Young Man Made of His Fortune"; "A Young Man's Experience in a Foreign Country"; "Getting Home-sick"; "Starting for Home"; "There's No Place Like Home"; "The Prodigal's Brother."

REV. W. M. ROBERTSON IN JARVIS STREET.

Mr. Robertson returned from Cadillac, Mich., last week and preached in Jarvis Street morning and evening. The Pastor taught the Bible Class in the morning, and conducted all services. The sermon in the morning was based on the text, "But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey." Mr. Robertson showed how possible it is for professing Christians to take it for granted that Christ is with them, while they go on without Him; at the same time, showing the possibility of retracing one's steps and regaining His fellowship. The wet evening made the open-air service impossible, but a great congregation attended the first service at which four were baptized, while at the great Communion Service which followed seventeen new members were received.

Mr. Robertson will preach every Sunday in Jarvis Street during the month of August, morning and evening, Dr. Shields preaching at the close of the evening service in the open air.

Editorial.

"THE CANADIAN BAPTIST" AND EVANGELISM.

The following article appeared in the editorial columns of *The Canadian Baptist* of July 29th. We ask our readers to study it carefully as well as our comments which follow:

"CONTROVERSY AND SOUL SAVING."

This is the subject of an editorial paragraph in the *Alabama Baptist*. It arises out of the attacks made upon Rev. Dr. Massee of Tremont Temple, Boston, as a result of his stand at the recent Northern Baptist Convention. In part the editor says:—

'It is reported that Dr. Massee was at once the leader of the organized fundamentalist group of the Northern Baptist Convention. For several years he led the debate on the floor of the Convention. Then he observed that the constant spirit of controversy was weakening his evangelistic and soul saving zeal. And for him, while he insisted that he had not given up any of his fundamental doctrines, yet since for the sake of his own usefulness he had to choose between the two, he decided in favor of the work of soul saving. Thus after thinking it through, his conclusion was that his own evangelistic fervor was too large a price to pay even for winning theological battles.

'This matter is mentioned here because, as we believe, it is a specific case of a very general truth. When one becomes a 'fusser' he usually ceases to be a lover, and when the love of souls dies out in the heart of the preacher he will as certain as two and two make four lose his zeal. If one insists that the theological 'scrapper' does not love souls less, but truth more, and that this fact leads him on into the conflict, then that statement may be countered by another, namely: there is a vast difference between theology and religion. Religion is very simple and has to do only with the soul's relationship to God, whereas theology may be a very complicated technic and it probably has more to do with the head than the heart.'

"Once more we repeat what we have said many times. There are bigger things in this world than calling men every disgraceful name that tongue can utter, than seeking to tear to pieces the churches of fellow Christians, than playing the Bolshevik with reputations established by long years of noble living, than sowing discord, suspicion and hatred in the ranks of the Christian army. Contending for the faith may give some people a splendid opportunity to work off their own spleen under a religious camouflage."

We agree with the implication of the article from *The Alabama Baptist* that nothing should be permitted to disturb the minister's personal relationship to God. Beyond question, the minister's chief business is so to preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit that men will thereby be saved. But on reading this article in *The Canadian Baptist* we were led to wonder by whom it was written,—who is this person who has such a passion for evangelism? It is not the first time *The Canadian Baptist* has suggested that determined contention for the faith necessitates lowering one's evangelistic zeal.

The Editor of *The Canadian Baptist* is Rev. L. F. Kipp, B.A., and naturally our first thought was, Has our Editor suddenly been set on fire with zeal for souls? or can it be that he has long been an active evangelist and that that great service has escaped our notice? We therefore looked into the record of Brother Kipp, and according to the official Year-Book of the Convention he was ordained in 1903 where we find him settled as pastor of Strathaven. He continued in the pastorate, serving several churches, until 1911 when he took up journalistic work in Montreal. During the period of his pastorate of a

church or churches, approximately eight years, the Year-Book reports he had fifty-three baptisms, or about six and five-eighths per year. From 1911 until a couple of years ago Brother Kipp was "somewhere in Montreal"! There is nothing in the record of the Montreal churches during that period to indicate that a flaming evangelist was at work among them. Editor Kipp is an excellent gentleman, and, we believe, amiable to the last degree; we have never heard of his inflicting any injury upon anyone,—and but for the Publication Board's discovery of him in Montreal the Denomination would not have known he was still in the land of the living so far as his contribution to the denominational life is concerned.

But is this the brother who now lectures, all and sundry on the duty of evangelism? Of course, the editor must accept responsibility, but possibly the article under review was written by another hand? If so, we must look for another flaming evangelist in the Denomination. Where does he live? What is his name? Where is the record of his ministry? Can it be that his headquarters is at McMaster University? Did anybody ever hear of such enthusiasm for evangelism as is now recommended to us emanating from McMaster University? There was one professor in McMaster who was known all over the Convention as a man who never lost an opportunity to speak to men personally about the salvation of their souls, but since Professor Campbell was dismissed from the staff of McMaster even the most enthusiastic defender of the University would not be bold enough to suggest that McMaster University is now distinguished by its evangelistic zeal.

But perhaps this article was written by one who preaches rather than practises evangelism. We greatly fear that the writer of these paragraphs is a camouflage artist. We remember seeing in France during the war immense ammunition dumps and great guns so cleverly concealed, or, as it was called, "camouflaged", that these instruments of death must have looked from the clouds like a fruitful field.

We have observed in times past when some prophet of the Lord has called particular attention to some glaring evil, such as an open bar or some other den of vice, the keepers of these places of iniquity usually develop a passion for the gospel and demand of the preacher that he preach the gospel!—which, being interpreted, means, "Talk about anything you like, but don't expose my sin"! *The Canadian Baptist* has resorted to the same trick: its zeal for evangelism is a piece of clever camouflage designed to cover up its fear that McMaster's departure from the faith will be still further exposed.

For ourselves, we propose to endeavour, as the Lord shall help us, to "do the work of an evangelist" more zealously than ever. We are unable to understand how anyone can contend for the faith without, at the same time, being evangelistic; or, on the other hand, we cannot understand how anyone can be truly evangelistic without engaging in controversy.

As for Dr. Masee: if controversy had a tendency to embitter his spirit and weaken his evangelistic zeal, it appears to us that there must have been something wrong either with his motive or his method.

One cannot but wonder what Bible some advocates of religious pacifism read. From Genesis to Malachi is a record of controversy. The first sermon our Lord Himself preached so provoked His hearers that they led Him to the brow of the hill and would have cast Him down headlong, and His whole ministry was so controversial that it culminated in the Cross. The Acts of the Apostles is a story of ceaseless controversy. The apostolic preachers were all controversialists. Paul preached the gospel "with much contention". The New Testament, like the Old, is a controversial Book. It was born in controversy, and will provoke controversy wherever it is believed and obeyed.

The church, like the Bible, was born in controversy. A proverb declares, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." A faithful witness to the gospel has always engendered bitter opposition, but true witnesses have "resisted unto blood striving against sin."

Furthermore, we may remind our readers once again, that Fundamentalists are not the advocates of a new, but of the old Faith. If there is to be a cessation of controversy, let the destructive critics begin. Let them get back to the Bible, and to the Cross, and to all the verities of the Christian faith. Then we will join hands with them in evangelistic effort. But until then we must regard their pleas for an armistice as sheer hypocrisy.

REV. T. I. STOCKLEY'S MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

We have pleasure in printing below a letter from the Rev. T. I. Stockley, who is on this Continent endeavouring to secure help for the Baptist missionaries in Jamaica. When we first knew Mr. Stockley he was pastor of the West Croydon Tabernacle, London, successor to Rev. James Spurgeon. For those who, particularly within the bounds of the Northern Convention, are perplexed as to where to put their foreign mission money, we recommend the work in which Mr. Stockley is engaged, as well as that of the Russian Missionary Society. We have known Mr. Stockley for years, and know him to be absolutely true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. He may be addressed, care Rev. Carey S. Thomas, 1209 Seventeenth St., Altoona, Pa., U.S.A., or 110 N. Dorrance St., Kingston, Pa., U.S.A.

JAMAICA BAPTIST MISSION NEW FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Quarterly Letter by the Rev. T. I. Stockley.

Jamaica Council: Rev. T. I. Stockley, Chairman; Rev. T. Gordon Somers, Secretary; Rev. Alfred Miller, Treasurer; Rev. E. Price, B.A., B.D.; Rev. A. G. Kirkham; Rev. W. J. Thompson; Mr. A. B. Lowe; Mr. Kent Phillips. Headquarters: Mandeville, Jamaica, British West Indies.

In this first quarterly letter, I deem it wise to make a brief historical statement, and to give a general vision of our present-day position.

In the mountainous and beautiful Island of Jamaica, the work of God through the Baptists dates back to the year 1783, and has a thrilling history. George Lisle, an emancipated slave from America, who had been a minister of a coloured Church in that land, founded the first Baptist Church in Jamaica. He was assisted by others of the African race, until 1814, when the first English missionary arrived in the Island. Others followed, a number of whom died of the terrible yellow fever. In the years 1824-5 three men of marked power arrived—William Knibb, Thomas Burchell, and Mursell Phillippo, under whose ministry the work amongst our Baptist Churches made great advances. Emancipation came in the year 1838, and the years around that great event were years of great spiritual prosperity for Jamaica Baptists. The tribulations and persecutions were many and severe, but God gave our missionaries the victory. In the year 1842 a momentous step was taken. Under the influence of William Knibb, the churches accepted the position of self-support. The step was brave, but unwise, for all down the years since that date, the struggles and sufferings of the churches and the missionaries have been very great. To-day we have about 210 Baptist Churches and some 48 missionaries, 40 of whom are colored, and the others white.

To-day the work in that fair isle is being sadly hindered and weakened by several serious things. For example, most of our missionaries—men who love and preach the Gospel—have far too many churches to shepherd. Some of them have five, six, seven, and even eight churches to care for. It is quite impossible for any one missionary to shepherd so many groups of people, separated as they often are, so widely, one from another. Often a missionary has to climb high hills, descend into deep valleys, and ford several rivers, in order to reach some of his churches. The writer has personally travelled through every parish in the Island, and visited nearly all the churches of our Jamaica Baptist Mission: he knows, therefore, something of the difficulties of such widespread fields of labour; and when the church members see their missionary only one Sunday in the month, or sometimes less frequently, they need to be of mature Christian experience to prevent church decline. The writer returns from some of his long journeys amongst the churches with an aching heart, when he sees churches which might, and ought to be, strong, dying for the want of spiritual nourishment, and a shepherd's care. We rejoice, however, to say that in our churches we have men and women of fine Christian character, whose lives have been transformed by the Holy Spirit; who are a constant joy to their missionaries, and who are esteemed and trusted by all who know them.

After exercising a year's special spiritual ministry amongst these dear people in 1921-2, the writer accepted the position of Superintendent of the

New Forward Movement, inaugurated for the following purposes: (a) First and foremost, the spiritual uplift and enlargement of the churches; (b) to bring the sorely-needed financial help to the missionaries; (c) to re-arrange the large circuits of churches, so that no missionary shall have more than three churches to shepherd; (d) to secure a considerable increase of missionaries, both white and colored; (e) to render some help to aged and infirmed missionaries. Now, to carry through this imperative task, an annual income of \$10,000 is required. The impossibility of Jamaica being able to raise this sum of money, will be seen when the people of America are reminded of the deep poverty of most of the Jamaica Baptist Christians. In some parts of Jamaica a labourer's wage is a dollar and a quarter, sometimes only a dollar, *a week*. Poor women sit all day long in the great heat of Jamaica, breaking stones for road work; and when they have filled a given large square box, they receive a *quarter of a dollar* for their long day's hard work; and then sometimes they have to walk five or six miles to get it! Other forms of labour are also very badly paid. Many of such poor toilers are members of our Baptist Churches, and some of them are beautiful characters, too; but what can such poor people give for God's Work, when they gather for worship on the Lord's Day? Out of their deep poverty, however, they gladly bring their little gift for the work of God in their midst; but, of course, that gift is extremely small.

The writer has come to America, therefore, to spend a short time in this land of amazing wealth, in order to entreat the Lord's people of America to come generously to Jamaica's help. The need is imperative if God's Work is to be saved from decay, and advanced. What is done must be done quickly, for Roman Catholics, and Russellites, and others, are trying hard to rob our Churches of their best members. Wherever possible, the writer implores the Baptist Churches of America, which stand for the great Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, to place Jamaica on their Budget, and out of their missionary benevolences to make a regular annual grant to our work. As soon as the \$10,000, as an annual income from the Churches of America, is assured, the writer will return to his loved work in Jamaica, with a great song in his heart; and his report will send through the heart of the missionaries and churches of the Jamaica Baptists a great hallelujah.

T. I. STOCKLEY.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

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Application for entry as second-class matter is pending.

THE SAVING OF THE HELPLESS SINNER

LESSON TEXT: John, chapter 5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24).

I. AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

1. Here lay a multitude of impotent folk waiting for healing. Bethesda with its five porches was a miniature world. Look where you will and you may find a multitude of people sick of physical, mental, and moral diseases; all of them missing the purpose and joy of life, all of them waiting and hoping against hope for some better day to dawn, for some sort of healing to come. 2. Bethesda's pool was reputed to have healing qualities for those who could be first: it was believed that an angel troubled the pool and that the first to step into the troubled waters might be healed. Bethesda was typical of all sorts of schemes for human betterment. There are many, many pools which offer alleviation to those who have the strength to be first, the world is always ready to help those who can help themselves, the world is always kind to those who are able to be first. 3. Into the midst of this all-but-despairing company, Jesus came offering to make one whole: and in that He announced the Gospel programme.

Jesus did not come to sew a new patch on an old garment, or to put new wine into old bottles, or to engage in any kind of work of repair: He came to make men whole. Christianity ministers to the whole man: it fills his spiritual need; it satisfies the mind, the intellect, the heart; it ministers to the body. 4. The man to whom Christ made His proposal objected that he had no one to help him into the pool. Oh, the pathos of it: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me"! And that is the cry of unnumbered multitudes of men and women—they have no one to help them, they are always at the end of the procession; the last one in the queue; others get to life's bargain counters first, they have no strength to be first, they are always the last. Is there any help or salvation for such? Christ comes to despairing souls who cannot help themselves and whom nobody else will help: "The last shall be first". 5. Like the nobleman's son, this impotent man was made whole by the word of Christ, "Rise up and walk".

II. THE PERVERSENESS OF THE NATURAL MIND.

We once heard it said of certain people who were bitterly opposed to a certain man, that if he were to begin handing out \$10.00 bills they would be against it. But our gracious God continually bestows gifts of inestimably greater value; but no matter what He does, men are against it. Indeed, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son", and men are against Him. 1. Here an impotent man is made whole, and no one is the poorer for the miracle and everybody the richer; yet the religious leaders were against it. We, too, have known religious leaders who never rejoice when spiritual blessing comes to a church or a ministry to which they are opposed. On the contrary, they do everything against it. 2. This natural enmity against God disguises itself under a zeal for religion. These men had a religion that cared nothing for poor human nature for whose benefit it was designed, but were zealous only for an abstract law. How often this is so!—zeal for a doctrine, a theory, a philosophy, side by side with utter indifference to the need of human souls. 3. Enmity that had murder in its heart was directed against One whose power was exercised only in healing. Here is a revelation of what sin really is: in the last analysis it is sheer hatred of God.

III. WHAT JESUS SAID OF HIMSELF.

We should bear in mind throughout the study of this Gospel, John's introductory word (chap. 1: 1-5). John's thesis is that Jesus is God (chap. 20: 30, 31). "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God". Here, by the inspiration of the Spirit, John records the answer of Christ to His enemies as establishing this truth. 1. Christ claimed to have the knowledge of God (vs. 20). 2. And the power of God (vss. 19, 20). 3. The life of God (vss. 21, 25, 26). 4. The judgment of God (vs. 22). 5. The honour of God (vs. 23). 6. The salvation of God (vs. 24). This is a most useful verse for pointing souls to Christ.) 7. The self-existence and independence of God (vs. 26). 8. The authority of God (vss. 27-29).

IV. THE WITNESS OF OTHERS TO CHRIST—Vss. 30-47.

1. The witness of John (vss. 32-35). This we considered in John 1: 15-36. 2. His own works. Christ declared He was independent of human testimony (vs. 34). Elsewhere He said, "Believe Me for the very works' sake". Here we should remember the miracles of Jesus are described as "signs", and they witnessed to His Divinity. 3. His Father (vs. 37). At His baptism the Father bore witness, and it was by this witness John knew Jesus to be the Christ (John 1: 32, 33). 4. The Scriptures also bare witness to Christ (vss. 39-47).

PROFESSOR MARSHALL'S FAMOUS FIRST AVENUE SERMON.

We have had many enquiries for Professor Marshall's First Avenue sermon. We do not know whether *The Canadian Baptist's* stock has run out or not, but we are anxious that all our people should read it—not because we believe it to be the gospel, but because we believe it is full of poison, and we should like

to put a big red poison label on it. In our view this is not gospel at all. We ask our Canadian readers to consider whether this is the kind of thing the rising generation of preachers is to be taught. We have never known a more glaring example of how a preacher may wrest a text from its context and make it teach the very opposite of what it was intended to teach. Here is the context:

"When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

Let anyone who understands plain English read it, and see if it does not plainly teach that Jesus withheld His confidence even from some who professed to believe in His name, because He knew what evil was in man. But Professor Marshall makes his text say that Jesus knew what good was in man. The sermon which follows needs no further comment:

"THE INSIGHT OF CHRIST."

A Sermon Preached in First Avenue Baptist Church, Toronto, on November 12, by Rev. Prof. L. H. Marshall, of McMaster University.

(Reprinted from *The Canadian Baptist* of November 26, 1925)

"For Jesus Himself knew what was in man."—John 2: 24.

I.

When we were children we were all doubtless much impressed and not a little puzzled by those Gospel narratives which record how Christ became aware of the thoughts at work in people's minds, though never a word was spoken. But as we grow older and our experience of life deepens, we understand these narratives better, because to some extent we find a similar, though very rudimentary power of insight in ourselves. We are all able to a greater or less degree to see into the minds and hearts of those with whom we converse day by day. Just as we feel more or less intensely the heat waves radiating from a stove, so we are, more or less, dimly aware of character waves radiating from every individual with whom we have to deal. Everybody has his aura, and creates, so to speak, his own atmosphere. If we engage in conversation with anyone for a few moments we are more or less keenly conscious of influences impinging upon our minds, influences which reveal that individual's soul with greater or less force and accuracy. Character can seldom, if ever, be entirely hidden. It oozes out in ways invisible and subtle. Somehow we feel the genuineness of the genuine, and the sincerity of the sincere, as, on the other hand, we feel the falseness of the false. We all know what it is to meet an entire stranger concerning whom we know nothing, either good or bad, and yet we feel instinctively that he is not to be trusted. We cannot explain our attitude quite, but such it is. There are other strangers whom we feel instinctively to be worthy of our confidence. It is marvellous how our virtues and our vices speak, even though their voice cannot be heard. How mysterious and powerful is the silent, invisible interchange of impressions that goes on between both parties in every interview. No suavity of manner can hide the harsh spirit. No display of correct form and etiquette can hide the dishonor that is at work in the soul. The shrew may strive to be sweet and charming, but her shrewishness refuses to be veiled. On the other hand no bluntness or awkwardness of manner can ever really conceal genuine goodness and kindness of heart. If we converse with a conceited man, though he simulates a profound humility, we shall be conscious only of his conceit. If we converse with a vain and affected girl, let her act as she will, our spirits will be bathed in the waves of affectation and vanity that flow out of her personality. It is being increasingly recognized to-day as one of the great spiritual laws of life that direct psychic contact is possible, that soul can communicate with soul without the intervention of any speech or gesture. It seems to be perfectly true that our "thoughts are things endowed with body, breath and wings," able in some

more or less obscure way to fly from us and to communicate themselves to others, whether we will or not. Sensitive people can feel to some extent what is going on in the hearts and minds of those with whom they are brought into direct relations.

Our Lord, as we should expect, seems to have possessed this power to an amazing degree. Just as rays of light from our persons falling upon the sensitive photographer's plate leave there our portrait, so those mysterious character rays that flow from every personality, impinging upon the sensitive spirit of our Divine Master, left inscribed there an accurate and terribly faithful description of every soul He met. "For Jesus Himself knew what was in man." His penetrating gaze pierced its way with startling accuracy into the secrets of every heart. The moment He was introduced to Nathaniel he recognized an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile. Similarly He felt within Himself that Herod Antipas was a fox. Judas had jealously guarded his dark and treacherous secret; he doubtless thought that his wicked compact was known to no one but himself and his co-conspirators; how startled he must have been, what fluttering and palpitation of heart he must have endured when Christ revealed by a word or two that He knew all about it. How wonderful again was the scene in the house of Simon, when Jesus sat at meat there and a woman who was a sinner came and lavished her loving gratitude upon Him. Simon was secretly coming to his own dark conclusion as to the unworthy character of his guest. He thought his ideas on the subject were carefully bottled up in the privacy of his own soul and hermetically sealed, and consequently he was very surprised when Christ with His "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee" began to reflect his thoughts as faithfully as a mirror would have reflected his countenance. Again and again Pharisees, in secret conclave, came to certain conclusions about Christ, sure that they had not been overheard, only to be startled by the discovery that He had read them as a book, and was able to reveal their most secret thoughts. The woman of Samaria found that when she conversed with Christ, the light of His countenance shone into every dark corner of her being, and laid bare secrets of her life. In wonderment she returned to her acquaintances and exclaimed: "Come, see a man who told me all things whatever I did." It must have been beautiful and awful to gaze into the face of Christ. If that experience were to come to you and me, we should feel that all the secrets of memory and conscience were as visible to Him as our bones might be to the X-ray operator. We should feel that all our light and shade, our glory and our shame, our noblest aspirations and our grossest desires, our welfare against evil and our wicked surrenders to it, our every hope and ambition and purpose, all, all were revealed in the light of His countenance. It is well for us to remember that, as the psalmist reminds us, God knows us altogether. As the collect, too, warns us, "God is one to whom all our hearts are open, to whom all our desires are known, and from whom none of the secrets of our life are hid."

II.

Christ's insight into human nature had its dark and sombre side. In fact the words of our text are used in a pessimistic sense. Christ's ministry at Jerusalem had aroused intense enthusiasm amongst the Passover pilgrims assembled there, but Christ apparently had no faith either in the people or in their enthusiasm, for He knew that the enthusiasm would prove as transitory as the morning dew, and that the people who were so ready with their applause to-day would be just as ready with their execration to-morrow. Consequently the evangelist says that Christ would not trust Himself to them, and then he adds so sadly and so bitterly: "For He knew what was in man." The remark is not in any way unfair to the essential thought of Jesus. True, it is that He took a very cheerful and hopeful view of human nature under the influence of Divine Grace, and was ever the incorrigible optimist and idealist, the Saviour who saw something worth saving in the lowest of the low, and in the farthest gone, and who simply regarded the lost as people who were not yet found, and had not yet come to their true selves. But there are different ways of reaching optimism. Some people get there by ignoring all the sad and sombre facts of life, and declaring that they cannot see anywhere the hideous, fiendish, grinning spectre of evil. This is optimism of a shallow type—the paradise of a fool. Christ did not reach His optimism by that road. For Him evil in human life

was terribly real. The saddest words ever uttered concerning man were words that fell from the lips of Christ. He tells us by implication that He had seen men behaving in regard to the sanctities of life as though they were mere dogs or swine. He had been appalled to see what vile things men would do to bring to moral wreck and ruin young people who were just emerging from the innocence of childhood. Think again of that ghastly catalogue of the evils which Christ declared to be latent in every human heart—lust, theft, murder, deceit, envy, blasphemy and the rest. When we read of the shocking behaviour of which Europeans have so often been guilty when dealing with obscure tribes in the heart of Africa, it is well for us to remember that the perpetrators of these atrocities had a human nature exactly like our own. There was no capacity for evil in them which is not present somewhere in us. When we read the record of crimes wrought in time of war, whether it be of disgraceful deeds in Belgium or amongst the Armenians, it is well for us to remember that these foul things were done by men whose human make-up was exactly like our own. When the newspaper confronts us with the record of sordid behaviour of any kind brought to light in the police courts or assize courts of the land, it is well for us to remember that the people concerned are people of like impulses with ourselves. It is a thought solemn and awful that there is no vile passion that has been manifested under the sun which does not exist somewhere, in some form or other, in you and me, which is not part of the fearful entail of our human nature. We may find it comparatively easy to banish from our consciousness those evil thoughts and desires which, if they are cherished, lead to criminal behaviour, and we fondly imagine that they are dead, because, happily enough, they trouble us little. But it is the teaching of the Gospel (reinforced by the new psychology), that they are not dead, but are at best sleeping in the subconscious realm, and may at any time seek to invade our consciousness, and try to shape our character and conduct. How few of us have really been put to a severe moral test? How much we owe to morally favorable circumstances. Many a woman here now, to whom the lines have fallen in pleasant places and who finds it comparatively easy to live a virtuous Christian life, would probably discover that there were dark, sinister, ugly powers latent within her, if some change of circumstances should fling her into the poverty and squalor and sordidness of sium existence. Many a youth who has rightly and easily won the reputation of being a highly respectable young man, owes far more than he can tell to the good society in which he moves, as he would soon discover if he were suddenly placed in a dangerous environment that brought powerful stimulus to all the lower elements of his nature. I wonder how many of us have been immune so far from serious moral falls, not so much because of any intrinsic superiority, but because temptation's spark has never fallen on our dangerously inflammable tinder, because the sleeping lions of our nature have never yet been stung to wakefulness and fury by the arrows of circumstance. Low down in the dungeons of the citadel of human personality there are wild beasts galore. In most of us they sleep so quietly perhaps that we forget their existence, but they are there. Christ said so. "He knew what was in man." We should know too. We need to watch and pray. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. We need to keep our lives ever high pitched—to walk a close walk with God, that our higher nature may be continually strengthened, refreshed, reinforced with the energies of divine grace, that so, if ever the day of severe trial dawns for us, we may be equipped with all the spiritual power that we shall need. Salvation, deliverance from evil, complete ascendancy over it, is the supreme need of man. That need is met when we enter into living fellowship with the crucified Christ. Jesus saves. He breaks the power of sin in you and me.

III.

But Christ's insight into human nature had also its bright side. He never despaired of anyone—not even of the prodigals and wastrels, and harlots. He had hope for all, simply because He knew what was in man. He knew that at the heart and centre of man's being, planted there by the hand of God, was something divine, beautiful, radiant, deathless, indestructible. It may be buried, hidden from view, ignored, forgotten, suppressed, but it is there in everybody, even in the worst, and there it remains incorruptible in all its

corruptness, undefiled in all its defilement, awaiting the day of its manifestation, its expression, its diamond radiance, its power. He believed in the possibilities of everybody, because He saw in all, the vilest of the vile, potential sainthood, an angel in fetters, the new man waiting the opportunity to throw the old man off. Beneath the ashes of collapsed human nature He knew that there were yet sparks of celestial fire. He saw the light brooding over the darkness in the blackest soul. He saw a latent love of purity in the heart of the profligate; He saw love of home and kindred and virtue latent in the prodigal wasting his substances in riotous living; He saw the soul of honour latent in the cheat; He saw the love of truth latent in the liar; He saw courage sleeping in the coward; He knew that there was a fund of unselfish energy somewhere even in the man who seemed to be entirely self-centred and self-absorbed. He knew that in man there was something akin to the creative Spirit of God; that man has an innate love of the good and the beautiful and the true; that God has created man for Himself, and that man can find no true rest for his spirit except in goodness and in God.

Some time ago a French professor tried a series of remarkable experiments on some seeds. His aim was to see if the germ of life could be destroyed without destroying the seed itself. He kept naked seeds of lucerne, mustard and wheat for three weeks at a temperature of liquid air and then for 77 hours at a temperature of liquid hydrogen, viz., 250 degrees below zero. He then put them in a vacuum for a whole year. He deprived them of their internal gases by subjection to an air pump; he kept them for a long time under mercury, in nitrogen and in carbon dioxide. After all these hardships most of the seeds still sprouted when sown in the usual way! The germ of life in a seed seems, therefore, to be tough. So it is with the divine element in the human soul. Whatever the rough and tumble of life it abides indestructible.

At the heart of all our Lord's evangelism, its motive power, its vital breath—was His optimistic insight into human nature. Hence His constant endeavour to call forth the highest and the holiest from men and women and to set free the best that lay in their hearts.

We need more of this insight in Christian work to-day. We often fail to share our Lord's optimism. If any one falls seriously and lamentably we are too inclined merely to blot his name out of the book of our remembrance, rather than, as Paul would say, "to restore such a one in a spirit of meekness." The released prisoner would probably find comparatively little inclination to help him amongst many of the professed disciples of Christ. The youth who shows prodigal tendencies and the maid who is giving herself up to frivolous ways are all too often despaired of as hopeless. The tiresome boy and the wilful, wayward girl are too often regarded as though there was nothing of goodness or worth in them. In dealing with all such we need Christ's sublime faith and deep insight, that we may have absolute confidence that there are nobler powers in them if only they can be touched into life. All who have put their hand to the task of teaching and training children and young people need the optimism and insight of Christ. It makes all the difference in the world to the spirit, and quality, and persistence, and hopefulness of our service if we undertake it in the strong faith that our task is simply by the grace of God to rouse into activity high and holy powers which God has made an inalienable part of human nature. It is ours to bring people into fellowship with Christ—and then all the higher and nobler powers of their souls leap into life and vigor under the magic spell of the Spirit of Christ crucified—as flame leaps to flame. How wonderful and how beautiful it is to think that in all of us, in you and me and in every human being, there are moral and spiritual potentialities, divine powers, which, under proper stimulus and encouragement from on high can develop into the excellencies of Christ. If only we cultivate the Spirit of the Master when we are confronted with facts about human beings, staggering in their sadness, we shall find that, though sin abounds, there is—though often unseen—a divine grace and beauty, which superabound. Christ knew what was in man. He knew man's highest and man's lowest, man's best and man's worst—and not only did He not despair, but believed so intensely in the glorious possibilities of humankind that He shrank not from the bitter cross that stood in the way of their emancipation.