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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"He Poured Out His Soul Unto Death"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 25th, 1953

(Electrically Recorded)

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death."—Isaiah 53:12.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We come to Thee, O Lord, with the words of Thy disciples of ancient time upon our lips and in our hearts. Lord teach us to pray. We come in the Name of Him Who said, I am the truth. We may not know the truth apart from Him; He is the centre and sum of the truth. And O Lord we would fain know Him better. We thank Thee for the divinely given faith which has enabled so many of us to behold the Lamb of God, and to see in Him the One Who taketh away the sins of the world. But O Lamb of God, we would know Thee better. We know so little, our knowledge is so meagre, so imperfect, so ill-assorted. We pray for the illumination and guidance of the great Teacher. We thank Thee for that which lies on the surface in Thy Holy Word, for the placer gold that even little children may gather. We thank Thee that Thou hast thereby enriched us all. We have heard Thee say, My yoke is easy, and my burden is light: and we have found it so. And yet, O Lord, we would know something more of the treasures of grace that are in Christ Jesus for us. We feel that we live such limited and impoverished lives. We do not live as though we were the children of the King. O for grace that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, that Thy purpose may be fulfilled in us. For didst Thou not say that Thou hast called us that Thou mightest through us show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light?

Teach us, we pray Thee, the secret of personal communion with Thee. Help us that we may live in daily fellowship with the most High. Give to us by Thine abounding grace an unclouded vision of Thy holiness, for we are no longer afraid of it Lord. Once we were; it was terrible, it was dreadful in our eyes, until we learned that it was the very foundation and the fountain of grace. And though we have had to cry, Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts, yet Thou hast come to us with Thy purging fire, Thou hast purged our lips, and Thou hast put this honour upon us, that we may come and pray to Thee, that we may even talk with Thee as did Abraham, remembering that Thou hast said, Ye are my friends. Oh, the condescen-

sion of grace! Oh, the immeasurable mercy which has wrapped our souls about, and brought us from strangerhood to heirship, from poverty to wealth, from spiritual impotence to the privilege of being strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Look upon this congregation O Lord. Give us all an appetite for divine things. Beget in us by Thy Spirit that hunger and thirst after righteousness which is the only guarantee of spiritual satisfaction. The Lord give us an interest in His Word tonight. May the bush burn with fire; may we hear a Voice. As we bow before Thee with open hearts and attentive minds, and we trust surrendered wills, may heaven come down our souls to greet, and glory crown the mercy seat.

And that blessing which shall be ours shall belong to others. Thou wilt not forsake those who forsake not Thee. Be present in sick-chambers, at home and in hospital wards, and with those who travel by sea, and on the land, and even above the clouds. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in Thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. We bless Thee that we cannot escape the presence of God, for in Thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Make us to participate in these things abundantly in this quiet evening hour of worship, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

I DARESAY many of you have had the experience of visiting some locality as you supposed for the first time, and yet, when arriving there you have had a strange feeling that you have been there before. I had thought of the text which I have announced, as I planned to speak to you on this text this evening, and then after I got home this morning I seemed to have a haunting memory of my having traversed this area of truth before. So I called Miss Lindsay and asked her to examine the index, and, sure enough, I discovered that I had preached from this text nearly twenty years ago, and that the sermon had been then published. So I looked up the sermon. I cannot say that I read it, but I glanced over it to see

the argument, and to my great delight I discovered that on that occasion I had approached it from an entirely different point of view. Hence I could proceed with my attempt at exposition this evening without danger of repetition.

After all, I suppose many of you have been to Niagara Falls repeatedly. It is never quite the same, is it? It is a marvellous spectacle, and if you have any appreciation of the great and the majestic, you must ever admire it, though you have seen it many times before. I do not suppose you weary of looking at the starry heavens, though you have looked at them often before. What a fascination the ocean has for some of us — always the same, and yet never the same, always introducing us to some new wonders. And so of the sunrise with its morning promise, and the sunset, as it draws its crimson curtains about the couch of night. These things are all very wonderful, and we love to see them again and again.

And yet, in this written Word there are still more unfathomable depths, and greater heights, and altogether wider dimensions,—more splendours, more wonders here than anywhere. And the nearer we come to Him Who is the Theme of the whole Book, and whose Personality pervades every chapter and every verse, the better do we understand that Scripture which says, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Never presume to say that you are familiar with this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is a veritable Holy of Holies. Where is there anything holier? How can the mind of man engage in anything higher or holier than in contemplation of Him Who, infinite as He was and is in all the qualities of His being, poured out His soul unto death? What can we say about a text like that? How can we understand it?

May I pause to say that in my view many devout and faithful Christian people have but a very superficial view of the great work of redemption by which we are saved. I hear men sing — it is usually sung as a male quartet — about "The Old Rugged Cross". What a pitiful view that presents! — the rugged cross, a piece of wood, an instrument of the curse. We leave that to our Roman Catholic friends. The cross is much more than a piece of wood. We know little of it unless we can get back of that materialistic conception of things to the tremendous spiritual reality portrayed in this great phrase, "He hath poured out his soul unto death."

Dare we try, as the Spirit of God may help us, to get a glimpse of the meaning of that great saying — "His soul?" What can be meant by the soul of Deity? And what is the significance of the outpouring of all these qualities of Deity? And what shall we say of that which seems almost to be represented as a sphere, a receptacle, a something somewhere apart from God, into which He poured out His soul unto death? Then we shall be on much — I will not say on happier ground, but on easier ground, when we think for a few minutes of the result of it all. "Therefore — that is the logician's word — will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death."

I.

Our Lord was made in the likeness of human flesh, but of course at every point where He resembles us He transcends us, He surpasses us. "Tarry ye here," and they did. "And he went a little farther," He always does.

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

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Has He not said, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." And yet He came in the form of human flesh that we might know Him a little. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY OF THE SOUL OF THE GOD-MAN? I am almost afraid, aren't you? Surely, surely we are on holy ground!

What do we mean by the soul of a man? The psychologists speak of the cognitive faculty, of cognition, that part of the mind which comes to know things, and to treasure things, and to relate knowledge — that part of the mind which thinks, which projects itself in thought into the immeasurable spaces. What about the mind of Jesus? *Nothing in the past was hidden from His view; everything was open, just as an open book.* He knew the mind of God from the beginning; He knew His plans; He knew His high purposes in the creation of man in His own image and likeness. He knew how the worlds were made — not this only, but all other worlds. He knew the record of man's sin from the beginning; it was all an open book, and nothing was hidden from His view. Oh, we read it this morning, how the Psalmist recognized that as an individual even his members were written in God's book "when as yet there was none of them." And no wonder that he said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." But He could. He knew the past, and all its tale of human sin, with all its awful accumulation of human guilt. He knew how sin had polluted, not this planet, but even the universe, so that God said even the heavens were unclean in His sight. And *the present* — He was cognizant of it all. He knew what men actually were and are. He "needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." He knew everything. May I say, without any implication of irreverence, that our Lord never acted or spoke from ignorance. "All things are

naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," and all that He did in our redemption He accomplished with the fullest possible knowledge of the reason for it, the necessity for it, as no one else ever did. That cognitive faculty of His, that ability to know — we call it in Him, omniscience, all-knowledge — could look forward to eternity, as He looked back to eternity, for "from everlasting to everlasting, (He is) God." And He could see all the long results of sin, He could see what it must mean in human life, what it must mean in the higher realms where principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world's darkness, hold sway. Nothing was hidden from him, the past, the present, or the future. It was part of His soul; it was the cognition, the knowledge, the intelligence, of His soul.

Many a man has rushed bravely to the front, and done something which he scarcely understood, and has won the Victoria Cross, and wondered that it was accorded him. In a brave impulse perhaps he did it suddenly. But not so the Lord Jesus. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and that mind of His could see into the future. I may have said it before; let me say it again. In my own thinking I can never shut the sufferings of Jesus up to those few hours of darkness when He died upon the cross. He knew from the foundation of the world all that the redemption of the race would cost Him.

"This was compassion like a God;
For when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was His blood
His pity ne'er withdrew."

And through all the unfolding millennia, until the fulness of time came when God sent forth His Son, this infinitely capacious mind of His was dealing with all the factors of man's redemption. If I had time I should like to go much farther in the analysis, let us say, of the faculty of memory, that faculty of appraisal which we call wisdom, the weighing of knowledge, and the relation of fact to fact, the weighing of man's sin against the mountains — all these things. I do not know how you felt about the inauguration of President Eisenhower, but I quite agreed with what the retiring President said when he appealed to Americans to remember to sympathize with and to support the man who was about to be introduced to a position where he would bear the greatest burden of any man in the world. I think that is true. But it is nothing to this.

In that there was not only a knowledge of mankind in the mass — you cannot understand this, and I cannot understand it; but I can state it as a Biblical truth — but a knowledge of the individual, and all the particulars of an individual's life. Again quoting from the Psalmist: "In thy book all my members were written." The children sang this morning that hymn about the sparrow. "And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Ah, but they were but lesser infinitesimal elements in our redemption. But His knowledge extended to all that. And then of course projected beyond the plane of time and sense into that realm where there are principalities and powers, where the devil holds sway, where all hell is let loose against the forces of righteousness. Jesus knew it all. You remember how the young man, the servant of Elisha, when he rose early in the morning, and looked round about the city of Dotham, saw that the plains round about were filled with the Syrian

enemy. And in horror he said, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" Then his eyes were opened to see the chariots of fire. My dear friends, we need to get back of the high priests, the Sanhedrin, back of these human instruments of the devil, and remember what the Scripture teaches us. That was only the facade, that was only the front of evil. Behind it were all the hosts of darkness, all of them arrayed against this Champion of ours. And He knew it all. His soul was exercised I am sure in an accurate estimation and appraisal of all the powers of evil with which He had to cope if He was to effect His purpose. I say I should like to linger on that for an hour or so.

But there is another element in the soul of man — *that is the emotional*; it is that part of us which feels, the part that loves, that can be grieved and pained and hurt deeply. And thus the soul of Jesus was engaged. His love for God the Father, His passionate devotion to the Divine holiness — "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," it is said of Him — His emotions were stirred; all there was of Him loved God and hated evil, loved the light and hated the darkness. But His love was given to us also; He loved His own. I do not know how, but He did. That was part of His soul, — the infinite affection of Deity going out to His wicked, smitten, human creatures, and desiring their salvation, while at the same time devoted to the divine holiness. What an exercise of soul there must have been in Him as all the emotions of Deity were engaged — What were they? When you look at a picture and admire it your emotions are stirred. When you see a great landscape you do not bother about the science of it, but it is spread out as a thing of beauty before you, and there is something within you that responds to it all — as when the mother looks upon her child, the bridegroom upon his bride, and perhaps I hope the bride upon the bridegroom. But there is an outgoing of the soul to that which is engaging and attractive. You remember that when God had made this world — you have never seen it as God saw it; none of us have ever seen it — as it appeared to Him — But He saw it in its beauty with eyes that were divine, and with a discernment that was unique. And as He looked upon all the things that His hands had made He saw that it was good. That means that the divine emotions were stirred, exercised, in the appraisal of the works of His hands. And as for His human creature when He said it was very good, still more He loved him. All that from all eternity was in the mind of Jesus and the soul of Jesus.

There is another element — *we call it volition, the will*, that essential ego, that thing that is the man. It summons all these elements of knowledge, and sets them all in order, and in relation to each other. It controls the emotions, and all the qualities of the soul, whatever they are. The will is the dynamic. What was the will of Jesus? It was more than the sum total of all the energy of the universe. He did not exhaust Himself when He said, "Let there be light," "Let there be . . ." "Let there be . . ." "Let there be . . ." And it was so. Why? Because behind that word, and resident within that word, was the sovereign will of Deity. Flinging the stars into space, setting the sun and the moon in their orbits, so to speak winding them up, and saying, "Stay there and do my will," — they are the expressions of that Divine volition which was resident in the Person of Jesus Christ, for "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." And it was that

gracious will of His which summoned all the powers of His soul, that He might pour out His soul unto death.

II.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THAT OUTPOURING? I am sure it meant this: He suffered no reserve, He withheld nothing. His whole soul — "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Why did He say that? He loved us with all His soul. And in that work of redemption which spanned the millennia, and culminated at the cross, all there was of God was engaged. God in the Person of His Son, hath all His mightiest works outdone. My dear friends, the figure almost suggests that these — I know I am a bit metaphysical, and yet there is a figure — elements of the Divine soul were so fused and melted and molten by the very wrath of God when He took our sin upon Him, that they became, so to speak, liquid, susceptible of being outpoured, until there was nothing left: "He hath poured out His soul unto death."

III.

WHAT DOES DEATH MEAN? It is not the cessation of existence; it is not the extinction of being. It is a form of relationship, a severance of communication or correspondence, a separation from light into darkness, from life inevitably into death. I do not know that it would be legitimate to say it, but it was almost as though the elements of that capacious mind were now poured into another receptacle called death. He did it! "No man taketh (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." And so He deliberately went to the cross, He deliberately took the field for us, He deliberately went out into the outer darkness into that place of mystery, inexplicable. There was a prophetic adumbration of it in the Psalm we read, so long before its actual occurrence: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He so identified Himself with our sins, took our sins upon Him, and poured out His whole soul unto death, where there was no God — into the outer darkness, wherever that is.

My dear friends, do not think lightly of the cross; do not speak lightly of it. It is the very ground of our redemption; it is the very heart of divine Revelation. Ah yes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." But "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." It is said of death and the grave in respect to the Lord Jesus, "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." He poured out His soul, He laid down His life, that He might take it again. And He took it again. He came forth from the grave a conqueror. That was the greatest battle field of all time, when all the shock troops of hell were gathered about that grave. The sepulchre was sealed and carefully guarded, lest the Lord of life should rise; they said, "Lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away." But into that I cannot go this evening. I simply proclaim the fact, the indubitable indisputable fact, the historic fact, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. "He is not here," said the angel, "he is risen." And He did rise. And He appeared unto His disciples, and said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." You know the story of

His ascension, and the withdrawal of His visible presence behind the curtains of Heaven, there to appear within the veil in the presence of God for us.

IV.

BUT WHAT IS HIS REWARD? O listen. I wish I were equal to it, but I am not. But let us see what we can do. "Therefore — God is speaking — because of His death, because of His redemptive work, because He poured out His soul unto death — Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great." Perhaps it was when He ascended into Heaven that great Psalm was fulfilled: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." The modern theologian is busy trying to belittle the Person of Christ, and particularly and specifically the death of Christ, reducing Him, if He had any historic existence, about which some of them are in doubt, to the low level of mankind. Right here in Toronto a few years ago a man who was one of the secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. over on College Street said that in view of the development of the science of eugenics it seemed quite possible and probable that the world might yet see one greater than Jesus. Listen: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," — thought it not a prize to be grasped at. You hear the little preacher who gets what one of our students called "a spoonful of Greek", and some day he says, "The original is so and so." The poor little duffer knows virtually nothing about the original; he hardly knows the alphabet. But he is a bit of a pedant, and wants to exhibit his learning. I have seen a lot of people like that, when certain things are new to them they think they are new to everybody else. Jesus thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God. I remember riding on a car during the great war back here on Sherbourne Street, and I heard a couple of soldiers talking who had just come back from England. The war was still on, but they were home on furlough. And one said to the other, "You know in this country ten thousand dollars puts on more 'side' than a million dollars in England. They strut around so proudly." I do not know whether that is so or not, but I know that people who are unaccustomed to certain things are disposed to parade them. Let me reverently say that oneness with the Father and the Holy Ghost was an eternal experience with Jesus Christ. It was, if I may so say, a holy commonplace. He thought it not a prize to be grasped at, "but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Then you remember what it says: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Dare I tell you something? A friend who has been following my articles on The Great Contention, and who personally knew some of these infidel "scholars" whose writings we have been analyzing, — in reference to one particular professor, — said to me, "I do not see visions, and I do not dream dreams, and I suppose it was nothing in the world but a fancy, but," he said, "Professor So and So used to be so sprightly. I have sat in his classes, and his eyes sparkled, and there was not a dull moment."

Then he said, "A little while ago, since you have been writing these things, I was sitting in my study, and I suddenly felt as though there were another presence there, and I turned. I know it was imagination, and I would be afraid to tell most people, but I did feel that presence, and I turned, and there stood the Professor. There was no light in his eye, no sprightliness. He seemed to be hopelessly dejected and undone," he said, "he seemed to stand there, and his lips in my fancy moved as though he were trying to tell me something, and I thought it was this: 'I have learned now that I was all wrong.'"

To Him "every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." All these infidel Professors, and all the rest of them — oh, what a day it will be! "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great." In Ephesians Paul says, "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand 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 (or this age), but also in that which is to come." There will never be a greater name than that of Jesus. He has divided to Him a portion with the great, the greatest of all, and in the land beyond the skies where the angels sing, and the multitude of the redeemed sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Then the inspired record says that "every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them" in antiphonal acclaim cried "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

But I must leave that, because I want to give you a little crumb of comfort before I send you away. "And he shall divide the spoil with the strong." The New Testament tells us that when Jesus died at the place called Calvary He took the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, the bill, — He "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." There is the receipt on file, paid in full. On that occasion we are told He "spoiled principalities and powers, (making) a shew of them openly (before all the universe) triumphing over them in it." He spoiled principalities and powers: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

There is an inspiring story in the Old Testament of how David with his six hundred Gittites had encamped at the little city of Ziklag. There they left their cattle — it was before he was proclaimed king — and their wives, and their children, and they went out on a foraging expedition. While they were away the Amalekites came down upon the city of Ziklag, and they took all the women and children captive, and took away all their cattle and horses, and everything they had, and then burned the city. And when David came back he found nothing but a smouldering ruin. When they saw it they talked of stoning him. The leader always gets the blame. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God; and having inquired of the Lord, he pursued the Amalekites to the brook Besor. Two hundred of his six hundred Gittites were so faint that they could go no further, and they abode behind. But David and his other four hundred pursued after the Amalekites. Now let me give you the

story in the actual words of Scripture, for nothing can equal that:

Behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.

My dear friends, it is promised that the Lord Jesus will *divide the spoil with the strong*. His people are to be sharers in the fruits of victory.

"In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost."

Our David recovered all, and comes to us laden with spoil, for the enrichment—of whom? Of the strong.

Who are they? Are you a strong man? Not in yourself. We are a lot of weaklings, are we not? But we ought not to be. Jesus Christ did not die and rise again to leave us poor weak creatures. We are to share in the exceeding greatness of His power which He wrought in Him in His resurrection. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "Take unto you the whole armour of God; that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day." "The breastplate of righteousness," — observe, there is no armour for the back. If you wear the Christian panoply you will have to face front. And "the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The shield of faith will quench every fiery dart. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." And in your hand "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." — I repeat God did not intend that you and I should be weaklings.

I have called your attention to it perhaps more than once that it was characteristic of David's reign that he did not build institutions, but he made men. "These are the mighty men that David had." And that is what the church is for. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of the Son of God, unto — what? — *“Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”*

We must not turn our backs upon the foe. Let us be ashamed to be like the children of Ephraim, who, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. Do you know what that means? It means that when the issue is joined between right and wrong, between good and evil, between error and truth, between light and darkness, we dare not be neutral: we must take sides. We must fight the good fight of faith.

Someone says, “I do not believe in controversy”; and forthwith they start a controversy with those who would stand for the defence of the faith. Another says, “I do not believe in fighting,” and then immediately draws the sword against everyone who uncompromisingly stands for the truth. Another says, “I think we ought to let well enough alone, and I dare say things will take care of themselves, if we stand aside and do nothing at all.” Another says, “I wish you all success in the cause of righteousness, but please do not call on me.” Another writes a letter, writes it to me, even commending me for my attempt to stand for the faith, then adds, “But please don’t mention my name.” I promise I will not: I should be ashamed to do so.

Let us not be of such contemptible kidney. We are to be strong. Said the Apostle Paul of false brethren, “Who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: **TO WHOM WE GAVE PLACE BY SUBJECTION, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR; THAT THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL MIGHT CONTINUE WITH YOU.**” Well may we pray:

O God of truth, whose living word
Upholds whate’er hath breath,
Look down on Thy creation, Lord,
Enslaved by sin and death.

Set up Thy standard, Lord, that we,
Who claim a heavenly birth,
May march with Thee to smite the lies
That vex Thy groaning earth.

We fight for truth, we fight for God,—
Poor slaves of lies and sin!
He who would fight for Thee on earth
Must first be true within.

Then, God of truth, for whom we long,
Thou who wilt hear our prayer,
Do Thine own battle in our hearts,
And slay the falsehood there.

Still smite, still burn, till naught is left
But God’s own truth and love;
Then, Lord, as morning dew come down,
Rest on us from above.

Yea, come! then, tried as in the fire,
From every lie set free,
Thy perfect truth shall dwell in us,
And we shall live in Thee. Amen.

This sermon will be read by many ministers when it is in print. Let me dare to counsel them: I have had ministers of every denomination come to see me, and they have sat in my office, and in different ways have said

the same thing: “I would give all I have in life to be a free man like you, to have perfect freedom to declare the whole counsel of God.” I say, “That is easy; you can get it. Anybody may have it.” “But how do you get it?” I say, “Did you ever read the story of the Hebrew children who went into the fire, when they had said first of all to Nebuchadnezzar, ‘Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace . . . but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.’ He said, ‘Into the furnace with them.’ Later Nebuchadnezzar looked in at a distance, and said, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . I see four men loose . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’ All they lost in the furnace is their bands.” And I say to my ministerial friend, “Get into the furnace; it will burn your ecclesiastical, and may be your denominational bands away, and then you will be a free man.” “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

Can I enlist some volunteers to-night?

“The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in His train.

“The martyr first, whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave,
Who saw his Master in the sky,
And called on Him to save.
Like Him, with pardon on His tongue,
In midst of mortal pain,
He prayed for them that did the wrong:
Who follows in His train?

“A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame:
They met the tyrant’s brandished steel,
The lion’s gory mane,
They bowed their necks the death to feel:
Who follows in their train?

“A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the Saviour’s throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed:
They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil, and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.”

But what shall I say of the spoils of war garnered by the conquering Christ: the robe of righteousness, the jewels of grace, the titles to mansions in the skies, the spiritual estates which shall be ours to rule over and enjoy? When “He shall divide the spoil with the strong” what earthly meed of praise, what vain-glorious human title, what reward of any sort that could be bestowed by any other hand, can be compared with the spoils of victory in which every one, whom He has made strong, shall share?

But we must not forget that the two hundred who fainted at Besor, were not faint-hearted: the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. Not every one can face the foe with equal valour. Some must tarry by the stuff at the brook Besor. But they shall not be without their reward, for “as his part is that goeth down to the battle,

so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike." Every faithful heart, regardless of his capacity, shall have a share in our glorious Victor's spoils.

May we all have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! In closing let us sing Frances Ridley Havergal's challenging hymn:

"Who is on the Lord's side?
Who will serve the King?
Who will be His helpers
Other lives to bring?
Who will leave the world's side?
Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side?
Who for Him will go?
By Thy call of mercy,
By Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side;
Saviour, we are Thine.

"Jesus, Thou hast bought us,
Not with gold or gem,
But with Thine own life-blood,
For Thy diadem.
With Thy blessing filling
Each who comes to Thee,
Thou hast made us willing,
Thou hast made us free.
By Thy grand redemption,
By Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side;
Saviour, we are Thine.

"Fierce may be the conflict,
Strong may be the foe,
But the King's own army
None can overthrow.
Round His standard ranging,
Victory is secure,
For His truth unchanging
Makes the triumph sure.
Joyfully enlisting,
By Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side;
Saviour, we are Thine.

"Chosen to be soldiers
In an alien land,
Chosen, called, and faithful,
For our Captain's band,
In the service royal
Let us not grow cold;
Let us be right loyal,
Noble, true, and bold.
Master, Thou wilt keep us,
By Thy grace divine,
Always on the Lord's side,
Saviour, always Thine. Amen."

FEW OR MANY?

The Lesson of Statistics on Religions

THE government statistics on the religious affiliations of Canadians recently made public, disclose that in the decade preceding the latest census the Roman Catholic Church has increased by more than a million members and that in the same period the United Church shows a gain of more than a half million. While it is a truism that statistics never tell the whole story, and this is peculiarly applicable to religious statistics, yet these figures clearly demonstrate that the influence of churches is by no means a thing of the past. One is reminded of the story of a landlubber who, on first seeing the ocean, was asked what he thought of it: "Think of it," he cried in amazement, "I think it is a huge success!" The very magnitude of the gains credited to these churches will extract wonder even from those who are not lost in admiration. The most convinced and militant Protestant must, in the face of this report, confess that as far as numbers go, the Church of Rome is a success. And on the same grounds, it must be admitted that the marriage of the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church of a generation ago has proved to be more prosperous than any but the most sanguine prophets then dared to hope.

Without meaning to detract from the comfort and encouragement that cardinals and bishops, moderators and denominational leaders may have derived from a contemplation of these astronomical figures, we cannot refrain from congratulating them that the government census was taken in the year 1951 and not at the beginning of the Christian era, say on the Day of Pentecost. A sorry showing the first Christian church would have made at that time, had Caesar decreed a religious roll call of his world-wide empire! One hundred and twenty disciples in an upper room would have been a meagre band in comparison with the solid ranks of the universal religion of that day. Caesar had his own effective methods for keeping his worshippers united in their adoration of his statues, and his troops guaranteed the catholicity, that is the universality, of emperor worship by the points of their spears and the edges of their swords. And if any rebel dared to acknowledge another king but the Roman Caesar there were ingenious ways of "liquidating" him, including the unspeakable torture of death by crucifixion. Against a religion that was at once united, catholic and Roman (we do not employ the words in their technical modern use), the despised handful in the upper room, even when swelled by three thousand newly-baptized converts, would have been so pitifully small as to be scornfully lumped with the "miscellaneous sects".

"Not Many Mighty"

Statistics, we repeat, are imposing, but they do not give the whole truth. Majorities are not always right, for mere weight of numbers cannot be the final arbiter in the moral realm. Those who argue that the truth or falsity of creeds can be decided by the mere counting of noses, as Carlyle called it, forget that Mohammedans and pagans far outnumber all those who profess and call themselves Christians; even if we should include all Roman Catholics and Eastern Churches with the Protestants. Communism appears to believe that sheer multitude of the masses and their physical force can decide all things, but it is no part of genuine Christianity to believe that God is on the side of the big battalions. Pagan philosophies that build on numbers and prove their arguments

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The Gospel Witness

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by force have no fellowship with the Saviour who was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Impressive statistics would lose their glamour if they were set forth under this rubric: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty (1 Cor. 2:26ff).

Old-fashioned Methodists were accustomed to greet their friends not with inane remarks on the weather or enquiries about physical health but with direct, soul-searching questions: "How is it with your soul to-day, brother?" Wesley organized his converts into small groups or classes, making the leader responsible for the spiritual welfare of the others. Now, despite the fact that government census takers asked us all some very searching questions about our age and our occupation and our income, none of them posed the pointed enquiries about our spiritual state and standing that the Wesleyan class leaders used to ask. It was not to be expected that secular officials should do so; their duty was fulfilled when they asked and reported on the religious affiliations of the citizens, and they did not even require a certificate of membership in a church to check the truth of the response.

An Assay Office Report

As a special favour to a hopeful farmer, the writer once lugged a suitcase full of mineral to the government assay office. It was as weighty as the richest gold-bearing ore ever mined, but, alas, the test revealed that it was almost worthless. Now, government statistics as to church membership are as accurate an index of spiritual life as the weight of a sample of gold ore. A sample weighing a ton might be worth only a dollar. Or, on the other hand, it might, like the ore from some mines, be rated as producing thirty dollars a ton. Sometimes nuggets are discovered which prove to be almost pure gold, and they are worth far more than crude ore that outweighs them hundreds of times over.

In the eyes of the New Testament writers, statistics were not regarded as of very great importance, for though we read of three thousand who "gladly received his word (and) were baptized" and on another occasion of five thousand "which heard the word" and "believed", there is no information as to the size of the membership roll in the churches described by inspired writers. In every case the emphasis is laid upon the fact that they were composed of those who were "called to be saints" or who were "in the Lord Jesus Christ" or who were "believing brethren". We talk about church membership and count the number of those who adhere to denominations as though to be a Christian meant no more than to join some lodge or club. In contrast to this loose use of language that denotes careless thinking, the New Testament used the word "member" in its true sense as a "bodily organ, a limb". It teaches that "now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). The capital question in the Bible is not whether we are members of a church, or of some particular church, but whether we are "members" of Christ, that is partakers of His life, united to Him by faith. The inspired writers paid little attention to num-

bers but much attention to quality. They were careful to make it indubitably clear that in New Testament times the personal relationship of the individual to Christ was of supreme importance, and that it was this which determined his fitness for baptism and for admission to the fellowship of the local church.

How Are Christians Made?

In the *Journal* of John Wesley, there is this instructive entry reporting the appeal made to him by an Indian chief in Georgia: "I desired," said the chief, "that some would speak the great Word to me; and my nation then desired to hear it; but now we are all in confusion. Yet I am glad you are come. . . . But we would not be made Christians as the Spaniards make Christians: we would be taught, before we are baptized."

In France there is a distinction currently made between "practising Catholics" and "non-practising Catholics". Millions of professing Roman Catholics in that country have no other connection or interest in religion apart from the fact that they were baptized in the church, married in the church and expect to be buried by the church. Italy is generally regarded as being solidly Roman Catholic, yet it has the largest Communist party in Europe outside of Russia. An Italian remarked to the writer the other day that probably forty per cent. of the Italian people were largely indifferent or antagonistic to the official church. In South America there are millions of people who are listed in ecclesiastical statistics as "Roman Catholics" whom intelligent Romanists regard as a liability to their Church for they exhibit superstition at its worst. Even the Roman Hierarchy appeals for missionaries to teach these spiritually and intellectually depressed peoples, though all the while they use their vast numbers as proof of the divine authority of the Church of Rome.

Multitudinism

Unhappily, the Church of Rome is not the only one afflicted by the plague of multitudinism. Protestant churches that in their doctrinal statements have been careful to eschew the pernicious Romish error that makes salvation dependent upon the physical application of a few drops of water, nevertheless, inscribe on their membership registers many who have never had a saving experience of the grace of God in Christ. It is true that Protestant churches do not teach, as does Rome, that "Outside of the church, there is no salvation." Yet it seems a natural deduction to the ordinary man to assume that because he has been baptized and made a member of a Christian church that he is therefore, in the true sense of the word, himself a Christian. When such is the case, the church and its ordinances, so far from leading men to Christ, stand across the way to Him as barriers thrust between the soul and its Saviour.

A few years ago one of the students in the Seminary told how he had become a church member, against his will. The preacher in the nearby church came to visit at his home one day, and like many farm boys, when the pastor came in the front door he went out the back door to seek refuge in the barn till the visitation should be past. In due time he returned to the house and seeing that the coast was clear, he asked his mother, "Well, what did the preacher want?" "He thinks you are old enough to join the church," was the reply. "But, mother," said the lad, "I'm not a Christian. I don't know anything about religion, and I'm not fit to become a member of

the church." Despite his protest, the next Sunday his name was read from the pulpit among the list of new members. Now, how much is that sort of membership worth, either in the sight of God or of man? Happily, the young man in question came under the sound of the Gospel in another church and was soundly converted, but many another young person has been lulled into the sleep of death because he was "railroaded" into the church — the word would be employed in connection with any other organization that dared employ similar tactics to gain members.

The Reformers

The Reformers of the sixteenth century, those great prophets raised up by God for such a time of special need and signal blessing, were undoubtedly men who, in their own souls had tasted and seen that God was good. Their protest was not primarily a negative one, against the social evils or the moral laxity or even the doctrinal errors of the Roman church, but only against these things so far as they perverted the Gospel. They were men who had found God, or rather had been found of Him, and therefore they testified what they had seen and heard: namely that God had spoken in His Word, that Christ had died on the Cross for sinners, and that the way for all was free and open for all to come to the fountain head of living waters, to the Saviour Himself, with whom each soul could and must come for himself. These spiritually enlightened men found that the Church of Rome had put itself in the place of Christ, as though God had withdrawn Himself from the undertaking to save men and had deputed the priests with their sacerdotal machinery as His sole and only representatives on earth. The Reformers came to regard the papacy as Antichrist because its agents stood in the place of God, not inviting men to the meek and lowly, and yet all powerful Saviour, but to their traditions, of men, which they exploited for their own base gain.

The greatest weakness of Protestantism is that it has not always been true to the genius of the Reformation, this personal experience of the believing soul with the Divine Saviour. In the doctrinal statements of all the Reformation Churches there is plainly and unmistakably written the truth that Christ is the One Mediator, that His sacrifice on the cross is the one true atonement for sin, that salvation is the free gift of God through faith in Christ. Yet the old danger of allowing the church and the sacraments to come between the soul and its Saviour was not always consistently guarded against, and as a result Protestant Churches have again and again fallen into the worst pitfalls of the papal system, either by teaching or by allowing their people to think that a man's relationship to the church determines his relationship to Christ.

A Barbed Reply

A curious enquirer once asked the Lord, "Are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:23). We are not told whether the question was prompted by genuine spiritual concern or by idle curiosity or by the common conception that supposes spiritual values can be measured by mechanical tallies. In any case, the Master's reply was a barbed one: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto

us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

Does the reply seem to indicate that there are but few by its allusions to "strait gate" and to the "many" who "will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." On the other hand, the wide sweep of the divine mercy is made clear in the gloriously inclusive picture of the great feast: "And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last." But to dwell on the "few" versus the "many". of the reply is surely to stay on the circumference of the principle laid down in the penetrating reply. The Master's barbed shaft is pointed with a personal application: "Strive to enter in." He would say, it seems, that this is first of all a matter for a man to settle with himself before God. Enter in *yourself*: "Save yourself from this untoward generation." He startles His hearers by telling them that the Great Day will reserve unexpected and painful surprises for those who imagine that spiritual destinies are determined by earthly relationships and physical contacts with truth and goodness. It is not enough to take the name of Christ upon our lips, to have seen Him with the eye of the flesh. To such he may say, as he may say to the church members in our day, Protestant or Roman Catholic, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The lesson of statistics on religious affiliation is not to be found in their size but in the personal application of the searching command of the Master: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

—W.S.W.

AN IMPURE CHURCH

Nothing will induce me to form an impure church. "Fifty added to the church" sounds well at home, but if only five of these are genuine, what will it profit in the Great Day?

—DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

A SIX-MONTHS' STORY CONTINUED IN THIS ISSUE

The story of **THE GREAT CONTENTION FOR THE FAITH** by Bible-believing Baptists of Canada, which began in the front-page article of Nov. 20, will continue in instalments week by week for probably four to six months.

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THE GREAT CONTENTION

Chapter Eleven in the History of the Battle for the Bible Among
Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

By Dr. T. T. Shields

IN THIS chapter we conclude our examination of the teachings of Professor George Cross. We have an analysis of another book by Dr. Cross, entitled, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*; but we have decided not to burden our readers with this. Schleiermacher became very largely Prof. Cross' master and model. He differs from Schleiermacher at some points, but in the main his writings are but an echo of the principles of Schleiermacher's teaching. And inasmuch as the book to which we have referred is really Dr. Cross' appreciative estimate of this revolutionary theologian, and does not necessarily at every point represent the exact position of Dr. Cross, we have thought it wiser and fairer to confine our examination to words actually written by Dr. Cross himself:

In this chapter we complete our analysis of Dr. Cross' teachings in his book, *Creative Christianity*, Chapter II., and also of his teaching in a booklet entitled, *The Attitude of the Modern Theologian Toward Jesus Christ*. These quotations with our comment upon them follow.

CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY

Quotations from Chapter II—The Discovery of the Perfect Personality

p. 57—*Re Miracles*: (Dr. Cross imagines an educated young man coming to the New Testament for the first time.)

"It is pretty certain that his attention would first be attracted to the extraordinary occurrences recorded and that he would detect resemblances between them and the extraordinary events associated in the minds of people with the beginnings of other faiths. Also, there can be little doubt that a reader with his mental tendencies would regard such accounts as the virgin birth, the visions and dreams associated (p. 58) with it, his feeding of thousands of people at a single time from a few barley cakes, his walking on the water of the lake to go aboard a boat and rejoin his disciples, his producing a calm in the midst of the storm by commanding the waves and winds to be quiet, his raising of the dead back to life by the utterance of a word — there can be little doubt, I say, in the minds of those who are familiar with the effect of thoroughly scientific training upon the minds of men in our day, that *this hypothetical youth would class these portions of the narratives with the folklore, legends or mythology he had already found in the traditions of other religious faiths or had read in their Scriptures.*"

Again: "Dr. Cross imagines an educated young man coming to the New Testament for the first time." We wonder what Dr. Cross would say of a poor drunken sot, completely mastered by his vice, who comes to the New Testament for the first time; and reads there of a Man called Jesus, Who died on a cross, and was buried, and rose again, and ascended into heaven? And such a poor drunken wretch — of course, he has not been to college, nor sat at the feet of Dr. Cross! — this poor human wreck is simple enough to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now he finds himself a completely new creature, new desires, new powers, new purposes: he becomes, in every respect, an upright, respectable, man, a useful citizen, an ideal husband and father — all because he came to the New Testament.

Would Dr. Cross have any objection to that? because there are tens of thousands of men and women who have been steeped in every kind of vice, and who have thus become new creatures by coming to the New Testament. But Dr. Cross is not interested in what Begbie would call such "broken earthenware": he is obsessed with the idea that the only person who matters in this world is "the educated young man", "the college man", "the intelligent man". And what does he do? He reads the New Testament, but he has been prepared by earlier studies in Comparative Religions, and has been told that many of the features of the Christian religion are to be found in other religions, so when he reads of the miraculous interventions in the Old Testament, "this hypothetical youth would class these portions of the narratives with the folklore, legends, or mythology, he had already found in the traditions of other religious faiths, or had read in their scriptures."

When such vicious teaching has been so long rampant in supposedly Christian institutions, it is surely nothing less than a miracle that a preacher of the gospel, or a church of believers, should be left anywhere upon the earth.

Would Dr. McDormand find any occasion to protest against this kind of teaching, or would he fear "the tragedy of schism" and consequently remain silent?

p. 63—*Re Authenticity of Records of the Gospel*:

"We must say that *we have not in the New Testament a simple matter-of-fact statement of what Jesus said and did*, and the more we try to make it appear so, the more evident is our failure. "We have no clear right to claim possession of a verbatim report of his teachings or anything like it . . . It is quite possible that there are instances, few or many, of exact quotations from his lips and in many passages there is a verisimilitude . . . But we can never be quite sure that the verisimilitude is not owing to the fitness of such sayings to the state of mind those people had come to or to our own state of mind."

Dr. Cross questions the authenticity of the records of the gospel: "We have no clear right to claim possession of His (Jesus') teachings or anything like it". Why have we not? It is true that the gospels were written long after the earthly life of our Lord had terminated. How, then, could anybody write The Sermon on the Mount, for instance, as representing the exact words of Jesus, or any other of His discourses, such as the third of John, or the sixth of John, or His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John? Has the New Testament anything to say on this problem? We venture to believe it is perfectly explicit. The Holy Ghost was promised, and it was specifically declared, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you". Once postulate God, begin where the Bible begins: "In the beginning God", once assume there is a Holy Spirit, and that He is God, it is no miracle for Him to remember everything, that Jesus has said. The miracle consists in His exercising the office of Divine Remembrancer.

p. 75—*Re New Testament Writers and the Life of Christ: Miracles*:

"Naturally, therefore, the representations which the New Testament writers make of the personality of Jesus must be used with discrimination. The accounts of such scenes as his exorcism of demons, his transfiguration on a mountain top, his stilling of storms, his summoning of deceased persons back to life, his physical ascension into the sky before the eyes of men, picture him as exercising a kind of magical power and as having access to influences of a kind extraneous to our lives. To men of that time these might seem evidences of his high calling but they make him in a corresponding degree a stranger and an alien to us. In all this our minds are drawn to the region of the mysterious, the unaccountable, the unknowable. With a personality whose native abode is there we can never be at home . . . (p. 76) We know of no means by which we can be carried into that unknown realm nor do our longings reach in that direction. Therefore we are unable to see in the representations we have just spoken of the perfection of personality, but rather its disparagement."

We have no true portrait of the personality of Jesus in the New Testament. What is said of Him "must be used with discrimination". Once again, everything that is said of Him, as indicating a supernatural interposition in the affairs of men, whether through Him in the lives of others, or in His own experiences, such as "His physical ascension into the sky before the eyes of men" — all these things are to be doubted! "Therefore we are unable to see in the representations we have just spoken of, the perfection of personality, but rather its disparagement."

We have heard of some very extravagant evangelists who, in retailing their own exploits, quite surpassed the record of the Apostle Paul. But they were woeful exaggerators, as we have discovered. And equally, their admirers, who have said similar things about them, are unreliable reporters. Perhaps so. But here we are asked to apply that principle of exaggeration and distortion to the gospel narratives. What have you to say, Dr. McDormand? Would you protest against such sacrilege as this?

p. 84—*Re Christ and the Resurrection and Doctrine of Redemption*:

"When 'Jesus and the resurrection' was preached to the votaries of these faiths (votaries of heathen philosophies) and to the advocates of the philosophy that was akin to them, he displaced in their minds their ancient deities, but it was at the cost of being conceived in their likeness and his salvation in terms of the kind of redemption which their worshippers craved. His death and resurrection were made the death and resurrection of a God and by him they were to be redeemed from the bondage of darkness, error and metaphysical corruption and to enter into the incorruptible, immortal life of deity."

Can we find anything anywhere to match the blasphemy of this paragraph? Jesus has merely displaced the deities which they had conceived in their own minds. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God". Dr. Cross would say, Ye turned from ancient to newer deities of your own imaginative creation. Here the atonement, death, and the actual resurrection of Jesus, are completely denied. Would Dr. McDormand, in order to avoid "schism", acquiesce in this denial?

p. 88—*Re "Orthodox Representations of Christ"*:

"In the orthodox representations of him at the time we see the grandeur of one who possessed in himself in a real life on earth the infinite power and glory of God, and who gave himself, nevertheless, to the endurance of an infinite penalty for sin for the sake of men who were worthless apart from the worth he thereby gave to them. But the interest in him personally is mostly limited to this one point. He is a being far superior to the world-fleeing Jesus of the mediaeval ascetic, but he is presented as an eternal divine personality whose native abode is in a different realm from ours and whose higher nature is an inscrutable mystery

to us." — "How artificial this entire construction seems to us now!"

Read the paragraph above, again — a representation of Jesus in the New Testament as the God-man, possessing in Himself in "a real life on earth the infinite power and glory of God, and who gave himself, nevertheless, to the endurance of an infinite penalty for sin." What about it? Dr. Cross says, "How artificial this entire construction seems to us now". Is it artificial to Dr. McDormand, and those for whom he speaks? Have they still a modicum of faith in the dependability of the New Testament, or is it all a cunningly-devised fable which people of intelligence are to reject? To protest, by every means in one's power, against such a complete denial of everything Christian — is it a necessity, a solemn duty, binding upon every one who would be loyal to Jesus Christ? Or must we yield to it the acquiescence of silence, lest our protest should cause schism? Schism from what? Separation from what? Separation from almost unimaginable, blatant, and blasphemous unbelief.

Quotations from Chapter III—The Making of the Better World

p. 95—*Re Christ and Human Betterment*:—"The features of the personality of Jesus depicted in the Gospels which have been the most powerfully effective in human betterment are not those which represent him as in the possession of powers extraneous to the normally conditioned human life, but those in which he appears as naturally belonging both inwardly and outwardly to our race."

Dr. Cross cannot risk the denial that in the personality of Jesus there have been features powerfully effective in human betterment. But he insists that it has not been the evidence of the supernaturalism of His character.— His life, and death, and resurrection — but the influential factors have been the evidences that inwardly and outwardly He was of our race and one with ourselves.

This man seems to hate the truth that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself"!

p. 109—*Re Original Sin*:—"According to the traditionally orthodox view, the whole of mankind is turned into a *massa perditionis* through the propagation by natural generation of the evil nature — Original Sin — which supervened in man upon the first transgression. There is no need to discuss that doctrine here, but it is well to point out that — it sadly perverts the truth in that it fails to perceive that the unity of the human race is constituted, not by the fact of a common physical descent, but rather by the participation, though in ever so various degrees, in a common ideal."

What Dr. Cross says in this paragraph about original sin is sheer piffle. In view of all human history, it is so obviously contrary to historical fact as to deserve no comment.

p. 110—*Re Sources of the Christian Vision of the Future*:—"From the Jew came the image of a new world of men in a better earth. It would be ushered in by a cataclysm, a physical resurrection of the dead, a judgment of all mankind before the divine tribunal, the sentence of the wicked to the lower world of demons and the exaltation of the righteous to the happiness of a renovated earth."

In this paragraph there is an implicit denial of what he elsewhere calls apocalypticism; a denial of any divine communications; and "the Christian vision of the future" is dependent upon the Jews' notion of heaven and hell.

p. 114—*Doctrine of the union of divine and human elements in Christ* said to be derived from Graeco-Roman Philosophy. "To them the Incarnation of God in Christ became the central dogma of the Christian faith and the

hope of the deification of our personal nature its governing motive."

An equally implicit denial of the truth of the divine and human elements in the nature of Christ. It is all "derived from Graeco-Roman philosophy".

p. 119—*Re Revelation*: "Moreover, the means to be used for its betterment are not to be brought into action by a violent irruption into the normal course of nature but in the very manner in (p. 120) which the good of the natural life is promoted. Quite in keeping with this is the conception of divine revelation which is now becoming prevalent among the more enlightened. Revelation is ceasing to be conceived of as the communication of facts which could not be known through the native processes of our spirits but only through purely miraculous channels, and the Bible is ceasing to be received as an authoritative collection of information concerning supernatural and superrational facts."

Here is a plain denial of the principle of revelation. Dr. Cross commits himself to "the conception of divine revelation which is now becoming prevalent among the more intelligent"!

How proud this man is of his little two or three-watt light that illumines his cranium! We met an early graduate of McMaster University a few years ago, and in the course of our discussion I quoted a scripture to him. He greeted me with a sneer, almost a satanic leer. I said to him, "Perhaps you don't believe in the principle of revelation now?" To which he replied, "If you mean in any extra-mundane revelation, I don't." Here it is: "The Bible is ceasing to be received as an authoritative collection of information concerning supernatural and superrational facts."

Quotation from Chapter IV—The Power of Cosmic Interpretation

p. 132—*Re Future Life*:

"Increasing numbers of intelligent people, particularly those who have lived through a college curriculum, have come to feel that no man is competent to say that we have positively authenticated information about the future life or the world beyond."

What blessings colleges have conferred upon the human race! Once people had some fear of God before their eyes. There was a time when men were somewhat deterred from the extremes of evil by thoughts of future retribution. And suffering saints were comforted by thoughts of heaven. But they were all wrong! We have no knowledge now that there is a future life!

Read Dr. Cross' paragraph over again; but bear in mind it does not apply — thank God! — to everybody, but only to "intelligent people, particularly those who have lived through a college curriculum". These professors seem to get their colleges on the brain, and somehow they learn in them — we say it without apology, and with perfect certitude — they learn how to become bigger fools than half the inmates of insane asylums.

QUOTATIONS FROM "THE ATTITUDE OF THE MODERN THEOLOGIAN TOWARD JESUS CHRIST" by George Cross, Ph.D., D.D.

Selected by OLIVE L. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.,
Professor of Greek, Toronto Baptist Seminary

Note: This article which is reprinted from *The Biblical World* contains similar statements concerning Christ and the Scriptures to those appearing in the books of Dr. Cross.

p. 25—"Early Protestant, mediaeval Catholic and ancient Catholic thinkers held that a declaration of the true and final view of what Christians should think of Christ had been definitely given by constituted external authority.

The modern theologian does not so believe, but sets aside such supposed authority in favor of the principle of free investigation."

p. 26—*Re Scriptures and Christ*:

"The modern student necessarily begins his attempt to reach a theological view of Jesus Christ by an effort to ascertain the original facts out of which the interest in him arose. It makes no difference to him where the facts are found, whether in the writings of the New Testament, or in the works of Jewish and Gentile writers of those times, or in anything that throws light on those times."

p. 27—On the same topic:

"Anyone who has had experience in working out a knowledge of fact from documentary or oral materials knows how difficult it is to reach certainty in matters of detail even about small affairs. . . . What if we cannot tell precisely how far his words and deeds as they lie before us in the Gospels bear the marks of the interpretative love and faith of his followers! That is not altogether a loss, for it helps us to know more fully what he was."

In the three paragraphs above, Dr. Cross discloses the basic principle of Modernism. In the first paragraph he groups Protestants, mediaeval and ancient Catholics, and they were all subject to "external authority". He makes no distinction between Protestants and Catholics, for whether the authority be the church, or Holy Scripture, "the modern theologian" is a law unto himself. "He sets aside all such authority in favour of free investigation." That, of course, is the great question. In what does supreme religious authority reside?

In the second paragraph we come again upon the hackneyed phrase "the modern student". Modernism seems to assume there were no thinkers in the world until "the modern student" was born. He professes such student is subject to the authority of "the original facts," and sees "no difference" between "the New Testament" and "Jewish and Gentile writers". Of course, this is an utter repudiation of all scriptural authority.

The third paragraph again discounts the dependability of Holy Scripture, and assumes that we cannot tell "precisely" how far the deeds and words of Jesus are given us in the gospels, and how far the narratives are coloured by "the love and faith of his followers". This is not a loss because at least we have some idea of what His followers thought of Him! But, of course, we have no really accurate history here, any more than we should find it in the rhapsodizing of a bridegroom over his bride, or a bride over her bridegroom.

p. 28, 29—In analyzing the Character of Christ, he says:

"To treat Jesus' words and deeds as evidence of something we call 'his nature', whether that be single or double, is to lose the clue to an understanding of the purpose of his life as he apprehended it for himself. Similarly, in order to know his character it is necessary to reject the assumption that he was in possession of information touching the moral significance of his own life or the lives of others obtained by him in ways inaccessible to us, for this would impose an effective barrier to our moral fellowship with him and conceal his real character from view.

(p. 29)—Still less are we to be precluded from a free analysis of Jesus' moral character by the gratuitous assumption that only one side of his person is open to our intelligence or that there were mysterious experiences of his or a mysterious knowledge in which we can have no part. The modern attitude toward him is a more reverent one. For such a view would put him far away and make his character an insoluble enigma."

In the above paragraph we come again upon the tiresome phrase, "the modern attitude". And what is it? It is Unitarianism — we had almost said, *minus*. To assume that Jesus knew any more than ordinary men, that

He had any idea of the moral significance of His own life, or that He had access to sources of knowledge "inaccessible to us" is to misunderstand Him. Surely, no one assuming this "modern attitude" could have any New Testament gospel to preach.

p. 30—"Further questions arise (concerning Christ): How did Jesus interpret himself and the relation he bore to the world of men? *What ambitions had he worldward?* When he thought of the hopes that men held to before his day and held still, how did they determine his conception of his own calling? *How did he reconcile himself to the course of the divine providence when he saw it moving directly counter to his desires?*"

The implications of this paragraph are positively blasphemous. It assumes that Jesus had yielded to the Devil's temptations, and that He had "ambitions worldward". And Jesus was completely frustrated because Providence had ordered His life in a way "directly counter to His desires"!

p. 30—"The answer of Jesus to us (as we ask the questions concerning Him) can come only from the way he fits himself on to our life's experiences. It is only as his moral character is transcribed into our souls that we know him."

(Note: In other words, the words and deeds of Christ are of no value to us. His answer to our problems as given in the Word means nothing. Human experience is the only criterion.)

p. 31, 32—"With this in mind (the career of the Christian communion) the modern theologian makes his estimate of Jesus and seeks for an adequate expression of it. The contrast with the traditional method is evident at a glance. The latter method was to begin with some definition or formal doctrine of his person which was traced by the text-proof method to the Bible, and then, on the basis of it, to seek to arouse in men's minds the appropriate personal experience. . . . It proceeds from outward belief to inward faith, *from doctrine to experience; from external authority to inner life.* It seeks conformity with a creed.

"The modern theologian looks at the matter oppositely. He seeks first of all to bring men to the facts and then to enable them to see Jesus with their own spiritual eyes and feel him with their hearts, without interposing a definition between.—*We honor the faith of our fathers the most when we transcend it.*"

What nonsense is expressed in the three paragraphs above!

Once more we are asked to bow to "the modern theologian", of whom it is said "he seeks first of all to bring men to the facts". Can anyone tell us what superior competence these modern theologians have, to arrive at the "facts" in reference to the life of Jesus, which was not possessed by those whom Paul describes thus:

"He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

What would be thought of a lawyer, after a witness on the other side had sworn that he was an eye-witness of the events at issue before the Court; that he was present, near at hand, heard, saw, and perhaps felt, something of that which was at issue — what, I say, would be thought of a lawyer who should put a witness on the stand in opposition, who would testify, "I was not present when the events occurred, therefore I saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing. As a matter of fact, I had no knowledge of the case until many years after the occurrences reported; and I was not at the scene of the occurrence, but thousands of miles away. Notwithstanding, I am here to swear to the 'facts' of the case."

What would any Judge do with such utterly irrelevant evidence?

What if, for the sake of argument we were to set aside the principle of divine inspiration, and reduce the whole matter to the natural plane, by what principle recognizable by rational men, may it be assumed that the modern theologians know more about the "facts" of the life of Jesus than those who were His contemporaries, who saw Him in the flesh, and wrote about Him, while the events recorded were still fresh in their memories! Or even of those a generation later, who were at least nearer to the events recorded, than "the modern theologian" of our time? If we add to this reflection the authoritative principle of divine inspiration, surely it is evident that such "modern theologians" as Dr. Cross, are doing little better than blowing soap bubbles from a clay pipe!

p. 32—"It is easy, therefore, to perceive how a modern theologian feels when he is confronted with the demand that he say "Yes" or "No" to some accepted doctrine of Jesus Christ. He feels that the question implies a perversion of his aim as a thinker. He knows that for the multitudes whose burdens are already too heavy to be borne it tends to prostitute the gospel of an infinite love to the interest of a binding and enslaving law."

Here we are again in company with "a modern theologian", who says that to be asked to say "yes" or "no" to some accepted doctrine of Jesus Christ "implies a perversion of His aim as a thinker."

We are happy to say "Good-bye" to Professor Cross, and his alleged thinking. Why such men should ever be tolerated in a supposedly Christian institution we are completely at a loss to understand. And judged by their own writings, they are not thinkers, but mental meanderers, trying to find their way through the "smog" produced by the smoke from their own fable-manufacturing shops. "The modern thinker"! His vain, and virulent — when indeed, they are not vacuous — productions, will constitute a topsyturvy monument marking the place where theological sanity was buried.

NEWS FROM FRENCH CHURCHES

▲ NUMBER of personal letters and circulars from pastors in France have come to our desk in the last week and from them we cull the following items of interest concerning the progress of the work of the Gospel in that great, and yet needy, land.

Pastor Guedj in Paris

Pastor Emile Guedj, greatly beloved in Canada for his rich voice as a Gospel singer, writes as follows in a recent number of the circular of his spiritually active church at Colombes, a suburb of Paris.

"After twenty-three years absence, one of our former Sunday school scholars knocked at our door the other day. He is of Swedish origin, and years ago, his parents gave us charge of teaching him the truths of the Bible. To our great joy this lad of sixteen years, as he was then, responded to the Lord's invitation. He went, through severe spiritual struggles, but we had the privilege of kneeling with him in prayer when he accepted Christ as Saviour. Then his family returned to Sweden and we did not see him again. But the Good Shepherd watched over His sheep and we were deeply touched to see the emotion of this brother, now a pastor, accompanied by his wife, as he returned to the familiar places where he had heard the Good News and experienced the new birth.

"May God bless his household and convert still many

more of our Sunday school children. Take courage, Sunday school teachers!

"At the end of the old year a valiant team of well-organized workers, systematically distributed in the City of Colombes and its suburbs, a card setting forth the way of salvation and offering a New Testament to all who would request it. One brother climbed 102 staircases in a single day in order to cover his sector conscientiously. Two ladies and a husband and wife were recently baptized."

Bilingual Work in Alsace

Our first student-professor of French in Toronto Baptist Seminary is now a veteran pastor in his native Alsace, and from the circular sent out to the members of his church at Mulhouse, we note that among the blessings of the past year he numbers the return to France of our former student-professor Etienne Huser. We heartily agree in his estimate of this blessing. The building has been further improved and the people have kept up a remarkably fine rate of giving, thus enabling the church to meet all current building expenses over and above the ordinary expenditure, while paying off almost a half million francs on the building loans. (The exchange rate for francs is now in the neighbourhood of 1,000 francs for three dollars.) Best of all we note that five young people were baptized in the course of the year. The church is active in the work of tract distribution and in teaching the young in Sunday schools and summer camps. Preaching is carried on in two languages, namely, French and German. We learn from an authoritative source in Canada, that Brother Etienne Huser, who has already spent some time working with Dr. Dubarry in Nîmes is to return there for another post-graduate course in theology, homiletics, pastoral art, linguistics and other subjects in which Dr. Dubarry excels after a half a century as pastor of the same great church. We envy Mr. Huser his priceless opportunity!

A Swiss Graduate at Work

We learn from a news item in *Le Lien Fraternel* the monthly organ of our brethren of the French Bible Mission that the Church at Tramelan, Switzerland, was host to a rally of young people coming from other sister churches in Switzerland and France. Some 250 attended and during the sessions a young lady gave herself to Christ. The pastor of this church is Rev. W. H. Frey, another one of our student-professors of French in Toronto Baptist Seminary.

A Lighthouse in Northern France

The pastor of the church at Lille sent us this year, in accordance with a long standing custom, the motto he proposed to his people: "Resist!" In the letter he remarked that they were then celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the church. A fuller account is given in the monthly paper from which we take the following excerpts of the history of this faithful and fruitful work that holds forth the Word of Life in a great industrial centre near the Belgian border. The power of Rome is strong here and the currents of radical thought do not prepare the hearts of the people for the message of the Gospel, except in the negative fashion of leaving "a great aching void the world can never fill."

"A historian of Lille reports that even as long ago as 1535 there were in the region of that city evangelical Christians who preached the truth of the Gospel as we now do. As just as in our day there were many adversaries and some of these ancient believers sealed their testimony with their life's blood.

"In the year 1815, at the time of the battle of Waterloo, there were English soldiers stationed in these regions. Among them were some zealous Christians of Baptist convictions who did not miss the opportunity of giving their testimony in word and deed. Through their labours a group of believers was formed near here. The work was carried on for more than half a century and left its imprint on various towns and villages. In 1886 a pamphlet fell into the hands of one of the believers at Croix, a suburb of Lille, and seeing the importance of a church fellowship founded on the basis of New Testament doctrine, he gathered a group of fellow-believers who first met in the kitchen, later in a rented hall. Then in 1894 a church building was constructed. The first pastor was M. August Mafille, who held a responsible position in one of the great factories of the neighbourhood. He established the work on a solid foundation and has been succeeded by his son, the present pastor, M. Maurice Mafille, who these many years now has followed faithfully in his father's footsteps.

"The anniversary occasion was marked by the preaching of Pastor Jalaguier of Nîmes, the able assistant of Dr. Dubarry. There were also several pastors and friends from nearby churches."

Each one of the churches mentioned above has several branches or missions in the region surrounding them and thus the Gospel Light is spread far and wide. We commend these steadfast, believing brethren to the prayers of our people as we rejoice in the blessing that they have enjoyed in the past years.—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 First Quarter Lesson 6 February 8, 1953

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

THE SAVIOUR OF SAMARIA

Lesson Text: John 4:1-15.

Golden Text: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John 4:14.

I. The Circumstances: verses 1-8.

The problem of race prejudices is causing deep concern among the leaders of our day. Our Saviour came to this earth as the light of the world, and the radiance of His love was shed upon men of every race and condition. For this reason, His ministry in Samaria should serve as an example of the proper attitude of the Christian toward those of another race.

The Jews and the Samaritans had been at enmity for centuries, commencing with the time when jealousy existed between the tribes of Judah and Ephraim which led to the divisions into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, with Jerusalem and Samaria as their respective capitals. When the people of the northern kingdom were taken into captivity by the Assyrians, members of other idolatrous nations joined the Samaritans still in the land, with the result that the religion of the district was a mixture of Judaism and heathenism. When the Jews returned from captivity, the Samaritans, being refused permission to aid the Jews in the restoration of Jerusalem, mocked and hindered their rivals (Ezra 4).

Josephus the historian tells us that a brother of the Jewish High Priest, having married a Samaritan woman, and not submitting to the law which required that he put her away, joined the Samaritans and became a High Priest in a temple built for him on Mount Gerizim. Thereafter the Samaritans contended that Mount Gerizim was the true centre of worship, rather than Mount Zion (John 4:20).

The mutual mistrust between Jews and Samaritans was still strong in the first century. The two provinces of Judaea and Samaria, although administered separately, were under

the same Roman Governor. Our Lord gave instructions to the Twelve to avoid Samaritan territory in their evangelistic mission, lest racial prejudices should disrupt the work (Matt. 10:5).

It is significant, then, that the Lord Jesus Christ should at this time demonstrate in a practical way the truth that He came as the Saviour of the whole world (v. 42). The Samaritans, like the Jews, expected the Messiah to come (vv. 25, 29). Soon after John the Baptist had testified in their midst concerning Christ (John 3:23), our Saviour ministered personally in Samaria to the woman at the well, and through her to the whole district (vv. 39-45). Two later visits in love and mercy are recorded (Luke 9:51-56: 17:12-19), and the Samaritans were cited as examples of love toward one's neighbour (Luke 10:30-37). Revival blessing came to Samaria under Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:1-8, 25).

Notice the setting of this incident. Our Lord had commenced His public ministry in the southern province of Judaea (John 1), then had travelled north to Galilee, performing miracles at Cana and Capernaum (John 2:1-12). As the time of the Passover drew near, He came back to Jerusalem, cleansing the temple, and manifesting His glory in such a way that many professed to believe upon Him (John 2:13-25). Among those who were impressed by His miracles was Nicodemus, to whom our Lord spoke concerning the new birth (John 3:1-21). For a time John the Baptist ministered in the same vicinity as our Saviour, but misunderstanding and discussion arose among their respective followers (John 3:25, 26; 4:1). Then John was cast into prison (Luke 3:19, 20).

Our Lord did not desire that there should be rivalry and controversy over Him among the disciples of John, hence He departed from Judaea for the northern province of Galilee again, a distance of about three days' journey. The usual route from Jerusalem lay through the district of Samaria, although many travellers preferred to journey along the eastern shore of the Jordan through Perea. Older scholars will be interested in following these routes on a map. But the geographical element was not the chief consideration. Christ followed the Father's plan for His life, and that plan included the salvation of the woman of Samaria and many of her countrymen. May we, too, walk in the path marked out for us by the Master (Psa. 119:133).

Reaching Jacob's well outside the city of Sychar (Gen. 33:19; 48:22; Josh. 24:32), Christ sat down to rest. Weariness must not deter us from duty and service which the Lord requires. Touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15), Christ experienced weariness, and yet He took advantage of the brief rest from His journeying to bring help to a needy soul. He was ever "instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2).

The disciples had gone into the city, or they probably would have supplied Christ with the utensils for drawing water from the well, but, as He had none, He used this circumstance as the ground of His request for a drink. He gave the Samaritan the opportunity of showing a courtesy which might arouse her interest and kindly feeling. It is often a wise plan in witnessing to an individual to ask a favour of that one, and thus create a brotherly feeling which will help him to listen to our message (Gen. 24:14; Matt. 10:42).

II. The Conversation: verses 9-15.

That a Jew should ask her a favour was a surprise to the Samaritan woman, for ordinarily there would be no social intercourse between members of the rival races. Moreover, she was probably a social outcast and poor, since women of high standing and good reputation went to public fountains only in the evening, whereas this incident took place at noon, if we are to understand that John described the time in terms of Roman reckoning, as is most likely. There is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:35); the barriers of sex, class, creed, condition or nation do not hinder the Son of God.

The Samaritan hesitated to confer the favour, but had she known about God's gift to the world (John 3:16), and had she recognized God's Messiah (Luke 19:42), their positions would have been reversed, and in humility she would have been praying to Him to bestow upon her the boon of eternal life. Dimly she sensed that this One talking with her must be greater than He seemed, greater even than the patriarch Jacob.

The water from the well of Sychar was an appropriate starting-point for the message on eternal life. Our Lord

tactfully used the natural circumstances to bring the conversation around to the vital point (Compare Acts 8:30-35). Natural water is refreshing, purifying and necessary to human life, but it cannot permanently slake thirst. Eternal life through Christ is refreshing, purifying, quickening, and it satisfies the longing of the soul for God (John 6:35, 51). The powerful, life-giving flow never ceases, but it becomes a perennial spring (Rev. 7:16). The very life of God is poured into the hearts of those who love Him; His Spirit takes up abode with our spirits (1 Cor. 6:19), and as we yield to Him, indwells and infills us (John 7:37-39). Water is frequently mentioned in Scripture as a symbol of life (Ezek. 47:1, 9; Zech. 14:8; Rev. 22:1, 2).

The woman of Samaria expressed a desire for eternal life, and her prayer was the first step in her salvation. She realized her need. God will satisfy the desire of those who long for Him (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 5:6; Rev. 21:6; 22:17).

Firmly, yet kindly, the Lord pointed out the sin of the woman's life (vv. 16-19). Repentance is given only to those who are willing to confess and forsake their sins. This probing of the surgeon's lancet was painful, and the Samaritan attempted, as people under conviction often do, to deflect the point of the sharp instrument so as to induce the surgeon to keep away from the tender spot. She would gladly have carried on a harmless religious discussion with the Prophet on the rival claims of Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion as centres of worship, but the Saviour brought her back to the issue by explaining the true spiritual nature of worship. He then revealed Himself to her as the Messiah (vv. 20-26). She herself believed upon Him, then joyfully witnessed to her friends and compatriots, who also believed (vv. 27-30, 39-42).

This incident will provide many helpful lessons for the teacher in the important task of witnessing to an individual, so that the Holy Spirit may bring that one to conviction of sin and to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Teacher, Prophet, Saviour, and King. Notice also the steps of salvation, as illustrated in the experience of the Samaritan woman.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Feb. 2—The Saviour and True Worship	John 4:16-27.
Feb. 3—The Saviour's Meat	John 4:28-38.
Feb. 4—The Saviour's Power	John 4:39-45.
Feb. 5—The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:30-37.
Feb. 6—The Grateful Samaritan	Luke 17:12-19.
Feb. 7—The Unbelieving Samaritan	Luke 9:51-56.
Feb. 8—The Revival in Samaria	Acts 8:1-8, 25.

Vol. 17 First Quarter Lesson 7 February 15, 1953

JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON

Lesson Text: John 4:43-54.

Golden Text: "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way."—John 4:50.

I. Faith Tested: verses 43-50.

To one accustomed to judge by outward appearance only, the time and energy which our Saviour spent on dealing with a lone outcast woman of Samaria might seem either to have been wasted or unwisely spent. But with our Lord the value of one soul surpasses the material wealth of the universe (Matt. 16:26). Moreover, the salvation of the Samaritan woman proved profitable in another way, since by her testimony many of her fellow-countrymen were convinced that Christ was the Messiah, and they, too, believed upon Him (John 4:39).

After spending two days in the vicinity of Sychar, our Saviour departed north for Galilee, according to His intended purpose (verses 1-4). One would naturally suppose that in going to Galilee, He would again repair to Nazareth, where He had been brought up (Luke 2:51; 4:16), but He did not, since, as He Himself had said, "A Prophet hath no honour in his own country" (Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24). Instead of going to Nazareth, He journeyed down to Cana, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee.

The people of Nazareth would not have received Christ, but the inhabitants of Cana were ready to welcome Him (Luke 8:40). Some of them had witnessed His first miracle, which had been performed at Cana (John 2:1-11), and some had attended the Passover Feast in Jerusalem, where He had manifested His Deity in His words and works (John 2:13-23; 3:2).

It is true that not many noble, not many mighty are called (1 Cor. 1:26), and that when Christ was on the earth,

the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). On the other hand, the Scripture record contains the names of men and women in high positions of honour and responsibility who believed upon Christ (John 12:42); for example, Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50; 19:39), Joseph of Arimathaea (John 19:39), Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7) and Publius (Acts 28:7). This nobleman was perhaps a ruler, a courtier or one attached to the royal household (Luke 8:3; Acts 13:1). Doubtless He had heard of the miracles wrought by our Saviour.

When all is going well, prejudices may be allowed to control our actions, but in the time of crisis, the loving heart will stop at nothing. The nobleman applied directly and humbly to the lowly Nazarene, requesting healing for His Son. He thus acknowledged the greatness of the Christ. His faith was as yet imperfect, for he thought that the Divine Physician must go personally to the bedside of the sick one to effect a cure (Luke 7:2-9).

The first test to the nobleman's faith came when the Saviour uttered what seemed like a rebuke: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." For the moment, and for a purpose, the nobleman was classed with the many who required instant spectacular proof that Jesus was the Christ (Matt. 12:38; 16:1). A similar test was experienced by the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:25-30).

The second test to his faith came when the Master seemed to be indifferent to the seriousness of the nobleman's need. The nobleman perhaps thought to himself: "Why does the Master spend time in talking and discussing theological questions when my son lies at the point of death?" Openly he urged the Master to make haste. Similarly, our Lord did not immediately answer the call to the home of Lazarus (John 11:3-6). In the spiritual realm delays are not always denials, but the Lord may be giving us the opportunity to exercise faith and patience (Mark 5:35, 36).

The Lord knows the hearts of men; He knows those to whom He can safely commit Himself (John 2:24, 25). The nobleman met both tests bravely and well. When the Lord uttered the word of healing, the nobleman believed, without question, and without seeing any outward sign. He took the Lord at His word, which is the essence of faith. He then went his way, satisfied that his petition had been granted (Mark 11:24; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:14, 15). Faith is, not merely an attitude of heart, but it is also an action of the will. It is staking our all upon the sure word of our God.

II. Faith Triumphant: verses 51-54.

Just as faith springs from the conviction of the truth of the Lord's word, so assurance comes from obedience to that same word. We are told that as the lepers went away, acting upon the word of the Lord, they were cleansed (Luke 17:14). Fact, faith and feeling come in that order, whereas many would desire to feel saved before they really are saved. The departure of the nobleman was proof that he had trusted the simple word of the Saviour, but as he went, his servants brought confirmation of the good news which he already believed: his son was living, and also healed.

The nobleman's faith, at first very imperfect, had grown by reason of the tests successively and successfully encountered. His faith finally became triumphant when the great man found, by inquiry, that healing had taken place the very moment when the Saviour spoke the word of power.

With this concrete evidence before them that Jesus was the Christ, and hearing the testimony of the father, the whole household of the nobleman believed (Luke 19:9; Acts 2:39; 16:15, 34; 18:8). Such is the influence of believing faith on the part of parents over their households (2 Tim. 1:5).

This second miracle in Cana took place when the Lord Jesus had left Judaea for Galilee (John 4:3), whereas the first miracle performed there, changing the water into wine, had taken place as He was leaving Galilee for Judaea (v. 54; John 2:11-13).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Feb. 9—Faith Tested by Seeming Denial Mark 7:24-30.
 Feb. 10—Faith Tested by Seeming Delay Mark 5:22-24, 35-43.
 Feb. 11—Faith Tested by Seeming Indifference John 11:1-15.
 Feb. 12—Faith Tested by Sacrifice Gen. 22:1-14.
 Feb. 13—Faith Tested by Opposition Matt. 10:16-32.
 Feb. 14—Faith Tested by Tribulation Matt. 24:3-13.
 Feb. 15—Faith Triumphant 1 John 5:1-11.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Faith of our fathers, living still. Oh for a faith that will not shrink. At even, ere the sun was set. There is no love like the love of Jesus: Tell me the story of Jesus. The dear old story of a Saviour's love.

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