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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE DIMENSIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 26th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—Eph. 3:17-19.

Prayer before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord our God, for a great High Priest Who has passed into the heavens, not with blood of others, but with His own blood, Who now appears in the presence of God for us. We come in His name, for we have no other ground of approach, no other merit to plead than that of His perfect righteousness. We would fain worship Thee, O Lord, for it is ever a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to call upon His name.

Thou art in heaven, and we are upon earth. Thou art the high and lofty One Who inhabitest eternity. Thou art so great and holy, that we are without capacity to understand Thy thought—indeed, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts. Yet we thank Thee that Thou hast sent us Thy Spirit to teach us how to pray, to enable us to render to Thee a service which can be acceptable in Thy holy sight. Therefore do we make mention of the blood, of its atoning efficiency, of the great fact that the work of atonement is finished, and that we who sometime were afar off are now made nigh by the blood.

Most of us here are Thy children. We have tasted that the Lord is gracious. We have experienced Thy mercy and Thy faithfulness. We have been made the subjects of Thy grace. And yet, O Lord, we have been very dull scholars in Thy school; we have been very wilful and wayward as Thy children; we have not known Thee as we ought, nor have we any of us served Thee as we ought. Sometimes our ears have been open to the siren voices of the world. Indeed we had turned aside but for the grace of which we have been singing, that would not let us go. We should have been far off from Thee, but that again and again Thou hast recalled us not alone to the place of duty but to the privilege and experience of fellowship.

We acknowledge before Thee this evening how inestimably we are indebted to the redeeming grace of God. If we know our own hearts, we desire to be better children of Thine, better

men and women, more diligent students of the things of God, more apt to learn, and readier to serve. Oh that our eyes, the eyes of our hearts, might be enlightened, that we might know what is the hope of Thy calling, and what the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance in the saints! Forgive our tardiness. Forgive, we pray, our reluctance to respond to the impulses of Thy Spirit. We beseech Thee to come to us in fuller measure this evening. We know that we might be far other than we are; we might have grown up into Him Who is our Head, even Christ, to a higher degree than we have done. We have too often yielded to the allurements of things that seem to be in themselves not evil, but which yet divert us from Thyself. Give us grace that we may not be satisfied with the second best, with the things which are good as a substitute for the things which are best. We would follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and learn more perfectly how to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Thee. Teach us who are Thy children that we may be able to say, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

We have been redeemed by blood. We owe Thee everything, Lord Jesus. We are not our own, but have been bought with an infinite price. Help us ever to recognize it, that we may glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are Thine.

We would this evening come to Thy Book again. How vast are its treasures, how profound its principles! Help us to understand it. May we experience the ministry of Him by Whom the Book has been inspired; may the Holy Ghost interpret to us His own truth. Thou hast promised that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: renew our strength this evening. Thou hast promised that they shall mount up with wings as eagles: give wings to our faith—yea, let our faith be as wings, lifting us above the drab and common things of life, enabling us to explore something of the glories of the heavenly places wherein we have all spiritual blessings in Christ. Make, we beseech Thee, the life that is hid with Christ in God to become extremely at-

tractive to us, that we may all covet earnestly the best gifts, and be satisfied with nothing less than the daily fulfilment of the purposes of grace in our lives.

There are some in Thy presence who know nothing of these things. They stand without, or at best but in the outer court. We pray that any who have never seen Jesus Christ may see Him this evening. Give that heavenly vision of the Lamb that was slain, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Include us all, we pray Thee, in the bestowments of Thy grace. Put about this congregation, every member, Thine arms of love, and as Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, graciously draw us to Thyself by Thy loving kindness, that when we leave this building this evening we may do so with the assurance that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our interests, O Lord, extend far beyond the limits of this congregation. Therefore do we pray for the whole household of faith, and every minister of truth who privately or publicly makes known the riches of Thy grace. Lord, give power to all who endeavour to serve Thee, and make effectual the testimony of the gospel wherever and however given. Touch with Thy healing and comforting hand those who are sick; dry the tears of those who mourn; fill the vacancies in the home-circles by giving a larger and fuller enjoyment of the favour and blessing of the Lord. As the children of Israel in Goshen when Egypt was wrapped in a pall of thick darkness that could be felt, had light in their dwellings,—so in the midst of a dark world, may we all have light in our dwellings, and greatly rejoice in God our Saviour. We ask it in the name of Him Who died for us, and rose again, Amen.

The most misunderstood and misrepresented man who ever walked this earth was the Man of Nazareth Whose birth we have just celebrated, Who was also the Lord of glory; and He said, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" The religion of Christ also is misunderstood and misrepresented. Our Lord described the devil as the father of lies, saying, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." And he is. He is the arch-slanderer of all the ages. He began it in the Garden of Eden. He lied to our first parents about God. He told them that God was deliberately keeping some gladness from them: "God doth know that in the days ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Therefore He is keeping you in darkness. If you would be happy, follow me." He has been telling the same old lie with variations ever since.

That is the popular view of the Christian religion, that it is something to be avoided, something to be shunned, something to be afraid of if you would get the best out of life. Oh that we could understand that all that is of value, in time and in eternity, is offered to, and provided for, the man or woman who will receive Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is no real life apart from Him, no real joy from which He is divorced.

I have read to you a staggering passage. The spiritual stature of a man or woman may often be most accurately gauged by the dimensions of their prayers. Children, as we read this evening, speak as children: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." There was little perspective to life, little reach and scope to our understanding, we were content with the toy shop, the candy counter, and the little things of life.

I have a dog that I think is very intelligent, but there is one thing I can never understand about him. He has a particular rubber ball of which he never becomes tired. When I go home to-night he will run and get that ball and come to me wagging his tail as though he

had made a new discovery. Sometimes he goes to sleep with it in his mouth.

But I have seen men and women with their rubber balls, and have marvelled how they found comfort in them. But they do.

"Look how we grovel here below
Fond of these earthly toys,
Our souls can neither fly nor go
To reach immortal joys."

Said Paul, "When I became a man, I put away childish things. I have a larger view of life. The things that interested me when I was a child are now unnoticed." So also is it in the Christian life. In our spiritual infancy, what little prayers we pray! How easily satisfied we are! We play around the counters in the divine toy shop—because the Lord condescends to the requirements of little children spiritually. But if and when we grow up into Christ, we begin to ask for something more. As a man prays, and by the scope of his prayer, by its dimensions, one may form some idea of his spiritual stature.

Do not assume that the preacher implies any superiority, by an illustration relating to his physical stature: it is the only one that comes to me at the moment. I have gone into many a store to buy something, and have been met by the clerk who looked me up and down and then said, "I am sorry, sir; we have nothing for you." "But you have not looked." "I do not need to. We do not keep things for men of your size." I went into a store in one of the Southern cities one day, after enquiring in two or three others, and asked for a certain article. The shop-keeper said, "I have been waiting for you for two years." I put it on, and it fitted me, and the man said, "I have had many customers during these years, but I have been waiting for a man of your size. I am glad to get rid of it."

How big a suit do you need? What is your measure? What is the size of your prayer? While I speak to you who are Christians, I know I cannot present the possibilities of the Christian life without, at the same time, proclaiming the great evangel to those who have never known Christ.

This great saint addresses his prayer to the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom"—you see, there is a walk up to the mansion, and we must note a few things by the way until we get to the heart of it. His prayer is addressed to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

I saw a photograph the other day of a gentleman in the United States who it is said is likely to be appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James. There were eleven in the picture, the man, his very youthful-looking wife, and nine splendid children, five girls and four boys, a magnificent family. As I looked at them I said to myself, "Well, sir; it has cost you something to bring them up." Then I read underneath that he was a man who had made nine millions of dollars—he had a million dollars for each of his children. When I read that I said, "I shall not sympathize with you any more, but only congratulate you that you have a big family, and resources enough to take care of them."

"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"—He is a rich Father with a great family, and yet has resources enough to supply the utmost need of every one of them. Do not forget that when you pray;

do not let your prayers be small. Remember the hymn we sing,—

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much."

Paul prayed that He would grant us "according to the riches of his glory". There is the measure of the Father's estate, plenty for everyone. You need not plead too humbly when you afford a gracious God an opportunity to enrich you. He loves to do it. That is what "the riches of his glory" are for, that He may lavish the treasures of His grace upon the children whom He loves. Hence we are to come "boldly" to the throne of grace.

He prays further that they may "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." The agent is the Spirit of God. Let us never forget that while we have access to the Father through Christ, we have such access "by one Spirit". In every exercise of Deity, whenever God stoops to enrich a human soul, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are engaged in the transaction. We can no more do without the ministry of the Holy Ghost than we can do without the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ. Paul prayed that the Spirit may do something for us: what is the Spirit to do? "That he would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." People want a plaster for their wounds, a crutch for their moral lameness; a splint for their fractures; and aids of many sorts to prop up or repair our crippled natures.

But that is not how God works. He deals with the inner man. Paul says, "If you are to be what you ought to be, you must be made healthy within, strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man. Not propped up, your arm put in splints, and led on a legal tether so that you may not be tempted to wander. Instead of that, God puts His Spirit within us, enabling us to say,

"My heart refuses joys like these,
Since I have known the Lord."

Paul prays for spiritual health for these people, which he defines as having Christ dwelling in the heart by faith.

"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love." Rooted and grounded! I have some oak trees in my garden, most of them very tall. I am not an expert, but I suppose some of them are a hundred years old. My neighbour has a small forest in his garden. I watch those trees when the wind is blowing in the summer time, how they bow their heads before the wind. They rise about forty feet without a branch, just like pillars of the temple; and then branch out for thirty or forty feet higher; and I marvel that they can stand against the tempest. They are not only rooted: they are grounded. The roots have gone down until they have wrapped themselves around the subsoil. They have found a base, a foundation, and so they stand.

I saw my neighbour's gardener a year ago boring holes around the trees, going down several feet, as far as he could dig. When he had done that, he filled the holes with a certain kind of fertilizer. He said the tree expert had told the owner of the trees that if he would preserve them he must get right down to the roots, so that the roots instead of coming up to the surface for nourishment, would go down and lay hold of the deep soil. When the spring came I could tell where every hole had been made by the luxuriant growth of grass. Those trees were rooted and grounded.

That is what Christians need. They need to be fed at the very roots—not by the kind of preaching which prevails in some quarters, and which scratches the surface, and ministers to one's entertainment. You will never grow great oaks by that method; you will never produce men that will grow like the cedars of Lebanon unless they are rooted and grounded.

Here is an extraordinary thing. Paul prayed that these Christians might be made strong enough to go to school: "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that ye, being rooted and grounded in love"—what for?—that ye "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Measure that. Put beside that the meagre, mechanical, all-but-infinitesimal popular notions of the Christian religion. Why is it that we have weak churches and anaemic Christians? Why have we people carried about by every wind of doctrine? Simply because the keepers of the Lord's vineyard have not dug about the roots of the trees and given to the growing children of God, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, instructing them so that they might be strengthened with all might in the inner man. Paul says, "There is a school that I want you to attend, a book I want you to read, a subject I want you to study; but in order to do it you must have abounding spiritual health."

I.

I can give you only the outline of the truth I ask you to study. We are asked to consider THE DIMENSIONS OF THE LOVE OF GOD. "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints"—it is not a study for a few favoured people. There are some children who leave public-school before they are half through; in some cases, of necessity. There are others who complete their public school work, and go on to high school, and after a year or two drop out. Some finish, and go on farther and take a university course; and when they have finished, they take post-graduate work at another university. I heard of a rich man who left an annuity to one of his sons: so long as he was at school he was to receive several thousand dollars a year. When I read of him he had been attending university for about twenty years. He wanted that income to last—and he did not drop out by the way. He piled up degrees, going on and on. O that the children of God would continue at school and go on and on with Christ!

This benefit is for "all" saints. I believe the Lord God desires to have an educated family. He would have all His children grow up to the full stature of Jesus Christ. Paul is not praying for a few of the rarer spirits. He said, "I would have you to comprehend with all the saints, what are the possibilities of the Christian life and attain to the measure of what ought to be the stature in the divine family, so that you will be mighty enough to comprehend this great matter." He desired that they should have health and strength enough to comprehend the love of God.

What is "the breadth"? How broad is the love of Christ? Can you measure it? I knew a young man who said, when he went to a restaurant that he always read the menu as he once attempted to read Hebrew, backward. He always looked at the price first, and the price determined what he ordered. I have heard many

people discussing the menu. Calling a waiter they have said sometimes, "Waiter, this item is so much, what does that include?" "That is the meat order and includes vegetables, bread and butter, tea or coffee, and dessert." "Very well, I think I will have that. I thought perhaps it included nothing but the meat."

What does the love of God include? What is the breadth of it? How wide is it? How wide a love do we need? What if I were to ask what sort of love it required in order that your sins may be forgiven? Have you any sins to be forgiven? I have, many of them. So have you. What is included when God loves me enough in Christ to forgive my sins? If He would forgive my sins, He must remove them from me. But how far will the love of God carry your sins away, How far will God's love remove our sins from us? How far? "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." We need to know the breadth of the love of God; the completeness of His redeeming purpose. How far is the east from the west? "So far" that they can never meet. In another sense than Kipling meant it, "Never the twain shall meet". When God removes our sins from us, they are laid upon One Who was the Scapegoat, Who bore them into a land not inhabited—where they can never be found again. Oh the breadth of it!

You had an affection for someone, a friend; and you said, "I like him very much; we have much in common." For a while you met frequently and had a certain kind of fellowship. Then for some reason the friendship was broken and you drifted apart. "What about your friend, the one I used to see you with? You do not seem to consort with him now." "No, he is a very peculiar fellow. Up to a point he and I had a good many things in common, and we had a fairly good time together; but he rather wearied me after a while. His peculiarities became irksome and offensive to me. He has some strange views. Of course, I do not expect other people to believe as I do, but we gradually cooled off. There was no real break, but we drifted apart." How wide was your love? Not broad enough to include your friend's idiosyncrasies. It was not broad enough to make allowance for his mental aberrations. But who wants to be chained to someone all the time?

Yet Christ can come and dwell in your hearts by faith, and dwell in such intimate relation to you that He will never be away from you, and yet will never get tired of you. He puts up with all your peculiarities, all your idiosyncrasies, all your wilfulness, and your waywardness,—ah,

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

All that we might know—even the breadth of the love of God which encompasses us no matter where we go.

Have you travelled much? Have you been bothered with passports? Go to Europe, and when you cross the boundaries of one country, though it may be two o'clock in the morning, they will waken you to have your passport re-examined. You say, "But it was all taken care of an hour or so ago." "Ah yes, but we have crossed into another country, and you must present your passport again." But no matter where we go, the love of God is

broad enough to encompass us. We never get beyond its limits—"That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

And *the length of it*. Some people love for a little while, but their love does not last long. How short-lived is human love, although the noblest of human qualities! Even domestically, what tragedies there are! The love of country is short-lived in some quarters. Some years ago I had many overtures from across the line; but I always felt I could never forswear my allegiance to the land of my birth and to the British Empire. But there are many who do. To many one country seems to be as good as another.

Love is short-lived. I remember a book by W. J. Dawson entitled I think, "A Prophet in Babylon". Dr. Dawson was a Congregational minister of London, a somewhat eminent man. Among other things he said that a minister should never expect to form lasting friendships in his congregation. As long as the minister is successful, and the wind is in his sails and everything is going well, he is applauded. The people talk about "our beloved Pastor". But when the winds of adversity blow the majority will forget all about his being "beloved". Bless God, that is not true of every church, as I have abundantly proved. The truest fellowships and the most abiding human affection are found in the church of Christ. But it is true in large measure, of some persons in every church. I have myself been betrayed again and again.

How long will the love of our God last? What is the length of it? His love anticipated all our need. He did not begin to love us to-day. He loved us from the beginning: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." You can never outlive the love of God. If you are a Christian, the love of God will last through all this earthly life; and when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, and have made our journey to that bourne from which no traveller returns, we shall find the love of God is just as strong and true as ever. Oh that we could rest in the assurance of it! The breadth and the length of it cannot be measured.

"And depth". How deep is the love of God? Deeper than the deepest sea, I know. Some of us have sinned deeply—we have all sinned deeply, but how deeply? One in the Book said, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." Do you know what Jesus Christ suffered when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Do you know into what depths of darkness He descended when He died for you and me? I will tell you. The darkness of the lowest hell. That is how deep His love is. My brother, the love of God loved you out of hell, out of the nethermost hell! Oh how deep! I shall have to leave it, leave it to a sanctified and grateful imagination. Consider the text I quoted a while ago: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." You are not only to take that dimension, the heaven to the earth, but as heaven is higher than hell. Let me rather say, as the lowest hell is removed from the highest heaven; that is

the depth of the love of Christ. He loved us out of the depths.

"And height." I do not know much about that. I know a little about the depth, but not much about the height. I know I can say with the Psalmist that "he brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." But to come from the depths to such liberty as we have attained thus far, has little to do with the height to which His love will lift us some day.

I wonder could I give you that measurement in Scripture—it comes to me at the moment, and scriptural language is always best for the exposition of Scripture. Jesus, I say, went into the lowest hell; He descended into hell. Yes, He did; and then He ascended—and what is said of Him? That God "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand"—where is that?—"in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet." And Paul, in this same epistle, prayed that we might know something of that power. That is the measure of the height of the love of God, to lift us to the altitude of Heaven's holiness, to enable us to scale the heights of Heaven itself.

What a love that is! How small is our estimate of the possibilities of the Christian life.

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free;
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fulness over me.
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of Thy love;
Leading onward, leading homeward,
To my glorious rest above.

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Spread His praise from shore to shore;
How He loveth, ever loveth,
Changeth never, never more;
How He watches o'er His loved ones,
Died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth,
Watcheth o'er them from the throne.

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Love of ev'ry love the best;
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'Tis a haven sweet of rest.
O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me!
And it lifts me up to glory,
For it lifts me up to Thee."

II.

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." What a paradox! How can we know that which "passeth knowledge"? There are many things you know that surpass your knowledge. There are things which have entered into your own consciousness, things you know to be true, things that you have learned, not by any ordinary process of memorization or reasoning, but you have experienced them until they have become a part of you, and you say, "I know it." "Then explain it to me." "I cannot explain it." "Then how do you know it?" "I have experienced it; that is how I know." Though we cannot define the love of God, we can experience it.

The breadth of it? Yes. I remember during the war crossing the sea, and getting into conversation with an

American chaplain who was going over to serve with the American troops. He told me of an experience he had had years before. Somewhere on the Pacific he was shipwrecked; he and others were cast upon a small island off the beaten track of regular steamboats. He said they were marooned for six months. I asked whether he feared they would have to remain permanently. He said "No; we knew that we should be discovered sometime; for we knew that there is not an island anywhere that is not occasionally touched by the British Navy; and we knew that in the course of a year some ship carrying the British flag would come to us." So he said they settled down and waited knowing that a ship of the British navy of some description would come along. Six months passed, and they saw a ship on the skyline. It came nearer, sighting the land, to see what was happening. They hoisted their signals, and the ship sent boats and they got back to civilization under the British flag. He said he never was more thankful for the British Navy, although an American citizen.

I did not ask him the latitude or longitude of that particular island: I do not know where it was. The important matter was that the sweep of the British navy was broad enough to reach it. Sometimes some of us have been lost like that. We could not have told where we were until the love of God found us, and brought us back again.

"O love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me!

"Stronger His love than death or hell;
Its riches are unsearchable:
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see,
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length, and breadth, and height.

"God only knows the love of God;
Oh that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart:
For love I sigh, for love I pine:
This only portion, Lord, be mine,
Be mine this better part."

III.

"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." What a programme! What a prospect! What a possibility! What a promise! Young people, if you have not found that Jesus Christ satisfies you, you are missing something somewhere. "Filled"; no vacancy; no void in the life. "That ye might be filled." Herein is the only complement of life. The only satisfaction the soul can find is here: "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." We have drawn but little upon our inheritance. There are stores of grace that we have never appropriated, because we have never dreamed of their fulness.

But I cannot dwell upon that, for the simple reason that it belongs to infinitude: "the fulness of God." How can people such as we are, people of little minds and little hearts, "be filled with the fulness of God", how is that possible?

Perhaps you may get a glimpse of the truth as you see a new significance in the Saviour's saying, "Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again."

Do you understand Einstein and his mathematical doctrine of relativity? I do not. I do not know what the

learned man is talking about—nor does one in ten thousand. It is well for those who understand it; I have no doubt he is a great genius—and some people have the ability to recognize his ability even though they do not understand his theory. Do you understand the music of the great masters, Beethoven, and Wagner, and Chopin, and Bach? "No; but I can enjoy it." "Could you produce it?" "No." "Why not?" "I have not the capacity." What a wizard Marconi was! What a marvellous brain he had! Were I to call the roll of the great masters of music, of art, of science, of literature, what a galaxy of geniuses we should have! Do you know Shakespeare? Have you ever read him until you were almost dazed, and were forced to say, "Where did he get it? What a genius!"

Where did any of them get it? When they were born. Any one of them, I suppose, looked like any other baby. I do not suppose Einstein counted his fingers any earlier than other children. No scientist in the world could have predicted what any one of those children would become. But there were potentialities in that infant personality that in due time were developed and enlarged into a capacity for the tremendous achievements which are now written respectively to his credit.

Why must we be born again? That we may have created within us a capacity for divine things. We must have the divine Father's life in us, we must have implanted within us a capacity for God, shall I say a genius for spiritual things, so that, having spiritual health, we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that (we) might be filled with all the fulness of God."

You say, "That is beyond me." Yes, I know. It is beyond all of us. I had a friend down south who was a Greek scholar, a professor of Greek who obtained his doctor's degree from Johns Hopkins University. He had a family of lovely children, and he said to me one day when a guest in his home, "I wish you would have a talk with so-and-so, my son. He is a professing Christian, but I am troubled about him." I talked with the lad, and told him what I thought of his father. He said, "I know all that. I think he is as fine as you do; but he does not understand me." "Yes, he does", I said, "he loves you." "But he does not understand me", he said. Then he said his father had told him one day he was going to give him a great treat, and he took him to Baltimore. The lad said, "I was all set up about it. But he took me to Johns Hopkins University, into a certain section of the library. I looked around, and it was all Greek—every book in that particular section. He pulled out a chair, sat down with a book—and he was in paradise. But I was not! That may have been his idea of fun, but it was not mine."

It would be a mistake to attempt to teach higher mathematics spiritually, to those who have not learned the multiplication table, but I remind you, as I would remind my own heart, that there are heights and depths in the Christian religion that you and I know little about. The martyrologies of the church are not fiction. There have been saints who so loved Christ that they welcomed the flames that they might get closer to Him; and went home rejoicing in chariots of fire. They knew Him.

Paul knew what these Ephesians would say. "That is all very well for you, Paul, but it is beyond us." "No; it

is not", said he, "I will tell you how this experience may be yours: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen."

Now we shall sing Matheson's great hymn:

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flick'ring torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrow'd ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

"O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust, life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

A NEW THING UNDER THE SUN

A short time ago Japan sunk an American gunboat named the U.S.S. *Panay*, and about the same time shelled a British gunboat, named *Ladybird*. These two incidents have provoked a great deal of discussion in the press, and many diplomatic exchanges between London and Tokio, and between Washington and Tokio.

The *Ladybird* matter is not yet cleared up, but in response to strong representations from Washington, Tokio apologized for the sinking of the *Panay*, and promised not to do it again. Washington accepted the apology.

Rome is quite happy about the result, and hails it as a new method of settling international disputes! Who knows but that Mussolini may apologize for his unprovoked attack on and conquest of Ethiopia, involving the sacrifice of tens of thousands of lives? He may even promise not to repeat the outrage—especially as there is only one Ethiopia. And when Japan has possessed herself of China at the cost of the lives of hundreds of thousands of non-combatant Chinese, including women and children, she may even chivalrously express regret that she has found it impossible to make China Japan-possessed without violence, and may promise not to repeat her outlawry.

Applying the principle to civic and national affairs perhaps we may yet be able to dismiss our policemen, jailers, and judges. It may be quite sufficient for some government official to write a polite note to bank-robbers and murderers of different sorts, expressing the government's sense of indignation that these outrages should have been committed, and demanding some explanation. Whereupon the bank-robber, who perhaps is also a murderer, may instruct his secretary to reply to the Attorney-General explaining that he was greatly in need of cash, and he knew of no way of getting it but by breaking into a bank. He is very sorry that he had to resort to violence, and deeply regrets that in the encounter some members of the resisting bank staff should have lost their lives; and he may then add a promise that

he will not rob that particular bank again—nor will he kill the same people a second time! While, of course, he would send an expression of sympathy to the relatives of his victims.

That method, of course, would save a good deal of trouble for some people. It would help to circulate the bank's surplus funds, and incidentally would give employment to the undertakers.

One wonders, Is the world going mad? or is it already quite out of its mind?

TORONTO'S BLACK CHRISTMAS

Friday and Saturday were black days in Toronto. There were one hundred and twenty-three motor accidents, sixty-five people were injured, and three killed. Two of those killed were a blind man and his wife. The man was a news vendor, and was being conducted across the intersection by his wife to his little news stand at the corner of Lansdowne Ave. and St. Clair Ave.; and both were run down by a motor-car.

The majority of these accidents were due to liquor—nearly thirty drunken drivers were arrested. The Government which has organized its liquor department to promote liquor sales by every possible means extended the hours of sale for four nights preceding Christmas. We need not say more about it now, except to announce that on Sunday night next we shall speak on the question, "Should the Hepburn Government Be Indicted for Manslaughter? Will Ontario People Prove Themselves Devoid Equally of Conscience and Common Sense?" The address will appear in next week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

TO ALL JARVIS STREET MEMBERS

The Pastor would remind the members of the church that from New Year's morning to the end of the church year, we shall have exactly three months in which to make up all our accounts. During the depression many members were forced to reduce the amount of their contributions. While prosperity is not by any means at the flood tide, Government statistics prove conclusively that business in general is vastly better. Some of the great departmental stores in Toronto report the best Christmas business in all their history. *May it not be possible for some who reduced their offerings to restore them to the former amount? May it not be possible for a large number to increase their giving?*

The Pastor confesses that the effort and anxiety incidental to the closing of Jarvis Street's financial year with all our heavy responsibilities laid him low on the 31st of March, 1937. He has a wholesome dread of the necessity of making another such effort next March. The effort of last March almost terminated the Pastor's ministry. No Pastor has a more affectionate following, we believe; and because of that he believes that a good many of the members would have brought flowers for his funeral had it taken place. As that turned out to be unnecessary, why should not those who appreciate Jarvis Street and her work begin at once to make a thankoffering to the Lord, spreading it over thirteen instalments, each of which should be over and above the regular offering? If that were begun at once, the almost killing strain of the last weeks of the financial year, which ends March 31st, might be avoided. Will you not begin next Sunday?

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

Saturday and Sunday were fairly busy in Jarvis Street, Christmas notwithstanding. The Christmas service was held as usual at eleven o'clock Saturday morning, at which the Pastor preached. For such a service there was a large congregation. In response to the request of some, it had been decided to hold the Saturday evening prayer-meeting as usual, but we must admit that we came to the meeting with some fear lest it should be very small. It was smaller than usual, of course, but the attendance was far larger than the majority of Toronto churches have at their one regular weekly prayer meeting. And that on the evening of Christmas Day!

On Sunday the weather was fine, and the congregations exceedingly good. The Sunday School suffered somewhat. How could it be otherwise the morning after the visit of Santa Claus? At the close of the Sunday morning service we met an Anglican clergyman who seemed to be a very gracious spirit. He said he had for many years promised himself a visit to Jarvis Street, but that Sunday had proved his first opportunity. And with a smile he added, "I have been completely disillusioned; I need not tell you in what respect."

THE COMING WEEK-END

We remind the members of the church, and all interested friends, that the WATCHNIGHT SERVICE will be held from 10.30 to just past midnight Friday night. The NEW YEAR'S MORNING PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP SERVICE will be held Saturday morning at ten o'clock, and our experience Christmas night leads us to announce the Saturday night prayer meeting this week as usual. On account of the Watchnight Service on Friday, there will be no service Thursday, December 30th.

"THE PLOT THAT FAILED", AND "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

These two books are going like the proverbial hot cakes. In the ten days since the delivery of the bound volumes, about four hundred and sixty copies of "The Plot That Failed", and over one hundred and ninety "Other Little Ships", have been sold—six hundred and fifty volumes in all.

One who had received a copy of "The Plot That Failed" writes that he cannot understand how it is possible to sell such a book for one dollar. Another tells us that it is more thrilling than any novel he read before he was converted. A Pastor writes saying it is the best book on Pastoral Theology ever published—and still only \$1.00. Last week we said we should be obliged to charge 10c for postage after the New Year, but after going into the matter carefully, we have decided to continue the \$1.00 price, unless of course anyone desires to enclose 10c for postage—if they do, we shall not send it back.

The book contains three hundred and ninety pages, and is splendidly bound in cloth with gilt lettering. Send in your order at once. And as for those who have received their copy, we should be glad to hear from them, to know what they think of the book.

A REAL SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

Toronto Baptist Seminary is not a large institution, but it has done, and is doing, a great work. More and more clearly we see the need for ministers and missionaries trained in the use of the Word of God. On the one hand you have the arid wastes of Modernism and near-Unitarianism; and on the other, the ultra-spiritual and ultra-emotional and nonreasonable cults of Pentecostalism and other evangelical extremes. We are rapidly being driven to the conclusion that these ultra-spiritual and irrational cults are as real foes of New Testament evangelicalism as Modernism itself.

There is therefore a very urgent need for a sound, sane, educational institution in which men and women may be so trained that they may spiritualize the intellectual, and intellectualize the spiritual; and thus be true to the verities of the Christian faith. This is the ministry Toronto Baptist Seminary is exercising.

The Seminary will end its fiscal year March 31st, and we appeal to all Seminary friends to keep this in mind, and send us their contributions as soon as possible—and as often as possible—between now and March 31st. In each case, let your contribution be as large as your means will allow.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS TOO

What we have said of The Seminary, we may say of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Its fiscal year closes March 31st. THE GOSPEL WITNESS is everybody's servant. It works hard, and endeavours to pay its way; but, carrying no advertisements, the subscription price is not sufficient to pay for printing and postage. It is now well past the middle of the sixteenth year of publication, and neither the Editor nor the Secretary has received a cent of remuneration for the strenuous labour of the years. The money that has been received by subscriptions and donations has been required to pay for printing, mailing, and equipment.

And yet what a ministry THE GOSPEL WITNESS has exercised! Within a week we have heard from two ardent readers of the paper, ladies, both of them having passed the eighty-year limit, and who tell us that whatever else they miss they must have THE GOSPEL WITNESS as long as they live. They are both shut-ins, to whom THE GOSPEL WITNESS is their only pastor.

Large numbers of lonely missionaries look to it as their chief comfort, while many hundreds of ministers find in its pages food for their souls and inspiration and help in their work. THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a welcome visitor in many hospitals and sanitariums. It has carried the message of salvation to multitudes of people, and many have been converted through perusing its pages. Within the first year of its ministry we heard of its being used by a young girl who had been converted in Jarvis Street, and who went back home into the heart of the forest in New Ontario. She set up a service in her mother's home, and read THE GOSPEL WITNESS sermons. In a little while, a missionary tramping through the woods came upon them, and found six converts awaiting baptism, who were baptized by the missionary in a nearby creek. A year or so later this young girl having married one of her own converts continued the services in her own house, and another missionary had a similar experience, with the difference that he found nineteen converts awaiting baptism, who were baptized at his hand.

Thus the postage stamp that carries THE GOSPEL WITNESS pays the fare of a missionary into remote places, there to preach the gospel of God's grace.

The messages of THE WITNESS have been translated into many languages, including Arabic; so that there is a sense in which the Jarvis Street pulpit preaches in many tongues.

Will you not begin now to help us to balance our books as of March 31st, by putting aside a little extra week by week for THE GOSPEL WITNESS? But do not wait until the last month, please! It is the anxiety of those closing weeks that becomes almost unbearable. Help us generously—and help us now.

Bible School Lesson Outline

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

Vol. 2 First Quarter Lesson 2 January 9th, 1938

THE FIRST MIRACLE

Lesson Text: John 2.

Golden Text: "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"—John 2:5.

I. Christ Manifesting His Glory in Cana—verses 1-12.

Cana of Galilee was the city of Nathanael (21:2). The presence of even one follower of Christ in a place is a blessing, and signifies that Christ has a testimony there.

The first miracle is typical of all the miracles of Christ, in that by performing it He manifested forth His glory (verse 11) as the Son of God. The disciples recognized the token of His Deity, and their faith in Him was strengthened.

The glory of Christ is not inconsistent with true earthly joy; His presence at the marriage feast contributed to the happiness of that occasion. He would deliver us from the snare of sinful pleasure, but bestow upon us lasting, holy joy (Psa. 16:11; Prov. 10:22).

The glory of Christ may be manifested in the simple everyday affairs of life. On this occasion He solved the domestic problem of an embarrassed host. Whatsoever we do may be done to His glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23). It was slaves

who were admonished to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Tit. 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:1).

The time when Christ should manifest His glory was under His own control. His mother evidently thought this would be a good opportunity for Him to show to the world that He was God. The Greek word for 'woman' does not imply disrespect or severity, but rather tenderness. He gently reminded her that He must follow His own course; the time for the full revelation of His glory had not yet arrived (17:1). He had now entered upon His Divine work, and He could not allow any human being to dictate His actions. At the same time, He Himself chose to give to His disciples a glimpse of His essential Deity, and they understood His meaning.

Christ is sovereign also in the manner in which He manifests His glory. At one time He might perform a direct miracle; at another time He might use means (compare John 9:6 with Mark 10:52), as on this occasion when He changed the water into wine.

The six large water-jars, with capacity varying from about 18 to 27 gallons, were intended to be used in connection with the washing of feet and hands, as well as vessels and utensils, before and after meals (Mark 7:3, 4).

The Greek word for 'draw' is generally used of drawing water from a well (4:7, 11). If taken in its usual sense here it would imply that Christ instructed the servants to draw from the well sufficient water to fill the jars, in order to show perhaps that this was ordinary water, and then said something to this effect: "Now draw more water from the well and carry it to the governor of the feast". Explain to scholars that this wine would not be intoxicating liquor (Prov. 20:1), but one of the fruit drinks which form a necessary item of diet in Eastern countries where pure water is not always to be found.

Christ graciously coupled His Divine power with human impotence, making the obedience of servants a condition for the bestowal of blessing. He promises to reveal Himself to those who obey Him (14:21), and to give them His Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32), through whom "greater works than these" may be done (John 14:12). He grants to the believer the privilege of being a co-labourer with Him in the miracle of the new birth of a soul. Wise are they who are obedient to Him. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

The glory of Christ is indissolubly connected with His suffering. The first miracle of changing the water into wine, the symbol of suffering (Matt. 20:22, 23) and of death (1 Cor. 11:25), suggests the bitter sorrow which Christ bore for us before entering into His glory (Heb. 2:9, 10; Luke 24:26; John 12:23, 24; 1 Pet. 1:11).

II. Christ Manifesting His Glory in Jerusalem—verses 13-25.

The action of Christ in cleansing the temple at Jerusalem was another sign of His sovereign power. The custom of selling animals for sacrifice, established for the convenience of worshippers living at too great a distance to bring their own flocks, had brought about abuses of greed and avarice. Our Saviour sternly drove the money-changers from the temple court, stating as a ground for His action, that it was His Father's house which they were desecrating (compare Matt. 21:12, 13; Mark 11:15-17). The disciples acknowledged His claim to be the true Prophet of God, applying to Him the statement of Psalm 69:9, which refers definitely to the Messiah (compare Rom. 15:3). Christ was jealous for the holiness of the house of God.

The unbelieving Jews challenged His authority. The sign He showed them was a statement in metaphorical language that He would die and rise again. The temple was the symbol of God's presence with His people (2 Chron. 6:20); the body of Christ was the reality, for Christ tabernacled among men (1:14). The destruction of the temple of His body (3:16), and also the resurrection of that body (Rom. 1:4), were tokens of His Deity. The disciples understood this after the Resurrection, when they fully believed the Scripture, and the word of Christ. The Jews misapplied the words of Christ at this time, and also when they brought accusations against Him before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:57, 58; Acts 6:14).

Some who witnessed the miracles of Christ were convinced in mind that He was the Messiah, but they were not convicted in heart (compare 6:14, 15, 26). They professed to trust Him, but He did not trust Himself to them, for He knew that their confession was a mere outward show. Men may easily deceive themselves, and their fellows, but God, who reads the hearts of men (Jer. 7:10), is not mocked.