

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLE AND
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 7. No. 44.

TORONTO, MARCH 14th, 1929.

Whole No. 358.

THE CROSS THE CENTRE

By Dr. A. McCaig of London, England.

In speaking of the Cross I need hardly say that we are not thinking of the material symbol of the Cross in itself or as a ritual sign. We have no sympathy with the Romish superstitions that have gathered round that use of it. The Cross in New Testament language means Sacrifice, Expiation, Propitiation, Atonement, Redemption and it is ever in that signification that we use the word and glory in the truth it embodies.

It has long been a commonplace with Evangelical Christianity that the Cross holds the Central position in the Christian system, but there is a strong tendency at the present day to assign that place to the Incarnation, and we are told that the Incarnation is to be regarded as the true centre of the Christian Faith. There is a measure of plausibility in the contention, and we certainly have no desire to minimize the importance of the Incarnation. We believe that the Cross implies the Incarnation, and that the Incarnation leads to the Cross: and we may use the term, Incarnation, to describe the whole of the marvellous manifestation of God in the matter of human Redemption, but we cannot agree with the theorists to whom I refer, in making the Incarnation so important as to say that it would have taken place had there been no Fall and no need of Redemption, or that it may be conceived of as apart from sin and Salvation. This is going beyond what is written; at most it can only be a speculation. We believe it is opposed to what is written, and we maintain the old position that the CROSS—the Atonement—is Central, the Incarnation being a mysterious means to that glorious end. The other idea when taken out of the region of speculation is apt to minimize the importance of the Atonement, and to encourage the hope of Salvation in some other way than through "the Blood of the Cross."

My main object, however, is not the polemical one of confuting the modern dogma (which is not so very modern after all,) but the devotional one of stirring our hearts to fresh love and adoration for our Crucified Redeemer.

1. The Cross Central in the Divine Purpose.

Into the unrevealed secrets of the Lord we may not attempt to pry. The Divine Purpose we can only know by Revelation. Prophecy reflected that Purpose. It gave, at

least, hints of what was in the Eternal Mind. The more closely we look at the Old Testament Predictions, the more clearly we see that the Cross is the Central idea. The very first prediction tells of the Cross. Incarnation is certainly implied in the expression, "Seed of the woman;" but the great truth foreshadowed is Redemption through suffering; Conquest through the Cross. In the promise to Abraham, the blessing comes through the Incarnate One, "thy seed," the exact method being undefined; but as interpreted by the Apostle, the blessing clearly comes through the Cross (Gal. 3. 13, 14). In the 22nd Psalm, the Cross is upreared and the writer sits under its sombre shadow and sobs out the sad story in tones as pathetic and almost as plain as those of the Evangelists. In Isaiah 53 the Cross is gloriously prominent, all-engrossing; the chapter like the Psalm anticipates and almost rivals in clearness the Evangelists' tale of "the place called Calvary." Thus we might look in detail at all the leading prophecies and by them be guided to the same interpretation of the Divine Purpose as centring in the Atoning Saviour.

If the Prophecies reflect the Purpose, not less certainly do the Types foreshadow it: and in all the great Types, while there is a hint of the Incarnation, and other important truths, Atonement is the leading idea. The Tabernacle built upon the Redemption silver, the Ark with its propitiatory covering and the sprinkled Blood, the many Sacrifices, the Perpetual Blood-shedding, the Cleansing Rites, the Priestly Functions all told of the Cross, all glowed with the distant light of Calvary, all plainly cried, "The Purpose of the Eternal is to save sinners by Sacrifice!"

Unmistakable are the New Testament statements of the Purpose. Caiaphas unwittingly makes it known, the Evangelist giving the inner meaning of the high-priestly oracle, that Christ should die, "not for that nation only," but that also "He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Peter declares, in his Pentecostal address, that Christ was delivered up, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and in his first Epistle, he more fully expresses the thought when speaking of Redemption through the precious Blood of Christ, he says, "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you:"

and in perfect keeping with that we have the statement, among others, that Christ is, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and the Book of Life in which the names of the Redeemed are written, is the "Book of the Lamb." Ever does the Divine Purpose move round this great transaction. The Person of the Redeemer is in one sense the Centre, but the very fact that He is represented as a Sacrificial Lamb, shows that the Atoning Work is the great thought of God. Salvation is no after-thought of God. The Cross is not an Experiment. From eternity God contemplated the race in its sin. He determined to provide Salvation, and, in His wisdom, arranged that the Salvation should come through Atonement.

If, as some say, the Incarnation was a necessary method of the Divine Manifestation, demanded apart from sin, then the freeness of the Purpose is obscured, and the Gift of the son is no longer the specific manifestation of God's love for sinners. Great indeed is the Love shown in the Incarnation, but that Love appears in all its splendour when we see the lowly birth crowned by the shameful Death. The Cross is the climax of Divine Love as it is the Refulgence of the Divine Intelligence, the Masterpiece of Divine Skill.

II. The Cross Central in the Thought of Christ.

It has become fashionable in certain quarters, to give great prominence to the "Teaching of Jesus" especially to the ethical side of that Teaching, at the expense of the Apostolic Testimony. We have no desire to undervalue the importance of any aspect of Christ's Teaching, but we consider the Teaching of the Apostles as of equal import, as indeed really the Teaching of Jesus through the Apostles. The four Gospels are the record of "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." And, by the way, what is specifically called the "Teaching of Jesus", that recorded in the Gospels, is His Teaching as set forth by these Apostolic men Divinely Inspired; so that there ought never to be any dream of conflict between the Teaching of Christ and that of His Apostles. But when we examine Christ's Teaching as reflecting His thoughts, we cannot fail to see how prominent a place is held by the Cross.

Some will have that it was only gradually, and at a late period that His way to victory lay by the Cross, that His Death was essential to the Salvation which He came to accomplish. They say that "at one time Jesus had an idea of a Messianic Kingdom that did not embrace the Cross." This we cannot admit. We know, from other Scriptures that He came into the world to do the will of His Father and to offer Himself a Sacrifice of sin. It would be strange indeed if the mists of earth so obscured His vision as to lead Him to lose sight of that great object.

We believe that all the Prophecies demanded that Christ should come to His work with the full consciousness of what it involved; but waiving that and taking Christ as represented by the Evangelists, studying His Teaching as there recorded, we maintain that the Cross was ever before Him. Even in the Synoptists, there are many indications of this. It is sometimes maintained that the first thought of it entertained by Him was at Caesarea Phillipi, after the confession of Peter: but long before that, we find Him speaking of the days when the disciples should fast because the Bridegroom should be taken away from them. No doubt the Revelation of the Cross was gradually given to the disciples and dimly understood by them; but the Cross did not come into the range of Christ's vision unexpectedly. He saw it from eternity. He contemplated it all through life. I need not refer to the many other passages in the Synopt-

ists where He speaks of His Death, as it is generally admitted that, in the latter part of His ministry the thought was continually with Him: but when we turn to the Gospel according to John, we find abundant evidence that from the beginning it was so.

Throughout, this Gospel is luminous with the light of Calvary. In the second chapter, we hear Christ speaking of the overthrow of the temple of His body. To Nicodemus, He clearly makes known the necessity of His being "lifted up." In the discourse at Capernaum, He speaks of giving His flesh for the life of the world. The tenth chapter is full of passion, in the twelfth chapter He speaks of the approaching hour of His glorification, using the expressive figure of the corn of wheat dying and bringing forth much fruit, and lets us hear the surging of the sea of agony which yet beneath has its calm depths of Divine resignation and resolution; "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy Name." Mark, He does not speak as if He had but recently found out that such an awful hour awaited Him, but rather as if it had been long appointed and expected. And then, He more definitely indicates the great event of that hour. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He knew that from the Cross He would rule the universe, dominate the ages, subdue the powers of evil, be the true Shiloh, the Centre of saving attraction for the sinful sons of men. Well might that hour be ever in His mind; it meant much to Him; it means much to us: that hour fixed in the Eternal Purpose, that hour to which all ages had converged, that hour in which centred the greatest interests of Heaven, Earth and Hell.

Undoubtedly, according to the beloved disciple, who was so well qualified to reflect the Teaching of his Master, the Cross was ever Central in the thoughts of Christ, and Salvation ever conceived of as coming through His Suffering and Death. And fully in line with John are the other Evangelists in those great outstanding utterances of theirs. Luke's account of the Heavenly visitants on the Mount of Transfiguration talking with Jesus of the Decease, the Exodus, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, shows it was the most important theme imaginable. The saying, reported by all three, that the "Son of Man came . . . to give His life a Ransom instead of many" is enough to show what was the engrossing Purpose of His life, the Central thought of His heart. To the same purport is His statement at the Supper about the Blood of the New Covenant coupled with the injunction to His Church, perpetually to commemorate His Death.

We do prize the Teaching of Jesus, but we feel that it can only be fully understood in the light of the Cross. We rejoice in the Holy Life of Christ, but we believe that Life finds its consummation at the Cross. We admire the Miracles of Christ, but "The Cross of Christ is more to us than all His miracles." It is "the Matchless Miracle of Love."

Surely it is not without significance that so much space is given by the Evangelists to the Story of the Crucifixion. They do not all tell of His Birth, His Baptism, His Transfiguration, but they all linger lovingly over the details of the story of His Passion, His Death, His Cross. The impression grows upon us, as we read the narratives, that the crown of them all is the Cross. They all move on unswervingly to this tragic yet truly triumphant conclusion, a conclusion which the Master saw from the commencement.

This the Church has ever felt and beautifully is it expressed in an old Latin Hymn of the 6th century:—

"Sing my tongue, the glorious battle, with completed victory
rife,
And above the Cross's trophy, tell the triumph of the
strife,
How the world's Redeemer conquered by surrendering His
life.
Thirty years among us dwelling, His appointed time ful-
filled,
Born for this, He meets His Passion: for that this He freely
willed;
On the Cross the Lamb is lifted, where His life-blood shall
be spilled.
Faithful Cross! above all other, one and only noble Tree,
None in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit thy peer
may be;
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron, sweetest weight is hung on
Thee."

III. The Cross Central in Apostolic Preaching.

This is so clear that it cannot well be gainsaid. Thus a modern writer, speaking of what he calls "the strange fact that divines have said so little about the teaching of Jesus" says "but the strangest fact of all is that when we go back to the New Testament itself, we find that the most voluminous of the apostolic writers, St. Paul, does not allude to the teaching except in the most casual way. . . . thus even from apostolic times, through the bias to which I refer, the teaching has been neglected in favour of the central fact of His saving work." But surely the very fact that Paul and the other Apostles gave so much prominence to that "central fact" is a proof that the "bias" of the Church has been a bias in the right direction.

We believe that these Apostles were Divinely guided in thus setting forth the Cross. It is strange that many of those who speak of the Incarnation as central, yet consider that it is immaterial whether we regard the account of the Virgin Birth as historical or not. But apart from that account, we have in the Apostolic preaching only incidental references to the Incarnation; which fact is sufficient to refute the idea that it was the all-important thing. The Apostles, in their preaching, always take the Incarnation for granted, for the Saviour whom they preach in One Who has appeared in human nature, "God manifest in the flesh;" but while they touch upon the facts of His life of holiness, His miracles of healing, His deeds of blessing, their story moves on without a pause to the Cross, and in that Cross is their glory.

All their rhetoric is bathed in the light of the Cross. All their weightiest arguments are backed by the power of the Cross. All their tenderest pleadings throb with the love of the Cross. The dominant note of their Gospel melody is the Cross. Their whole lives march to the music of the Cross. All their work is baptised in the spirit of the Cross.

Of course they spoke of other things; they declared the "whole counsel of God." They gave emphatic testimony to the Resurrection, the Ascension, the continued Life of the Lord Jesus on high and His glorious Coming again: but these and all other glorious truths are regarded as having their roots in Calvary and drawing their life from the Cross. The Atonement through which Salvation comes is the great matter. Thus Paul can summarize his message in the phrase, "we preach Christ crucified."

The preaching of Christ Incarnate would not have been foolishness to the philosophical Greeks for their own mythology had hints of such a doctrine. The preaching of Christ glorified would not have been a stumbling-block to the Jew, for a glorious Messiah was his fond ideal. The preaching of a Christ of spotless morality, of purest teaching, of wondrous working, need not have repelled either Jew or Greek:

but to preach that Christ, Incarnate and Glorified, had been *Crucified*, that the perfection of living and working had blossomed and fruited in the Cross, this is what the natural mind repudiated.

But this the Apostles continued to preach, knowing that it was at once the grandest Revelation of God, the only Solution of the mysteries which surround men, and the true Satisfaction of the needs that torment them.

The Gospel Message is called "The Word of the Cross." It is the Divine exposition of the transcendent fact of Calvary. Ruskin has this "definition of the purest architectural abstractions": "They are the deep and laborious thoughts of the greatest men put into such easy letters that they can be written by the simplest." "The Word of the Cross" is the deepest thought of God put into such easy letters that they can be understood and proclaimed by the simplest. Would that all preachers realized that they can only be in the true "Apostolic succession" as they preach this "Word of the Cross" and declare, with Paul, that they are determined to know nothing among men "save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified!"

IV. The Cross Central in Christian Doctrine.

Doctrine is a necessity to a thinking man. It is idle to say, "Let us keep to the facts of Christianity, never mind the doctrines." You cannot have an intelligent grasp of the facts without having doctrine. Your doctrine is simply your judgment about a fact. New Testament doctrine is the judgment of inspired men about the facts of Christianity. You take two marbles and place them beside two other marbles; these are facts; but when you go on and say, "two and two make four," you announce a doctrine. Arrange three lines in a certain way, and you get the fact of a triangle; but you are not content with seeing that it is a triangle; you go further, if you are a disciple of Euclid, and you formulate the doctrine that any two angles of a triangle are together less than two right angles. When we say "Christ died," we announce a fact; but when we add "for our sins," we declare a doctrine, as we also do when we try to answer to ourselves the question, "Who was Christ?"

We are often advised to preach the Death of Christ without any theory. It can't be done: and the only question is whether we shall preach the theories, the views of men, or the theory, the view, the explanation, the doctrine, call it what you will, given by God Himself in the New Testament. We cannot talk intelligently about the Death of Christ without stating doctrine, and we hold that in the noble system of Christian doctrine, the doctrine of the Cross, the Atonement, holds the Central place.

Election, unpalatable to many, yet in some form believed even by those who scout the name of Calvinist, is closely connected with the Cross, for God's people are elect unto salvation, "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Regeneration, is the work of the Spirit, but the Spirit is given as the purchase of the Cross; and He uses the truth of the Cross as the instrument to accomplish His regenerating work. Justification cannot be dissociated from the Cross: we are justified, by God, the Author, through Grace, the Source, through Christ, the Medium, through the Resurrection, the Evidence, through Faith, the Instrument; but through His *Blood* as the ground, the Basis of it all. Sanctification—the Cross is the power to sanctify; we are crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed. In the power of the Cross, as brought to bear upon us by the Spirit, we are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us alive, but it is through reckoning ourselves dead—dead through the Cross.

So might we look at the other doctrines and find that they are all bound into one harmonious system by the Central Sun of the Cross.

Incarnation and Resurrection are the only two doctrines that can be thought to compete with the Cross in importance. Of the Incarnation we have already shown that it leads to the Cross and is never, in Scripture, contemplated in separation from the Cross. The doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ might sometimes seem to claim the central position in the Apostolic system of doctrine; but it is only seeming. We can hardly over-estimate the importance of the Resurrection. We often speak of it as fundamental; but it is fundamental *evidentially*. It is the great demonstration of the truth of Christianity: if it could not be established, the whole system would fall into ruins. Most emphatically does Paul assert the utter futility of preaching or believing, if the Resurrection is not a fact. Preaching is vain and Faith is vain in a threefold way, as the three different Greek words used show. "Unless ye believed in vain," *eikee*, rashly, unreasonably, without sufficient evidence. "Your faith is vain," *kenee*, empty, unsubstantial, a shell without a kernel. Again it is "vain," *mataia*, foolish, resultless, to no purpose. "If Christ be not raised our preaching is vain" but what was the preaching? Not the preaching specifically of the Resurrection; that is dealt with in the next clause, "We are found false witnesses of God;" but the preaching which is vain, if the Resurrection is not true, is the Gospel, the story of the Cross, containing first of all, as of primary importance, the great truth that saves. "Christ died for our sins." The Resurrection is like the attestation to a will without which the will would be void, vain; but with it the contents are reliable and bring blessing to those interested.

The Resurrection establishes the Gospel Message. If we would give prominence to the fact that God has revealed Himself to men, come near to them, then we must emphasize the Incarnation. If we would prove the truth of Christianity, then we require to emphasize the Resurrection: but the very heart of the Revelation which the Incarnation brings, and the supreme glory of the truth which the Resurrection establishes we find in the Cross.

I need not stop to show how closely connected with the Cross are Baptism and the Lord's Supper, whether viewed as ordinances or as Doctrines. In Baptism we certainly do think of the Resurrection, but first and chiefly of the Death: "we are buried with Him by baptism unto death." In the Supper, we are pointed forward to the glorious Second Advent, but "till He come" we show forth His Death, in the bread broken and wine outpoured, we read afresh in "large letters" written by the Saviour's own hand, the solemn, yet joyful story of the Cross. Michelet, speaking of the fountain at the Coliseum where the gladiators were wont to wash their wounds, says, "The pillar of this fountain was also the first milestone of the Empire; all the roads of the Roman world were reckoned from this monument of slavery and death." May we not say that all the roads in the world of Christian doctrine are reckoned from that monument of shame and death—the Cross of Calvary?

V. The Cross Central in Conversion-Work.

It has gloriously vindicated its right to this place. Sinners get peace through the sight of the Cross; and preachers of the Gospel can declare with ever-growing emphasis "There is life for a look at the crucified One." We might rest the whole case on the testimony of converts. Hold an experience meeting of all the Redeemed and it will be found that most will trace their conversion to some "word of the Cross."

Many truths may be used to awaken, to encourage, to guide the sinner; but as a rule it is the truth of the Atonement that brings rest. I do not think there would be so much lament about the lack of conversions, were this glorious truth more fully and constantly proclaimed. We have heard many sermons, great sermons so-called, which would demand some extraordinary display of Divine Grace to lead to the conversion of any soul. In that admirable book by C. H. Spurgeon, "The Soul-Winner," there is a specially instructive Lecture, which I remember hearing in my College days, on the "kind of sermons likely to win souls," which we wish every preacher in the land might read. Among many helpful hints there is this:—"Those sermons which are fullest of Christ are the most likely to be blessed to the conversion of the hearers. Let your sermons be full of Christ from beginning to end, crammed full of the Gospel." And then adds the greatest preacher of his age, "I cannot preach anything else but Christ and His Cross, for I know nothing else save Christ and Him Crucified." It is well known how he stuck to his theme. In all true Revivals the Doctrine of the Cross has been made prominent. The "Love song of the Welsh Revival," was a hymn of the Cross:

"Here is love in mighty torrents;
Pity like a boundless flood;
When the Prince of Life our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious Blood."

while other hymns about the Hill of Calvary, and the Breezes from Calvary, were constantly heard. Among the Russian people there is no text that has been more blessed to conversions or more prized by believers than "The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Ever let us remember that it is the truth of the Cross that saves. Call up and examine as witnesses the most successful soul-winners from the beginning of the Gospel till now and they will all testify that the Cross is ever Central in Conversion work.

Ruskin says of a certain picture in the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice which, by his advice we have had the pleasure of seeing, "A most interesting picture, but which is unusual, best seen on a dark day when the white figure of Christ alone draws the eye." Is it not in the dark day of conviction that the sinner best sees the Cross and the figure of the Crucified Saviour alone draws the eye, sets at rest the conscience, satisfies the heart and gives full Salvation?

VI. The Cross Central in Christian Experience.

The new life is born at the Cross and all the blessings of that life come through the Cross. Forgiveness, peace, joy, hope, strength, guidance are all flowers that grow on Calvary. The *heart* of every true Christian, whatever ideas and speculations may occupy the head, finds its truest satisfaction in the Cross, and must ever sing;—"Jesus keep me near the Cross."

The spiritual life can only be strong as it maintains contact with the Cross. True prayer is baptized at the Cross. Truly and beautifully does Dora Greenwell say:—"No one truly prays who does not pray in the freedom of Christ's life and work and death. . . . It is the sight of the Cross and of all the tremendous associations that are bound up with it . . . that brings, that *binds* the soul to prayer. It is this sight that makes of every awakened soul, a priest, an intercessor . . . no longer trusting in its own repentance, its own faith, its own prayer, but joining its every petition to the might of that prevailing blood, which is itself the most powerful of all intercessions."

In Affliction, how precious is the Cross! How the sorrowing, burdened heart finds comfort in the Cross! When the king of Mexico and his chief favourite were put to the torture by their Spanish conquerors to compel them to reveal the place of the royal treasure, the courtier giving way under the suffering, implored his monarch by a look, to give him permission to speak, but the king, who had been bearing all unflinchingly, responded, "Am I now reposing on a bed of roses?" The words and the thought inspired the favourite with fresh endurance and he emulated the spirit of his brave sovereign.

How often the suffering saint has been strengthened and shamed into endurance by the thought of the sufferings which Jesus bore! And suffering with Him and for Him is better than the best that life can give without Him.

"Apart from Thee, all gain is loss,
All labour vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy Cross
Is better than the sun."

So might we look at all the phases of Christian Experience, and we should everywhere and always find that the Cross is the Centre. It is never more so than in the last earthly experience. The ripest saint, no less than the vilest sinner, finds all his comfort and joy in the Cross. We may not care for the ritualistic flavour of the line, "Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes," but in our meaning of the Cross, we believe the line embodies the best desire of every dying saint. "The port I would be at" said the saintly Rutherford in his last moments, "is Redemption through His Blood." And the likeminded Spurgeon at the last declared, "All my creed may now be summed up in the four little words, 'Jesus died for me,'" which makes us think of the well-known lines, with their wondrous history, (lines especially precious to me as being whispered by my dearest one, as she entered the valley):—

"In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy Salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

Ah, yes; when earthly scenes are fading, when the features of the best beloved ones grow dim to the weakening vision, when the black curtain rises, and the great Eternity, with all its tremendous issues looms before the departing spirit, then, if ever, is the Cross precious, central, essential.

VII. The Cross Central in Glory.

It is so with regard to the glory of Christ Himself. His glory as the God-man comes through the Cross. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: *wherefore* "God hath highly exalted Him." It was for the joy set before Him that He endured the Cross. It is because He poured out His soul unto death, that He can divide the spoil with the strong. Because He glorified God on the Cross, God has glorified Him on the Throne; and He ever sitteth as a *priest* upon His throne—"the throne of God and the Lamb."

It is true of the Redeemed; they gather round the Cross now: in the glory they know no other Centre. Throughout the Apocalyptic vision of the Glory, the great Central Figure is the Glorified Christ, but He always appears bearing the marks of His Passion—"the Lamb as it had been slain." The Lamb is the Victor, the Lamb is the Leader, the Lamb is the Light, the Lamb is the Source and Centre of all Glory for His people. The saints before the Throne, are there be-

cause they "have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." The Redeemed "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and their eternal song of adoration is "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

"The bride eyes not her garments,
But her dear Bridegroom's face,
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace:
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced Hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's Land."

Much else one might say about the Cross, but I forbear: what we all need is to see the Cross for ourselves in all its glory. What Ruskin says of the picture of the Crucifixion by a great painter, we may say of the Cross itself; we "must leave it to work its will on the spectator; for it is beyond all analysis and above all praise." But, if we have afresh realized that all the Divine purposes circle round the Cross; that the thoughts of the Man of Sorrows were ever occupied with the Cross; that the Apostles and all true preachers have ever gathered round and pointed to the Cross; that all the great doctrines of Grace revolve around the Cross; that sinners find all their salvation through the Cross; that saints on earth derive all their blessings from the Cross; and Saints in Heaven trace all their glory to the Cross: we surely ought, with renewed emphasis to say:—

"God forbid that we should glory,
Save in Christ the Crucified;
Or should blush to tell the story,
How for sinners Jesus died.

So round the Cross we sing,
Of Christ our Offering,
Of Christ our Living King,
HALLELUJAH FOR THE CROSS!"

The Recompense

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Modern teachers of ethics say that among motives for action, the motive of reward and punishment is not of the highest order. That is true in some cases, and the person who performs a service merely for the sake of the reward promised may lose a great deal, for "virtue is its own reward". On the other hand, the principle of divine compensation is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Our God is a righteous Judge, and we know that His decisions will always be just. He has promised reward to those who are faithful to Him at all costs, and a consideration of the reward should be an added incentive to us to be true to Him in times of decision, of trial, and perplexity. As we face the crises of life, if we keep in mind external issues, we

may become "more than conquerors, through him that loved us". It is worth while to have "respect unto the recompense of the reward".

Moses was in the valley of decision, facing the crisis which would determine the course of his after-life. He must decide whether he would continue to live as an adopted member of Egypt's royal house, enjoying the popularity of the court, or whether he would take his place among those who worshipped the God of his fathers, sharing the reproach of the despised Hebrew slaves. On the one hand he was offered fame, honour, riches, and pleasure; but on the other—shame, dishonour, poverty, and suffering. By faith he refused Egypt, and by faith he chose Canaan, "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward". As he viewed the two alternatives in the light of the future consequences, he was enabled to choose the course which would bring true joy, peace, and blessing to his own soul; salvation to his people; and glory to God. Affliction was preferable to the pleasures of sin because affliction was but a step in the process of deliverance. The "reproach of Christ" could be esteemed of more real value than "the treasures of Egypt", because identification with Christ in His humiliation would be followed by identification with Him in His glory. Yes, Moses remembered the recompense.

The rich young ruler failed to regard the recompense, and preferred to cling to his earthly possessions rather than receive heavenly treasures. Therefore he went away grieved. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" In the time of crisis and decision, let us weigh circumstances in the balances of heaven, that we may have a right sense of values, and that we may make choices which will glorify our Master.

In the time of trial, suffering, and sorrow, we shall do well to consider the promises of reward to those who are faithful. Listen to the testimony of the Apostle Paul in the midst of his persecution and trouble: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal". The affliction of the apostle was by no means light, but when considered in relation to the glory which should follow it could be called light.

Our Lord Himself has given us an example of steadfastness and patience in suffering because of the after-results. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God". It is as we look unto Him that we are able to endure.

The Apostle Peter passed through periods of testing when he was sifted as wheat is sifted to separate the grain from the chaff. It is he who compares the trial of faith to the testing of gold by fire. The gold when tried by fire is freed from all alloy, and shines with purer lustre than before; so faith, when tried by affliction, will be refined, purified, and finally glorified, "kept by the power of God through faith unto

salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

The daily discipline of life, though hard to endure, will but prepare us for full and free service in our Master's presence, and we shall be comforted when we think of the reward of suffering. "Now no chastening (or discipline) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Whate'er the loss,
Whate'er the cross,
Shall they complain
Of present pain
Who trust in God's hereafter?

The principle of the Lord's recompense enables us to understand the perplexing problem of the prosperity of the wicked. In this life the righteous are frequently afflicted and troubled while the wicked seem to prosper. The Psalmist felt troubled at the apparent success of the enemies of the Lord, and wondered whether it was really worth while to serve Him. "Behold these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning". He then continues, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end". It was in the sanctuary of God that peace came to him, for in the presence of the Lord he was enabled to look beyond the present and see the day of reckoning which would surely come. Though the righteous might be despised, down-trodden, and forsaken of men, the time would come when they would be gloriously vindicated, and when the wicked would be punished. God would declare His righteousness. As we too remain "in the sanctuary of God" we shall be content to suffer and endure hardship and loss for His sake, knowing that His "Well done" will be full compensation. It should be our supreme desire to be well-pleasing in His sight: then we shall receive the recompense.

O. L. C.

"THE GOSPEL WITNESS" FUND.

We are most grateful to our many *Witness* friends for their generous gifts in response to our letter. The paper is being sent without charge to many ministers, missionaries, and shut-ins, and we wish we could share with our readers the many letters that reach us telling of help and inspiration received through its reading. These letters come from every part of the world. If you have not yet sent your gift, send at once, and have a part in this world-wide missionary work. Our *Witness's* financial year ends March 31st, and gifts reaching us before that date will be doubly appreciated. Send to: *The Gospel Witness*, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto, Canada.

THE LOST JEWEL

By A. C. M.
CHAPTER 15.

(Continued from last week)

"I am astonished to hear you say so", replied Sir Human, "I can only say, if he is the Prince of Darkness, he has let a flood of light into my mind."

"But are you sure what kind of light it is? Is it the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world?" enquired the Ambassador.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world", interposed Divine Truth.

"That is just what I am desirous of doing", replied Human; "I wish to get at the real facts. I do not know whether the air of this neighborhood has anything to do with it, but I know that since I have been in the Castle of Intelligence my intellect seems to be quickened; and a desire for information, amounting to hunger and thirst after the reason of things, has taken possession of me."

"That is a very good thing, kept within proper limits", replied the Ambassador, "but there is a possibility of this hunger and thirst after Knowledge degenerating into unsanctified inquisitiveness. Beware of that, for there are secret things which belong only to God, who is the King of kings. But pray, what was it on which the stranger shed so much light? It is possible there is some truth mixed up with his statements. He is in the habit of doing so; he often uses a little truth as a bait, to fasten his victims on the hook of error, when he goes forth as a fisher of men. But happily we are not ignorant of his devices."

"To be frank with you", replied Sir Human, "many of his remarks had reference to yourself, and others of your order. He came as a friend, he said, to caution me against you; and I must say he made some strange statements if they are true."

"I am not in the least surprised to hear this", said the Ambassador, "he watches my movements very closely, and either himself, or by means of his agents, seeks to thwart my endeavors constantly. Indeed, sometimes he tries his power on me personally. But you have not yet told us what he said."

"He said many things", answered Sir Human. "He said you were actuated by other motives than those of friendship for me; that you are a paid agent, and are paid by results; hence, it is a matter of self-interest to you, as the greater the number you persuade to migrate to the Province of Piety, the more you receive."

"That is not exactly true", replied the Ambassador, "though, as I said, there is some truth in it. That I receive the means to enable me to live, or to assist me in living, is correct. No man of business would consider what I receive, as clearly explained by the word pay, nor even by the word remuneration. It would be better expressed as an acknowledgment than as pay; and it is not always in strict proportion to my needs. The same amount of energy which I expend in my work—the same thought, care, and anxiety, if

I used it in business, would bring in far greater returns in the shape of payment. I must live; and if I devote all my time to the service of my King, and the benefit of my fellows, it is not too much to expect that I should be provided with food and raiment. Do you think it is?"

"Most certainly it is not too much to expect; but perfectly right you should have quite sufficient to supply all your needs", replied Sir Human, "but you have not touched the point of payment by results. What do you say to that?"

"I am bound to reply as before that there is some truth in it", answered the Ambassador, "but not in the sense the stranger put it. I am paid by results. I am paid in the joy I experience at seeing poor wanderers like yourself, who are searching in vain for happiness, successful in finding it. I am paid by results in the joy I realize when I see poor, miserable beings translated from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. I am paid in the satisfaction I experience when I am successful in my Master's service. I will not conceal from you that I do look for payment by results when my work is done, in the joy I hope to realize in the meeting with those in the palace of the King of kings, whom I have been the means of leading there. I look for payment in the reward of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. In that sense, and that only, I am paid by results. Was that all he said to you?"

"By no means", replied Sir Human. "He stated that there is quite a number of you professing to be the King's ambassadors; but that is the only point on which many of you agreed. He said that some of you prescribe a great deal of form and ceremony in approaching your King, while others advise the absence of form and ceremony. Some of you hold the King cannot be approached except through you, while others advocate going to Him at once. Others, he said, declare that it is necessary to plunge overhead in water before the King can be approached. On this ground he maintained that the so-called Ambassadors and their followers were split up into various factions, only agreeing in disliking each other."

"Again I am obliged to admit there is some truth", said the Ambassador, "but a great deal of falsehood. He did not tell you all are agreed in loving the King and His Son; and that their differences were more nominal than real."

"He said", observed Human, "that some did not believe the King's Son to be His Son at all, but only a favoured servant. If the differences are so small, why do they divide?"

"True, there are some who deny the royalty of the King's Son", said the Ambassador, "but we do not reckon them as being with us. As to the divisions they are called Churches, and seem to think that they live more happily by each fraternizing with those who agree with them."

"I suppose", replied Sir Human, "it is the wish to make all wills bend to one that causes the divisions? Perhaps we might put it this way:—

Believe as I believe, no more, no less;
That I am right, and no one else, confess;
Feel as I feel, think only as I think;
Eat what I eat, and drink but what I drink;
Look as I look, do always as I do,
And then; and only then, I'll fellowship with you.

That I am right, and always right, I know,
Because my own convictions tell me so;
And to be right is simply this—to be
Entirely and in all respects like me.
By churchly laws and customs I abide,
If they with my opinions coincide.
All creeds and doctrines I concede Divine,
Excepting those, of course, which disagree with mine.

Let sink the drowning, if he will not swim
Upon the plank that I throw out to him;
Let starve the hungry, if he will not eat
My kind and quantity of bread and meat;
Let freeze the naked, if he will not be
Clothed in such garments as are made by me.

'Twere better that the sick should die than live,
Unless they take the medicine I give;
'Twere better lost ones perish, than refuse
To be conformed to my peculiar views;
'Twere better that the world stand still than move
In any other way than that which I approve.

Is not that about the sentiment which actuates these various divisions?"

"I hope not", replied the Ambassador. "Your language is that of bigotry, and I trust we are free from that. We agree to differ on minor points; but we are all united in our love for the King's Son. That is our central rallying point. We are all doing the same work if we believe in the vicarious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"And will all differences be lost when you get there? Will you be all alike?" enquired Sir Human.

"No", said Divine Truth. "As one star differs from another star in glory, so it will be there."

"And yet", interposed Sir Human, "they will all live together then in harmony?"

"Yes", replied the Ambassador.

"Then why cannot they do so now?" enquired Sir Human.

"Because of the imperfection of Human Nature", replied the Ambassador.

"I confess I am puzzled", said Sir Human, "I can see nothing in Nature like it. I see different kinds of fish swimming in the same water; different kinds of birds singing in the same tree; different kinds of flowers growing in the same garden; different kinds of apples growing in the same orchard; and different kinds of children living in the same house—but in this Province of Piety it appears there cannot be unity without attempted uniformity. Truly, Mr. Ambassador, these are difficulties not easy to surmount. Among the variety, which is right?"

"All are right who love the Lord Jesus, the King's Son, in sincerity, and give themselves to Him", replied the Ambassador.

"Then why can they not live together?" asked Sir Human.

"Because, as I said, human imperfection yet asserts itself. How would you solve the difficulty?" said the Ambassador.

"Simply enough, if as you say the love of the Prince of Peace is such a powerful bond", replied Sir Human. "I would have them all together on the ground of love to the Lord Jesus. That should be their rallying point. Those who wanted to go under the water should go; those who wanted to use ceremony should use it; those who wished to dispense with ceremony should do so; those who liked to meet in classes of similar feelings to themselves should do so; those who did not should please themselves. The grand unity of spirit should centre in loyalty to the King's Son, and sincere love should be the bond of peace."

THE TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY.

The Toronto Baptist Seminary is winning the confidence and support of our Baptist people, and is meeting a long-felt need for a distinctively Baptist school. The students in attendance—over a hundred in number, fifty-seven of whom are in full course day classes—are largely from Ontario, but we have some from every part of Canada, and a few from across the seas.

Our Faculty has been enlarged this semester, which means increased expenditure, and we are writing to remind our friends that we need your help. Our fiscal year ends March 31st, and we should appreciate the hearty co-operation of *Witness* readers in our endeavour to close the year with a credit balance. Send your gift, made payable to The Toronto Baptist Seminary, to Dean Stockley—and if possible send at once.

LAST SUNDAY AND NEXT IN JARVIS ST.

Last Sunday Dr. H. C. Wayman preached gloriously morning and evening. There were 1,048 at the Bible School, and large congregations at both services.

Next Sunday evening Dr. Wayman will speak of his trip to Palestine. This promises to be a service of unusual interest. Come and bring your friends.

The following Sunday, (March 24) Dr. Shields will be at home, and will preach morning and evening.

S. O. S.

Des Moines University

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Meaning of the Crown of Thorns

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 25th, 1928.

(Stenographically Reported)

"And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe.

"And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!"—John 19:2-5.

Prayer before the Sermon.

O Lord our God, we remember what is written in Thy Word, Thine admonition to Moses when the bush burned with fire, and the voice was heard speaking out of the midst of the bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Every place is holy where it pleases Thee to reveal Thyself, and every word that comes from God ought to be heard attentively by His human creatures. Therefore we come this evening in that spirit. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall be all taught of God." May every member of this congregation this evening be taught of God! We come to Thy Word to learn of Him Who is our Saviour. We thank Thee for Thy self-disclosure. We bless Thee that when we could not by searching find out God, it pleased Thee to condescend to our little understandings, and He Who was to be our Saviour took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. He was compassed about with enemies as we are; made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet Himself being sinless; He was tempted, and knoweth therefore how to succour them that are tempted.

We beseech Thee to make Jesus Christ very real to us this evening. It may be that many minds before Thee are occupied with other considerations. Some are planning the business of the morrow, others are wrapped in gloom because of some painful retrospect; some are filled with fear because of things to come. But we shall all be content if we can see Jesus. We may all find complete and everlasting satisfaction in Him.

We recognize that we have no power to persuade men, nor even to instruct them. This is the work of the Divine Spirit, for to whomsoever it becomes known that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the truth comes as a revelation and not as a discovery. It may be some here have thought to find Thee for themselves, and they have sought Thee diligently, and yet have not found Thee. We beseech Thee to find the lost this evening, for did not the Son of man come to seek and to save that which was lost? We are all wayward. We have turned everyone to his own way. We have lost all sense of relationship to God and to the things above us. We must needs be found again by God Himself.

There is a man here perhaps from the other side of the continent, and he thinks nobody knows who he is, but Thou knowest him. Another is here from a distant European city, who perhaps thinks he has so separated himself from his past that neither his name, his record, nor his present whereabouts is known. But Thou hast found many a wandering soul in this place; find others to-night, Thou great Shepherd! How we need Thee everyone! Have pity on us, forgive our folly, our self-will, our self-conceit; and help us to come with all humility and with deep contrition of heart to Him Who is the Saviour of sinners, and this evening make us to rejoice in the knowledge of sins forgiven. May many who came in as strangers to God, go out as His children;

may many who came in poor and blind and naked and miserable, go out clothed in fine linen clean and white. Put the arms of Thy grace about us, and whatever our sins, whatever our folly, whatever our weaknesses, in the greatness of Thy mercy, forgive us all. Save us with Thy great salvation. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The record of the trial and crucifixion of our Lord contained in the gospels we accept as divinely inspired, and therefore, to the last detail, accurate. You will remember in how many particulars the Scriptures were fulfilled in those closing days of our Lord's ministry, and very especially as He came to the cross. They parted His garments; they cast lots upon His vesture; they gave Him vinegar to drink; they mocked at Him saying, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now." And ere He bowed His head, He gave utterance to a word of Scripture, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus in Him the Scripture was fulfilled. All that was written in the law and in the prophets and the psalms concerning Him, so far as it related to His first advent and His earthly ministry, was literally fulfilled. That being so, I am sure we are justified in examining every detail of this record. Not the least among the particulars of the record is the crown of thorns. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!"

I shall try to tell you *how the thorns were grown; and why they were platted into a crown, and what issued from the wounds which were made by them.*

I.

HOW WERE THESE THORNS PRODUCED? Obviously, from the inspired record, *they were not indigenous to the earth as it came from the Creator's hand.* When God had made all things, and surveyed His handiwork and observed that it was "very good", the thorns and thistles were not included; they did not belong to the earth as God made it.

Many people are disposed to blame God for life's handicaps, to complain that they suffer a thousand disadvantages, that they find their way hedged up with thorns, that they are beset with foes, and their progress prevented by many obstacles; and they are inclined to ask, "Why has God made me thus?" Why did God make the earth as it is? There are many things in the

earth, dear friends, which are entirely alien to the creation as it came from God's hand. It is true enough that the thorns and thistles are here, but God did not put them here. There are many things in this world that are irksome and full of peril for its human inhabitants, for which you must not blame God. Whether you survey the world about you, or the world within you, the truth obtains in both cases. You say, "Why did God make me as I am?" He did not. God made man in His own image and likeness. Your nature and mine, as we are or were by our first birth, was not wholly of God. Some man perhaps will say, "I find myself pre-disposed to evil. I find that my mind produces thorns and thistles. I find that evil is natural to me. There is a law in my members bringing me into bondage, a law of sin and death"—and the man is disposed to blame God. No, no, we must go farther back, my friends, and consider what this universe was like when it came from the hand of God, what man was like when God made him in His own image and likeness.

There are those who tell us that we are a good deal better than we used to be, that we have outgrown a great many evils. Of all the folly to which the human mind has ever afforded hospitality, or the human reason has given credence, there is no greater folly than that which men designate, evolution. "Did not I sow wheat in my field? Did I not sow good seed in my field? From whence then hath it tares?" Where do the tares come from, whether in the field, in the family, in society, in the nation, in the great world beyond, or in your own heart—who put them there? The lord of the parable said, "An enemy hath done this." Not from the hand of God did we come as we are.

And yet, the thorns are here. That is the main consideration. We may not trace their history, perhaps, back to their origin; but there are many things we cannot explain that we have to endure, because we find ourselves compelled to accommodate ourselves somehow or another to the facts of life. Do not deceive yourselves by supposing you are bordering on omniscience. There is much you do not know, even if you are a doctor of philosophy! There are a great many things you cannot explain, even if you are a most eminent scientist! There are things to which our lives are subject whose history is not written, and whose origin perhaps is shrouded in mystery. The truth is, these things are here, and somehow or another we have got to get on with them or find some means of eliminating them.

The principle of the thorns is operative in every life. You may view life in any aspect you please, and you will find always the thorns and the thistles. You will find it in your garden. You must plant radishes and lettuce and even onions—but weeds will grow without planting. However difficult of explanation, there is the fact. There is always the grub at the root and the blight upon the plant; the earth is full of things which are enemies to human progress and peace.

I say again, if you know your own heart, you know that it is a very thorny place. You say, "I have cultivated it"—have you? I do not care how well you have cultivated it, there are many thorns there. Some one here may think his heart is so thoroughly cultivated that he is entirely without thorns! A man came to me who had been to England where he heard a certain preacher. "I tell you", he said, "he is after the old man." I said,

"We all need to fight against him. He is a pretty bad lot. He needs to be nailed to the cross." "But I believe in getting rid of him altogether", my friend replied. "So do I some time", I said. "I am looking forward to that day. But do you think you have got rid of him?" "Oh, yes," said he—and "the old man" wheezed as he said it. Leave the garden a little while, and "the old man" will show himself again. The thorns and thistles are everywhere.

Yes, even love's fair dream sometimes will show that the roses can wither, and after the rose petals have fallen the thorns will appear. Life is full of it wherever one goes; it is in society about you. And if you do not admit that you have a thorny disposition yourself, you are sure your neighbor has! Of course you are all right! Well, let us leave the matter there. You speak for your neighbor—and your neighbor will speak for you! There are six of one and half a dozen of the other—you are both a bad lot. Do not let anybody puff you up and say you do not need salvation. The heart is full of thorns and thistles.

If you push your enquiries further into human relationships, in business, in society generally, in the national sphere, and international relationships, you will find that wherever you look this old world is full of thorns; and the wheat has to fight for an existence. Every good thing has to be cultivated, while evil will grow without cultivation. The thorns are here; and the earth, the whole earth, is corrupted.

You say that is pessimism? No, that is a simple facing of the facts. If you have any doubt about it, read tomorrow's newspapers. I do not know what will be in them, but I know they will be full of thorns. When you buy your paper and go to the office in the morning, say to yourself, "I am going to find out whether what the preacher said was true or not." You will discover on every page an account of tragedy, of life's thorns. The newspaper is not preaching; it is simply a record of human life, and it fits into the truth of the Bible.

How did the thorns come here? "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." It is our sin that has corrupted the earth. Some people mock at those lines in one of our glorious hymns—

"Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile,"—

but in spite of all our achievements it is true that wherever man touches anything he corrupts it morally, and the curse falls.

There was no difficulty in obtaining thorns for the Saviour's crown. The world was full of them. You must make application of the principle yourselves. Men and women here this evening have been torn with the briars, your lives have been all but ruined because you have lain among thorns, your lives have been blighted and in some cases blasted by sin. It would be easier, my friends, for me to look at the other side of things, and we shall touch that in a moment. I am speaking about thorns, and you must know they are here.

Thorns are the fruit of sin. A man talked with me last night who told me that somebody had been singing hymns in the place where he worked, and God had awakened his conscience. He said, "I heard some Jarvis Street open air meetings in the summer. I thought it was all

nonsense when I heard it, but when my conscience was awakened I did not know where to go, so I came along to Jarvis Street." He came to know what he should do to be saved. He told me a story, just a common human story such as any man could tell, a story of being among the thorns, torn and bleeding, and saying at last, "Is there any way out of this? Is it possible that by any power the wilderness and solitary place may be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose?" That is how the thorns came: they are the fruit of sin.

II.

Let me try to tell you How THEY WERE PLATTED INTO A CROWN. Jesus Christ was God's Pattern Man. He was more than that, as we read this evening: He was God, very God of very gods. That He was and is, yet He was essentially human, a Man, our Fellow, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He took on Him the seed of Abraham, and was in all things made like unto His brethren. And I dare to say that when Pilate said, "Behold the man", he was just as much the unconscious mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit as was Caiaphas, being the high priest but a wicked man, who prophesied that one man should die for the people. When Pilate said, "Behold the man", he pointed to the only perfect Man of which history preserves a record. Who is He? He is made in the express image of the Father's person, made in the likeness of God, so that He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". In Him was fulfilled the divine plan and purpose when God said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." When Jesus Christ came He appeared among men as an absolutely perfect man. Sometimes I think in our zeal for the great truth of His Deity, we forget His essential humanity with all the implications of that truth. But I will remind you of a few of them this evening.

You remember when man came from the Creator's hand, God put a crown upon his brow and a sceptre in his hand, and said to His creature, "Have dominion". Men were not made to be serfs; they were made to be sovereigns. We were not made to be led as captives by an alien power: we were made to be kings, subject only to the King of kings. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hand." That is what God intended when He put man in the earth: He intended that he should be a ruler of the earth. Now lift up your heads. There is no evolutionist in the world who can go further than I will in magnifying human nature, if we consider human nature as a divine ideal, realized only in the person of Jesus Christ; for if this old world could last a few more of the hundreds of millions of years that the evolutionists like to talk about, the last and utmost product of this alleged evolutionary process would be millions of leagues below the measure of the standard of the fulness of Christ. He is *the* Man!

Young man, do not pattern your life after anyone less than Christ. You will copy only their defects if you copy anything. First of all, I say, He is a Man. Study His life and you will find that there is a record here of at least one Man Who did have dominion over the works of God's hand. You say, "That was by the exercise of supernatural power". Yes, I know, but will you tell me of any situation in life where Jesus Christ was baffled? Will you tell me of anything of which He had not the mastery? The devils were subject to Him. The winds

and the waves obeyed Him. All sheep, and oxen, and whatsoever passed through the paths of the sea, they all obeyed the sovereign word of this glorious Man. He had dominion! Always He was a King. His enemies knew that He was different from all others.

He was the Pattern Man, a King. But *the crown He wore, as your Representative and mine, was a crown of thorns.* About His brow the thorns were placed. Every man who has ever been crowned has been crowned with thorns. It is proverbial that "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." There is no human achievement, I do not care where you go, that has not carried the principle of the thorns right to the throne. You cannot climb high enough in this life to get away from the thorns, no matter where you go. Pile up your millions, but you will still have thorns about you. Napoleon crowned himself. He took the crown from other hands and put it upon his own head; he was a self-made king. But he found it was a crown of thorns. You cannot find among all the successful men of this or any other generation one man, who if he be honest, will not tell you that when he has reached the utmost pinnacle of fame, when he has come to the place where he imagines he has dominion, that the thorns are there. You cannot get away from the thorns.

When Jesus Christ came forth as the Pattern Man, because He was your Representative and mine, they crowned Him with thorns. And it is not without significance that the thorns were wrapped about His brow, the place and symbol of the intellect, of the intelligence. We have done a great many things. What was the name of that wizard who gave us the seedless oranges? I should like to say to him, "Burbank, with all your skill, have you yet found a way to purge the earth so that it will not bring forth thorns and thistles—can you do it?" I will not be behind anybody in my recognition of what men have done. If we look at one side of things it is not surprising that we are a bit conceited. We have done a great deal that our forbears never did. I do not know whether you heard the story of Mr. Taft. Speaking of his one-time friend he said, "I never think of a certain man without being reminded of a little girl who came home from school one day and said to her mother, 'I am the cleverest girl in our school.' 'That is fine, Mary. Did the teacher tell you that?' 'Oh, no, teacher did not tell me that.' 'Did your fellow-scholars tell you that?' 'Oh, no.' 'Then how did you find it out?' 'Oh,' said she, 'I found it out for myself!'"

This generation has found out for itself that it is very clever, and we will not dispute it. In some departments of human thought and endeavour we have many achievements to our credit, and yet the thorns are always wrapped about the brow. You cannot think of any triumph in the human realm that has not been pressed into the service of evil. Is it the movie? What a wonderful invention that is, to be able to reproduce and preserve a record of animate things! If it were sanctified, what a blessing it might be! But what is it? It is the devil's instrument. It has done more to wreck the lives of men perhaps than any other invention. There are thorns always. The radio? Yes, it is used to broadcast the preaching of the gospel once a week, but most of the time it is used for other purposes. There is nothing wrong, of course, with the radio *per se*.

I read the other day a speech by a certain man in the House of Lords discussing the question of armaments. And do you know what he said? He said he had asked one of the leading chemists of England a few questions. He asked him if a bomb were dropped from an aeroplane on the Criterion at Piccadilly Circus how many people it would kill. He said it would probably kill two or three hundred people. Piccadilly Circus, I suppose, would be half a mile from the Thames bank, a good distance anyhow. Then this speaker said, if that bomb were charged with the latest gas it would destroy—one bomb—every breathing thing from Piccadilly to the Thames, and a like radius all around. He then asked that chemist how much of that gas it would require to blot out every breathing thing from the face of the London metropolitan area. He said eight tons would blot out the biggest city in the world. Then mentioning two well known gas factories in Germany, while not implying that they might be converted to that use, he asked the chemist how long it would take to convert those two factories into poison-gas factories. He said it would take one week. Then he enquired, "After these were converted into poison-gas factories, what would be their capacity per week?" The chemist replied, "Easily a hundred tons." One week to convert those factories into gas factories, one week to produce the poison, and at the end of two weeks this human intellect would have produced enough poison, when dropped from the air, to destroy twelve Londons! Enough to blot out twelve Londons! A crown? Yes, but of thorns. Sin and evil are regnant in this world.

But Jesus Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. *Of the thorns that pierced His brow, there was not one that was grown in His own garden, or from seed of His own sowing: You and I produced the thorns, and He in wondrous grace wore them.* And that is what we have done with our cleverness! We have perverted and prostituted all God's gifts to evil ends; and instead of realizing the fulfilment of the tempter's promise, making ourselves as gods, we have succeeded only in crowning ourselves with thorns. You can think of that all week, if you like. Again I say, bear it in mind as you read. Do you turn to the magazines? It is not often I read them, but one will not turn a dozen pages but he will find the thorns. When your children come home from school, look at their text books and you will find they are full of thorns. That is what man has done for himself. He has corrupted the earth and crowned himself with thorns.

III.

BUT IS THERE NO OTHER MEANING THAN THAT? WHAT ISSUES FROM THE WOUNDS THEY MADE? For while He was a Man, He was God. He died "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." And there was a sovereign power exercised when they crowned Him with thorns, for He was a King; and though they hated Him, and were about to drive Him out of the world, yet in the hour of His deepest humiliation He wore the crown. He never was other than a King: "No man taketh my life from me." Challenging all the powers of darkness; He said: "I have chosen my hour, the place of my death, the manner of my death. It was arranged from before the foundation of the world, and there is no power in the universe

that can interfere with my programme." He went to the cross wearing a crown, and from His brow there flowed the crimson tide. Because He was God—dare I say it? It is impossible to express it in human speech, and yet it will at least suggest the great truth when I say that one drop of His precious blood was of such infinite worth, Himself being God, that it was sufficient to redeem the whole world. And God had planned that He should thus die for us. O the wonder of it! The thorns, the nails, and the spear, brought forth the crimson tide.

Notwithstanding all our folly, we can all be washed from our sin. I always come back to that—I always will, because I must. And in the glory I expect never to be done speaking about it. There is nothing in time or in eternity comparable to this, that God in His infinite grace has made it possible to undo the work of the devil, and to destroy it; and to wash our sins away. I love to think of men and devils trying to put an end to God's plans, and yet God sovereignly using them, using the very thorns and nails to make the blood to flow.

Are you washed in the blood? Are you cleansed from sin by the stream that flowed from His five wounds?

His crown of thorns means something else; it means that *in Jesus Christ we ourselves are crowned*, for in His death in our behalf there is a promise that by God's abundant grace we shall yet come to the throne. I am going to be a king some day, I really am. I do not care what you say about it, but I am going to wear a crown some day. I am going to have my enemies under my feet some day; I am going to wield the sceptre some day; I am going to sit upon a throne some day. I know I shall conquer because I was in Christ when He conquered, and am complete in Him Who is the head of all principalities and powers.

Are you sick? Yes, more than sick; you are impotent, wicked, bankrupt in every respect; and yet all that we have lost is recovered for us and restored to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. I am glad He wore the crown of thorns because that is the promise of another crown that shall not fade. It is a promise that the thorns are going to be taken out of us some day. We have thorny dispositions. I know some people who are very much like a rose bush, very beautiful at a distance, but full of thorns. You have to be careful how you handle them! We are all like that, more or less. But some day we are going to get rid of the thorns, we really are. It takes a good deal of faith to believe that, for this poor sinner—and to be perfectly candid it takes some faith to believe that some of you are going to get rid of your thorns too! Grace has much to do, but some day we shall get to the place where God intended we should be.

Another thing: *I am going to have a garden some day in which there shall be no weeds.* I am going to live on the earth when there shall be no thorns or thistles. I believe the whole earth is going to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Are you ashamed to be called a literalist in that? There are a great many beautiful things in this world, and I do not believe the Lord is going to let the devil destroy it. David came back to Ziklag, and it was burned with fire, his wives and his children were gone, and there

(Continued on page 14.)

The Union Baptist Witness

These pages (13 and 14) are the Authorized Official Organ of The Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec.

W. GORDON BROWN, Editor.

FAIRBANK.

"In an address to the annual business meeting of the Fairbank Church about six weeks ago, Dr. Shields recommended the prayer of Hosea, 'O Lord, revive thy work'. All through the winter months God has been making bare His arm and saving sinners, but the past six weeks have been the most fruitful of all. On February 24th, at the evening service, six responded to the invitation; on March 3rd two more accepted Christ.

"From March 4th to 9th, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Zeoli were with us, preaching and singing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every night sinners were saved and backsliders restored. The passionate messages and remarkable story of how God saved this ex-convict and led him from prison to pulpit, made a deep impression on the people of Fairbank, and left abiding results. Praise God for the Zeolis!

"Last Sunday evening the church was packed to capacity, and when the pastor gave the invitation three responded, one a young woman who had never been in church before, and another a mother who for twelve years had been a backslider. Hallelujah for a God Who can save and restore!"—Rev. Frank Holliday.

* * *

RUNNYMEDE RD.

Special evangelistic meetings are being held in the Runnymede Rd. Baptist Church, Toronto, this week and next. At the service last Sunday evening two accepted the invitation. The speakers for this week were Revs. Fraser, Peer, Bower and Holliday; for next week the evangelist will be Rev. C. J. Loney.

* * *

EAST ZORRA.

A sad accident recently bereaved Rev. and Mrs. Frank Mesley of their five year old daughter, Grace. We extend to these mourning parents our deep sympathy.

* * *

OKLAHOMA CITY.

"Dr. M. F. Ham, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, is leading in an aggressive soul-winning campaign. He has associated with him the regular working forces of the church and Evangelist Leaman and Gospel Singer Rogers. Leaman and Rogers conduct shop meetings, cottage prayer meetings, do visitation work, etc. Dr. Ham preaches each night and gives messages over the radio at noon each day, also at other hours. The interest is growing; already many have made profession of faith."—The Southern Baptist Trumpet for March, 1929.

* * *

OUR FORWARD CAMPAIGN.

A special meeting of particular interest, held in Jarvis St., February 5th, has already been reported in these pages. At that gathering a fresh exposure was

made of the modernism now holding sway in McMaster University. It was determined to inaugurate a special campaign to carry information concerning the present controversy to every possible part of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, as also to establish New Testament Churches where opportunity offered. To this end an offering was taken at the meeting which amounted to \$1,500. We are informed that most of this is necessary for literature alone. Therefore our Union is in need of a much larger sum for campaign purposes.

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward", was what God said to Moses. We believe that He is still saying it to us. Therefore we urge that many churches, most of whom may not have been represented at the above mentioned meeting, should take a special offering for these campaign purposes; and also that interested individuals should forward their contributions for the same to our Union office, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2, Ont. In the Great War our allies could not have won as they did, if they had not been well supplied with ammunition. From the information at hand our leaders have the moulds from which high explosives may be manufactured. What we need just now is sufficient money to produce such ammunition, and to scatter it far and wide in those cities and towns and villages where McMaster's unbelief is holding uninformed individuals in the bonds of subjection to a modernistic programme.

ALTON.

At a meeting held not long since in the Alton Baptist Church, at which the former pastor and founder of the church, Mr. James McGinlay, was present, Mr. Turner, who came to the Toronto Baptist Seminary from the Canadian East, was appointed to act as Pastor. Under the leadership of Mr. W. H. Turner, the work goes forward steadily. A unit of the F.B.Y.P.A. was recently organized.

* * *

THE CHATHAM REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH.

A Chatham business man, not a member with the "Regulars", recently inserted in the local paper the following advertisement at his own expense: "Have you ever heard Chatham's youngest Preacher? He preaches in the old Patricia Hall—he's full of life and very interesting and will speak on a subject vital to us all. Opposite the Hotel Garner. Have a Sunday with him by way of a change—you'll enjoy it. Come!"

Our Missionary-elect, Mrs. H. L. Davey, recently visited Chatham, speaking to the Bible School in the morning and at an after-meeting in the evening. Several have lately professed conversion under Mr. Charlton's ministry.

At a recent Junior Service, seven girls confessed Christ, four of whom, in their teens, were exceptionally clear. A number of candidates are awaiting baptism.

The Chatham pastor says: "We are deeply indebted to the Jarvis St. Baptist Church for their generous gift of an organ and a magnificent set of pews. We are now equipped to seat the people comfortably, and we are glad to be able to report that each week sees an increase in the attendance at the services. A Building Fund has been started, and we are praying that the day will soon come when we shall be located in our own building on the ground floor. The narrow flight of stairs up to our present hall is a great hindrance to our work."

WESTBORO.

On Wednesday evening, February 13, the Westboro Baptist Church united for a great service of prayer and praise with the Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa, and seven candidates from the Westboro Church were immersed by Rev. A. J. Milligan its pastor. This makes a total of twelve who have been "buried with Him by baptism into death" since last September, and there are five or six awaiting baptism. The church is installing a baptistry in its own building.

WALSH.

The Faith Regular Baptist Church of Walsh had four added to their membership recently, three entering by baptism. The Sunday School carried on at Nixon continues to do well. On February 13th to 15th Evangelist and Mrs. Zeoli held a short campaign in Simcoe. The meetings were largely attended and several were converted or restored. A Bible class of "Regulars" meets each Sunday in one of the homes in this town. Rev. Oscar Boomer is pastor.

MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, TORONTO.

Ten new members were lately received into the fellowship of Mt. Pleasant Road Baptist Church, Toronto, of which Rev. Alexander Thomson, B.D., is pastor, seven of whom came by letter and three by baptism. Just now the church building is being redecorated and repaired. This was made necessary by a fire which recently broke out in the building, and which, had it not been quickly put out by the local firemen, might have demolished the whole edifice. Mr. Thomson is preaching morning sermons these weeks on "The Journeys of the Children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan," and evening sermons on "The Ten Commandments."

EMANUEL, MONTREAL.

Under the pastorate of Mr. Leggitt the work in Emanuel is steadily growing. The Sunday School is going ahead rapidly. On Sunday, March 3rd, a num-

ber responded to the invitation at the close of the evening sermon, which was an emphatic negative answer to this question, "Can a man disbelieve in the atoning death of Christ and still be a Christian?"

* * *

HIAWATHA STREET, ST. THOMAS.

Pastor Donald Fraser baptized three ladies on Sunday, March 3rd. Other candidates are awaiting baptism.

* * *

MINER'S BAY.

Pastor Gordon D. Mellish reports that during the winter months, he, contrary to the former custom on the Miner's Bay field, has continued the work. From Friday evening till Monday morning it is necessary for him to have six different people drive him from one place to another, covering thirty-seven miles in all. The services are held but once in three weeks, yet the people are very appreciative. So far, he says, he has hesitated to overlap the work of any other minister, but such hesitation must now be a thing of the past. It seems that at a funeral service recently, a neighboring preacher declared that "we used to believe the Bible", and that he did not know whether there was any future life at all! To people who would otherwise be confined to such a "ministry," we must take the unmutated Bible.

The district around Miner's Bay is in many ways an ideal one for summer vacation. The lakes and rivers have much of their primeval beauty. There are cottages and Christian farm homes where one might spend an ideal vacation. Christian work could be done by such campers in this old-spinning-wheel and log-cabin country. For further information apply to Mr. Mellish, 225 Bloor St. W., Toronto 9, Ont.

* * *

"RELIGIOUS EDUCATION".

In this day of increasing apostasy "religious education" has almost become

a synonym for Modernism. The movement which, for lack of a better name, we call Modernism, first fastened upon the universities of the land, and next descended upon a number of organizations existing for the purpose of fostering Christian teaching among the young.

The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec used to have a "Sunday School Board": they now have a "Board of Religious Education." The General Secretary is Rev. Dr. George T. Webb. For a number of years recently he was pastor of a "community church," situated near Buffalo, N.Y., having, we are informed, an "open membership." Although he is not in the pastorate now, the position which he then held shows his true sympathies so far as distinctive principles are concerned.

This Board of Religious Education of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec have, under date of February 19th, sent out a circular giving a summary of their work, and appealing to the churches of the Old Convention for liberal contributions. "The cost of this department of work is in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year." Personally, we fail to see how such expense is justified.

For instance, the Girls' Work Secretary seeks to promote the movement called the Canadian Girls in Training. "A co-operative school for Boys' Work Leaders was held at Pincroft, and representatives of Boys' Work in Baptist schools were present as the guests of the Board." (emphasis ours). This Boys' Work is none other than that which is known as Tuxis or the Canadian Standard Efficiency Test programme. Thus we see that the Board of Religious Education is in direct co-operation with these two youth movements which we have named. They exist for the express purpose of fostering a four-fold programme, having its spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical activities. We are old-fashioned enough to believe that the main business of the churches of

Jesus Christ is to preach the gospel, and thus win souls to Christ; and then to build them up in their most holy faith. All else must be subordinate to this one great purpose. From what we know of the Tuxis movement we are sure that its major emphasis is not on the spiritual side. Therefore as at present constituted it has no proper place in a Christian church.

What little so-called spiritual programme there is in the C.S.E.T. movement is not directed toward winning the boys to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as, by His substitutionary death, the sinner's only Saviour. A personal incident may make this clear. A few years ago we boarded at the same home as did a certain young banker. A very fine type of young man he was, and we coveted him for the Lord. One evening an opportunity to discuss salvation with him presented itself. I said, "Are you a saved man?" "Yes." "What makes you think that you are? Are you trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?" Yes, he was; so he said. "Do you know what it is to have your sins forgiven because Jesus Christ died for you?" No, he did not. "I don't think that forgiveness of sins is practical!" "Then you think a man is a Christian if he tries to follow the example of Christ?" "Yes," he said, "that is what Tuxis teaches us!" If, as we believe that this young man truly said, Tuxis is teaching the young manhood whom it may reach that salvation lies in a personal effort to follow the example of the life of Christ, apart from His cross and His blood, then that Tuxis is one of the movements of the day which, in plain language, is drowning men in spiritual perdition. As long as the Board of Religious Education of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec continue to foster the C.G.I.T. and C.S.E.T. movements, they are doing great injury to the young men and women of our Baptist families.

THE MEANING OF THE CROWN OF THORNS.

(Continued from page 12.)

was nothing but a heap of ashes. He called his men about him and went out after the enemy and slew them, and the record says, "David recovered all." When he came back in triumph with all that he had taken from the hand of the enemy, with one voice they declared, "This is David's spoil." He brought it all back again.

That smouldering heap of ruins that once was Ziklag is just a picture of human nature. But our David will recover all, and it will be David's spoil some day. Some day we shall reign with Him on the earth. I do not understand all the particulars as some of my friends do; I am content to wait until that time comes. But I do know—I do know, that God has never been thwarted yet; and that He sent His Son to destroy the works of the devil, and He is going to do what He came to do. Some day we ourselves shall have puri-

fied natures, some day "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Then when we ourselves are thus redeemed, the whole creation will share in the glorious deliverance, and the day will come when God will look upon His creation and say, "Behold, it is very good."

"We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus." The Man Who wore the crown of thorns in glorious triumph has carried our human nature to the throne, and that is the pledge that one day we shall be like Him. Are you glad? Do you who profess to be Christians really believe that? Do you? (Great chorus of "Yes"!)

If that be so, we ought to be the happiest people in the world. If there are any of you still in chains, still among the thorns, still bruised and bleeding, you come to my Saviour to-night. Put your broken life in His hands, and the word of God Who cannot lie for it, He will save you with His everlasting salvation for His great Name's sake.

Coals for the Altar Fire

By Rev. T. I. Stockley, D.D., Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

Sunday, March 17th.

My call to Christ.— Luke xviii:35-43.

I call you to Christ. The more deeply I study His character the more do I see that He is the only Saviour of the world. A working Peasant, the virgin's Son, a root out of a dry ground, He stands to my mind above all others in the clearness of His insight, the range of His outlook, the heroism of His courage, and the splendour of His sacrifice. To me He is none other than Emmanuel—"God with us." When I want Him most He is most to me; when the wind is coldest His touch is warmest; when heart and flesh do fail He is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

"On that Rock I stand."

When I feel the burden of my sin most grievously, and quail under its intolerable weight, Christ alone can speak to me the word which recovers my strength and recalls my hope.

"On that Rock I stand."

When the world goes hard with me, when bread is scarce, and friendship cold, and the outlook shut in by blinding snow, Christ soothes me and nerves me with infinite comfort.

"On that Rock I stand."

"In that faith I live."

Monday, March 18th.

My faith in Christ.— Hebrews xi:1-13.

Understand by being saved that you are saved from sin, saved from guilt, saved from error, saved from bondage, saved from selfishness, saved from fear, saved from every danger that can imperil your character or ruin your destiny. Without faith such salvation is impossible. Faith is the bond of union between the human and the Divine; faith is the realising and appropriating faculty; faith is reason in its highest action. As Christianity founds itself on literal history, building its house upon the granite of indisputable facts, and builds until the pinnacles of the royal structure pierce the clouds and enter a light above the brightness of the sun, so Faith builds on intelligence; Faith honours Reason; Faith accepts the severest verdicts of honest criticism; and having done this, Faith enters a higher region, and finds there not a shelter merely, but a sanctuary and a home.

Tuesday, March 19th.

My knowledge of Christ.—Hosea vi:1-11.

Fix your heart upon Christ—the living, loving, teaching Christ—who offers to save you from your sin, and tell Him frankly that you give yourself in to His keeping, and that you ask Him to show Himself to you more and more. The fault which I committed is one which you are very likely to repeat. I wanted to know *too much* about Christ all at once. I wanted to be a *theologian* before I was a Christian; to be able to answer all sorts of questions, and to clear up every difficulty. Now this will never do. It is like wanting to know all about the sun before you will draw the blind up to let the light in. What would you think of a man who would take an

organ to pieces to see where the music came from? Yet it is just so that some people treat Jesus Christ. They analyse and discuss and speculate, instead of flying, out of their own insufficiency, into the heart and the arms of the Saviour. At last I said to Jesus, "Lord, I know nothing, I can explain nothing; I am sinful and weak and poor, and I want the rest which Thou hast to give." After that came thought and learning and progress—mark, *after* that, not before it, not along with it, but *after* it. This is the point for you to begin at, and the time to begin is *now*.

Wednesday, March 20th.

My love to Christ.— John xii:1-11.

Perhaps you will say it was *easy* for me to go to Christ and to put myself in His keeping. Well, there is a sense in which that is true; and yet there is another sense in which there is no truth in it. I own that I never could read the words of Jesus without my heart going out to Him in great bursts of really tender love; the Prodigal Son, for instance, always holds me like a cable when I would drift away, and that infinitely pathetic story about Christ and the woman that was "a sinner," in Simon's house, would, I think, recover me of any plague of unbelief with which the devil can afflict my soul. Don't mistake this for a merely romantic or poetical admiration incident to boyish days—it was nothing of the kind; it was downright love; pure, bounding, youthful love; and, thank God, it is stronger to-day than ever! When I get dazed and weary with discussions and speculations and controversies of all sorts, if I take my New Testament and read about the Prodigal and the Woman I say, "Oh, why did I ever doubt this dear Christ, this Son of the Father, whose words are so deep, so tender, and so full of hope for the very worst of us?" And then the tears come, and the oath of renewed love, and the prayer of dedication made afresh. Saviour, do not let me stray! Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. Yes, that is true. Grieve Him I do every day by neglect, by impatience, by doubt, by folly; still, right away down in the deepest heart, I love Him with unspeakable tenderness.

Thursday, March 21st.

My feeding on Christ.— John vi:44-59.

I want to be, and I want you to be, "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"; to have bread to eat that the world knoweth not of, and springs of water that lie far away from the noisy paths of the common world. Every morning go early for a verse that shall be your companion all the day, and get a page of good Christian writing somewhere that will stimulate and strengthen you. One clear thought will guide you a day's journey through the wilderness, and one vision of God will scatter the darkness of the blackest night. Cry out for the living God, as if chiding Him for absence which has made you lonely and

cold. Say unto Him, Why standest Thou afar off, O God? Why hast Thou left my heart in silence and great fear?

Friday, March 22nd.

My living to Christ.— Phil. iv:4-13.

I have a life to live: *What am I going to do with it?* Is it to be frittered away in wastefulness of time and unconcern about all serious things, or is it to be moved by high motives to noble service? How are such motives excited, guided, sustained? I knew well enough how easy it was to live an empty and useless life, but something which I could not define told me that, apart altogether from considerations strictly religious, it was desirable to have a high standard of life, and wise to build up a strong and beneficent character. Then I read the life of Christ night and day, and hid His wonderful words in my heart. I was made to feel that if sin was not more awful than I had any power to imagine it to be, Christ would never have been where and what He was. Then I saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the unspeakable love of Jesus, and I cast myself upon the Son of God as my only hope and strength and defence. I cannot explain all this in words. I only know that my heart was led to give up all trust in itself, and to go to Christ as the only One that could give me new and heavenly life. The peace that came into my heart after this act can never be made clear to those who have not felt it and known it for themselves—truly it was "peace that passeth understanding," and it filled me with "joy unspeakable."

Saturday, March 23rd.

My work for Christ.— Matt. xx:1-16.

The danger of many a Christian is that he lives too much in feeling and imagination and reverie. He must avoid this danger, or it will become his ruin. When I have seen the cloud of fear rising in the blue sky of my hope and peace, I have always found it a good thing to go out and do some work for Christ. A few minutes' talk with an experienced Christian, or a little insight into the poverty, the sorrow, or difficulty of other people, has caused the cloud to vanish and all the light to come back into the sky. If it will assist you at all in your Christian life to know something of mine, I tell you with all simplicity that my experience has been most varied and often most trying. But who has ever walked over a beautiful landscape without sometimes being at the foot of a hill and sometimes on its top? Does it follow that I am on the wrong road because I am going downhill? Does it follow that I am on the wrong road because I am caught in a shower of rain, or a fall of snow? It is very much like this in going heavenward. There are hills to descend and hills to climb; and as you know what it is to go downhill and yet to be getting higher and higher all the time, so we may be in fear, and yet be moving up to clearer heights of vision and gladness.

—Readings by Joseph Parker, D.D.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION LESSON LEAF

Vol. IV.

No. 2.

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, Editor.

Lesson 14. Second Quarter. April 7, 1929.

PAUL'S STIRRING APPEAL.

Lesson Text: 2 Timothy, chapter 1.

Golden Text: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2 Timothy, 1:12.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE.

1. The last words of a person are highly valued and long remembered, especially if they are addressed as a message to a particular individual. In this epistle we have the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul addressed to Timothy his son in the faith, and through him to the whole church. They were written under trying circumstances from a prison cell shortly before a martyrdom which the apostle knew he could not escape. Such a fate did not cause vain regret on his part, he was ready to depart, he had fought a good fight and now he looked forward to the crown as his reward. 2. In this trying hour he had been forsaken by those who ought to have comforted him, only Luke was with him. It was undoubtedly dangerous to be known as the friend of such a prisoner, so through fear probably he had been forsaken. Under these circumstances his heart went out to the young man whom he had left at Ephesus as overseer of the church in that place. He desired to see him and requests him to come to Rome, but lest he is unable to arrive in time, and knowing his timid disposition, he makes to him the stirring appeal of this epistle to take his stand courageously with Jesus Christ.

II. THANKSGIVING, (vs. 1-5).

1. The apostle begins the epistle with his own name, the custom in those early days. This is followed by the statement of his office, (v. 1). He is in lowly circumstances, but he is very conscious of his high calling. He is the servant of Jesus Christ, and as such he is writing. No matter what our circumstances may be if we are true to God we may act with equal dignity and assurance, backed by the authority of our heavenly Master. 2. The salutation is then stated, (v. 2), then the thanksgiving, (vs. 3-5). In the latter there is a reference first to the service of the apostle. He had served God "with pure conscience". There was never at any time hypocrisy about him. Would to God this could be said about all who profess the Lord's name. The reason for the thanksgiving is then recorded. He is mindful of Timothy's "tears" and of his "unfeigned faith". At a time when some had departed from the faith and when he had been forsaken by others so that he could say "only Luke is with me", (4:11) his heart went out to this faithful young man, and he yearned to see him before he departed this life. We do not wonder at his expression of thanksgiving, the

faithful people are worth their weight in gold. We trust his desire was granted, and that he saw Timothy before he went to be with the Lord. 3. In this section note the blessedness of real Christian fellowship, the power of prayer, and the blessing of Christian home training. Timothy was brought up in a godly home, (v. 5; 3:14, 15). In regard to such training be it said nothing is of more importance for children. "Train up a child in the way he should go": we are taught, "and when he is old he will not depart from it", (Prov. 22:6). It is the duty and privilege of parents to live the Christian life before their children, to gather them round the family altar at least once every day, to teach them to pray and to read the Bible, and above all to lead them to Jesus Christ their Saviour. There is a crying need for such parents and for such homes, and given such we shall have better parents, better children, better churches, and a better nation.

III. AN EXHORTATION TO COURAGEOUS ACTION, (vs. 6-12).

1. It would seem as if Timothy was somewhat timid in disposition, and required to be stimulated to action, so here as in the former epistle, (1 Tim. 4:11-16) the apostle exhorts him to energetic service. He is enjoined to stir up the gift which was in him, (v. 6), implying he had received some definite gift for service at the time of his ordination. This gift he was to exercise more aggressively in the service of his Lord. In the face of false teaching within the church and persecution without there was need for real courageous action. The same may be said of these days, with its worldly religion and its false teaching, in fact in the presence of such conditions it is nothing short of sinful to be apathetic and indifferent. 2. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear" etc., (v. 7). Timothy is thus encouraged to boldness in testimony. God would supply the necessary power. An outstanding characteristic of the church in the days immediately succeeding Pentecost was boldness in witnessing to Christ, (Acts 4:13, 31). May we be animated by the same spirit. Following this the apostle further exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of him the Lord's prisoner but to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. (v. 8). 3. The gospel, on account of which we are called to suffer is "according to the power of God", (v. 8) "who hath saved us", (v. 9), a glorious experience, and "called us with an holy calling", a glorious privilege, "not according to our works", for we are sinful, "but according to His own purpose and grace" etc. Salvation is all of grace, (Eph. 2:8), man has nothing to recommend him to God, and he is totally unable to work for his salvation. God has planned and wrought out the whole and now all that man has to do is to accept His plan and the transaction is complete, (John 1:11-13). Such a plan was eternal in the purpose of God, (Eph. 1:4), but made manifest at the appearing of Jesus Christ, (v. 10). The Bible as a whole has as subject matter this plan of God

for redemption through Christ. In the Old Testament in type, symbol and direct statement God points forward to the work of the cross, while in the New Testament our attention is directed back to it. 4. The statement that Christ has abolished death, (v. 10) means not only that He has conquered death for Himself, but that for us He has deprived it of its power. At the resurrection morning it will yield up every body now in its grasp. And life and immortality have been brought to light through the gospel, (v. 10), that is, in the gospel there is clear teaching concerning them. Unto this gospel Paul had been appointed a preacher, etc. (v. 11), and on account of it he had suffered, but he was not ashamed for he had the definite assurance of his eternal salvation, (v. 12). God was able to keep that which he had committed unto Him against that day. Paul was living for eternity and not for time alone, therefore he could discount the sufferings of the present in anticipation of the eternal weight of glory, (2 Cor. 4:17). Attention may be directed to the necessity for boldness in testimony and for faithfulness to God, even to the extent of suffering for Him, to the nature of God's eternal purpose, the glorious nature of the gospel, and the blessedness of possessing the assurance of eternal salvation.

IV. AN EXHORTATION TO FIDELITY, (vs. 13-18).

1. In the closing verses of the chapter the apostle urges Timothy to guard the deposit given him, referring to the truth of the gospel, and cites two examples for Timothy's learning, one of warning the other of encouragement. He is to "hold fast the form of sound words", and to keep that which was committed unto him by the Holy Ghost, (vs. 13, 14). We realize by this that there was a body of truth which had to be jealously guarded, false teachers were at work propagating their errors, but the servant of God was not to surrender any part of the God-given deposit. In all ages such an exhortation has been required. The tendency on the part of some has been to compromise, to surrender, but this is never the will of God. We must not surrender a particle of the truth, but bravely hold it fast and when necessary contend for it against its enemies. 2. After the exhortation there follow the sad statement concerning the desertion of the apostle by the people of Asia (part of modern Asia Minor) two of whom are mentioned, (v. 15). Nothing is said elsewhere in reference to these two individuals, but they have achieved a disgraceful immortality through their cowardly desertion of God's servant. It is to be noted that Paul names the persons concerned, a custom objected to by some these days. Let us be warned by their example. 3. In contrast to this another example is given, (vs. 16-18) of one who was a real comfort to the apostle. He was not ashamed of his chain, but sought him out in Rome and refreshed him. We do not wonder the apostle prays for blessing upon him. A friend in need is a friend indeed. Emphasis may be laid upon the necessity for a thorough knowledge of the truth and upon fidelity thereto.