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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"In Remembrance of Me"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 1st, 1953

(Electrically Recorded)

"For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"And after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—1 Cor. 11:23-26.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We remember, O Lord, Thy saying in the days of Thy flesh, when one asked Thee, Show us the Father and it sufficeth us, and Thou didst reply, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. And this evening we think of God in terms of His self-disclosure in the Person of His only begotten Son: There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared. Thou hast come to us in One Who is the Lover of our souls. Thou hast told us that He came because God so loved the world. We bless Thee that though we have all sinned, and all have sinned so grievously against Thee and in Thy sight, yet Thou dost meet us in mercy and tender grace, and Thou hast made us to know that in spite of all our wickedness Thou hast not turned Thy face away from us. God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Were it not that the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, men would flee to the Father's arms. But Thou hast been slandered, and misrepresented, by the father of lies, and it is because men do not know Thee for what Thou art that they flee from Thee.

We thank Thee that so many of us here this evening have been sweetly constrained by the grace of Thy Spirit, and by many a providential event, to come to Thy feet. Thou hast brought us into Thy banqueting house, and Thy banner over us is love. O help us more and more profoundly to believe it, to believe the love that God has for us, and to see and measure, appraise and appreciate, that redeeming love as it is revealed in the death and the resurrection of Christ. How wondrously hast Thou wrought in order that we might be saved!

Now, O Lord, this evening we would dip again a little into Thy Word. We thank Thee for this bound volume of love letters, for these tender entreaties, these patient and gracious admonitions and expostulations. Thou art ever

dealing with us, and ever seeking those who are lost. Lord bring us into a closer fellowship with Thyself this evening. We would not write hard things against ourselves. We know that we have sinned; we know that we have been unfaithful in a thousand particulars; we know that we have forfeited the last right in ourselves to be where Thou art. Yet Thou hast provided us a merit which is not ours, a standing we could never have attained, a vesture that only grace could fashion. Thou hast given us the best robe, and shoes for our feet, a ring for our hand, a feast for our soul's satisfaction, and a Father's kiss of assured forgiveness. Lord our hearts would praise Thee for all Thy loving kindness and Thy truth.

We are to come this evening once again to this memorial feast, to recognize in it a little more clearly perhaps the boundlessness of the grace of God. O may there be no formal mechanical participation in this feast. May the cup be to us the communion of the blood of Christ, and may the bread be to us the communion of the body of Christ. Lord be present with us, and preside at the feast, as Thou didst at its institution. Perhaps there are many things on our minds that would distract our attention from that which should be central to our worship: there are cares, there are anxieties, there are perhaps forebodings of evils to come. There are those who are sick, of whom we think—so many things that belong to the ills to which this poor flesh is heir. Come to us and help us, that we may cast our burdens upon the Lord, all of them, and bear a song away, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

MANY many times, I know not how many, we have resorted to these verses, or their parallels in other Scriptures, for our instruction and inspiration. But we come again to this great ocean of truth. Very particu-

larly I remind you of what you already know, that this is a memorial feast, designed as a means of remembering. That is the emphatic word — "in remembrance of me".

Once again I would like to explain to you how indispensable to our peace and progress is our continuous remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not suppose that I need to tell very many in this house this evening that we do not regard these ordinances, the one which you have already witnessed, and that which we are later to observe, as sacraments. People speak of the "sacrament" of the Lord's Supper. A sacrament is a grace-conferring ceremony. It assumes that by one's participation in it, and in his reception of it, he receives grace. So our Romanist friends make baptism the sole and exclusive means of salvation. And others who are supposedly evangelical may thus regard baptism or the Lord's Supper, as though there were some particular merit acquired by its observance. In this place we do not so believe. We are not sacramentarians. We believe these ordinances confer no grace whatsoever, apart from the spiritual receptivity of the participant. We acquire no special merit by obeying any command of the Lord. At the very best we are unprofitable servants; notwithstanding, "in keeping of (his commandments) there is great reward." But that reward is a spiritual experience, and it comes to us because we delight in doing His will. I feel sure if you were to ask those who were baptized this evening if they received a blessing they would respond in the affirmative. Not that there is any magic in the water. What nonsense that is for those who believe that sprinkling of water is valid baptism — I do not at the moment argue that point, nor argue against it — to bring water from the Jordan, as though the waters of the Jordan were any better than the waters of Lake Ontario. All that implies a sacramentarianism that is alien to the spirit of the New Testament. No, no, we are to observe this feast spiritually, and its profitableness will depend wholly upon our competence to apprehend its spiritual value, and our ability to receive such grace as comes from a sincere obedience to the word and will of God.

Let me ask this question: Why should we remember Christ? He said, "In remembrance of me." It is true this ordinance was representative of His death, as is also the ordinance of baptism. But this ordinance, of which I speak particularly, is a means to an end. It is designed to perpetuate in our minds the remembrance of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The longer I live, and the longer I try to minister the Word of God, the more deeply do I feel the necessity of getting past all religious externals, even past all formulated creeds, however accurately they may express the truth — getting past these ordinances to the Person of Jesus Christ. Salvation is in Him, not the church; not in what you believe, but in Whom you believe. You may believe in an intellectual fashion a great deal about certain persons without any personal acquaintance with them. But the important thing for us as believers is that we should learn somehow, by the ministry of the Divine Spirit, to keep the Lord Jesus in continuous remembrance. I did not say "continual", I said "continuous", never, never forgetting Him.

I.

First, we must remember FOR OUR OWN SAKE. It is well that we should remember all good people, and like the apostle, give thanks at the remembrance of many of them. What a heritage we have

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

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in the recollection of our fellowships with the people of God! What a foretaste of Heaven it has been. Nor do I say a word that would diminish in your mind the importance of these human fellowships. What refreshing and inspiring experiences we have had in the exercise of divine worship, in our meditation upon the Word of God, the great principles, and the precepts, and the promises of God's holy Word! O how delectable to be shut up to these considerations. Yet I must ever remind you that in our worship, that in our study, that in our prayers, that in whatsoever good works we are permitted to do, we shall derive profit therefrom only as they are related to Jesus Christ. I wonder how many of us really love Him. I was inspired this morning as I met that dear young girl who comes to us from British Guiana. She was a Romanist, and she was brought to a knowledge of Christ through the instrumentality of some of our people. I met her back here after the service, and she said, evidently with joyful anticipation: "I'm going to be baptized tonight." She said, "Not because I am afraid of Him, but because now with all my heart I love Him, and I want to do that which is pleasing to Him." That is the way to obey His commandments — to submit to that ordinance, and to this, and to all other divine requirements, whatever they may be: "If ye love me (ye will) keep my commandments."

Our Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, said with infinite tenderness to His disciples, "Do not forget me; keep me always in mind, whatever you do. And I am leaving you an ordinance which will help you to remember." It may seem almost absurd, — the suggestion that flashes into my mind. A wife says to her husband who is going down town, "I wonder if you would do so and so for me?" He replies, "Gladly, my dear, if I can remember it." "Will you let me tie something on your finger so that you will not forget it?" Did you ever hear that? Later he looks at it, and remembers it is a promise he has made to someone he loves, and he says,

"I must go and do that." The Lord Jesus said, "I want you to remember me, and I am going to give you an ordinance that you may frequently observe, that will help you just to keep me always in mind."

Let me say to all believers here, that that is the only true criterion of spiritual development. By all means let us know the Word of God better. I have known some people who were walking Biblical textbooks, but who were as devoid of spiritual feeling as could be: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Make sure in the study of the Scripture that you always find your way to Christ. And in our prayers. I wonder how we pray. I am afraid sometimes it is like filling out a printed slip from some departmental store, sending in an order for this and that and the other thing, with no more interest in the great Storekeeper than you have in the President of one of these departmental stores — just a place to go to get something. No, no, that is not how to pray. We pray in His Name; we are identified with Him; we are merged in Him. Let me tell you, God will never hear *your* prayer — He never has. He will never hear *my* prayer — He never has. Somebody says, "I am a great believer in prayer." I am not. To me it is the greatest wonder in the world that any one of my prayers should ever get through to God. But I know how it happened. Perhaps I have told you before, but I think it was in Hamilton many years ago, that I was going along the street, and I saw a little girl trying to post a letter, trying to put it in the pillar box. She got up on her tip-toes, but she could not reach. Then she took one hand to try and lift the lid, and jumped, but she could not reach it. She put her hands down almost in despair, she looked up and down, and saw me coming. She was only a little girl, and I suppose I looked to her as though I could reach almost anything. She came running up to me, and holding up her letter, said, "Please sir would you post my letter for me? I cannot reach." I took her back to the post box — I saw it was duly stamped — and I said, "Now I will just lift you up, then you can post it." So I lifted her up, and she put it in the box. When we come to the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, stand on tip-toes as we may, we cannot reach. But He stoops and lifts us up. That is what it is to pray in His Name. He stamps it with His approval, and it goes before the Father having about it a sweet savor of Christ. What I am trying to impress upon you is the importance of remembering the Person of Christ. When you come to church here you are not indifferent to your minister, and to his associate, and Mr. Whitcombe. We all appreciate your interest, and your affection, but you must not come here to hear us. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." You may omit the rest that some people add — "and that to bless." You do not need that: it is not so written. *You need Him, that is all.*

And so in all our activities we must keep the Lord always before us. "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Many years ago a minister, who was older than I, told me of a certain great Canadian preacher whom he had known quite intimately, who was a great saint. His name was Alexander Grant. My friend said that they were attending a Convention, or something of the sort, and they were billeted together, and shared the same room. They talked, and talked, and talked, as ministers will when they get together. Then at last one or the other said, "Well I suppose it is about time we were try-

ing to get to sleep, to be ready for the morning." So they bade each other "Good night," and turned over to go to sleep. This friend said, "I lay awake for a good long time, but I thought my companion had gone to sleep. He was perfectly quiet, and very still. After perhaps an hour," he said, "Grant said, 'Well, good night, Lord Jesus, we have had a lovely time,' and in a moment he was sleeping like a little child." How the children come to father and mother before they go to bed for their good night kiss! What is your prayer at night? — just a mechanical prayer, or is it an hour of real communion? And can you say at the end, "Good night, Lord Jesus, we have had a lovely time"? That is what it is to be a Christian — to know Christ, and to be on terms of personal intimacy with Him. He said, "Remember me." "This do in remembrance of me." And if you and I are to be the Christians we ought to be that will be the great desideratum, the *sine qua non* of peace and power and progress — a daily and hourly fellowship moment by moment with Jesus Christ. He is not an absentee Saviour; He is here. We must remember Him, therefore, for our own sake.

II.

Then I think WE SHOULD REMEMBER HIM FOR HIS SAKE. I fear we do not sufficiently dwell upon those Scriptures which assure us that the Lord's portion is in His people. Haven't you wondered when you have seen some mothers with fretful children, and you have said, "How can they endure it day and night?" Mother takes the child in her arms and soothes it, and it goes off to sleep, and wakes again just to cry. You could not do it. Nobody but mother could do that. Solomon was wise, you remember, when he was called upon to make that decision, and he said, "Bring me a sword." "No, no, said the one woman; let her have it." "Give that child to that woman; she is the true mother." Has it occurred to you that the Lord Jesus takes a special pleasure in you? Do you like to hear of people who like you? Why a man called me the other day—he is a lawyer, and a very prominent lawyer, too. He said, "You know I read your paper, and I enjoy it." And he said, "I tell my friends that Dr. Shields is not the narrow fanatic they think he is, that he is one of the broadest and most liberal-minded men of my acquaintance." I said, "Thank you for that exceptional estimate." And, believe it or not, though I had never seen him I was rather pleased. Yesterday was a muddy day, and I decided it was no use to get my car washed. Today is a cold day, and the sun is bright. I would like it a little warmer, but after all I thought I had so much mud yesterday I could put up with the sunshine and cold. And when you have had thirty or forty years of slander your heart warms a little if somebody has some kind thing to say about you. I think you are even pleased if the Pastor says some kind thing about you, are you not? I have heard of many who were. Ah, but would you not like to be sure that the Lord Jesus has some kind thing to say about you? Would you not like to be sure every hour of the day — "I know Somebody Who never forgets me; I know Somebody Who never withdraws His love from me; I know Someone Who always finds delight in the remembrance of me." Then you look in the glass and say, "Is that the person?" I do not understand it, but it is true. He it is who said, "I do love you; I do remember you. But will you be a little reciprocal? Will you remember me, and keep me in mind also?" All of us like to be remembered, even if it

is only with a Christmas card. There is somebody you have not seen for twenty-five years, or a long time, and you get a card, and you say, "They actually remember me after all that time. Wasn't that nice?" How happy you are to be remembered.

Now the Lord Jesus, may I reverently say, is happy to be remembered. He likes to know that He is remembered. Some people test my memory sometimes. I do not think it is particularly kind, to tell you the truth. Someone says, "How are you? You don't remember me?" As though that were a crime. They never stop to think whether there is anything about them to remember or not. But that is the offence — "You do not remember me." But if you can, how pleased they are.

I remember a story of Mr. Spurgeon. A man was introduced to him one Sunday evening as Mr. Partridge. Mr. Spurgeon shook hands with him, and greeted him cordially, and went to his pulpit. It was all of a year after that that this man visited the Tabernacle again, and when he met Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Spurgeon said, "How are you Mr. Partridge?" "Not quite right Mr. Spurgeon," he said, "not Partridge, but Partridge." Mr. Spurgeon replied, "I am sorry; I will not make game of you again." O yes, "The Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written." He loves to be remembered.

I am sure that as often as we meet here it is not the Pastor, but the Lord of this house, Who presides. And I think He looks around to see who are here. "What! So and So absent. Have they forgotten Me, they are not here tonight?" If we really believed the love God has for us, and how he loves to be remembered by us, I think we would never let an opportunity pass of being where He is.

Somewhere, I am not sure where, but I rather think it is in one of Dickens' works, I read a story of someone who went into a cemetery, and noted some of the graves. He saw the old sexton there, and he said, "Do the people who lay their loved ones here come often afterwards to the grave?" Said the sexton, "Sometimes right after the funeral almost every day, and then for a while perhaps every week, and then every month, and then unless we cut them the weeds grow up. They have other interests, and they have forgotten." I knew a man, a great man of God he was, a great preacher of the gospel, and a great lover of the Lord. He had just one child, one daughter. He and his wife sacrificed everything that they might have a little to leave behind. He died, and not so very long afterwards his wife followed him to the grave. But after her husband's death she had a modest stone erected over his grave, and when she died her name was added to his upon that stone. It is not very far from my plot in the cemetery, which I visit often, and whenever I am there I always drive around and stop opposite that tombstone, and think of the man of God I used to know. But there is never a flower there, and never any evidence of care or remembrance. Father and mother gave her everything, but they hadn't been long gone before they were forgotten. I suppose that is human nature. But Jesus said, "Do not put me in the category of those whom you have forgotten." "This do in remembrance of me."

I wish when you study the Word of God you would give thought to this principle, to see how often the Word of God suggests that Heaven has the profoundest interest in God's children. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "If ye then,

being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" I remind you that He loves us, and He wants us to love Him. And He especially asks us to remember Him in this feast. I am glad that nobody knows where the grave of Jesus was. I know they speak of the Holy Sepulchre, but nobody knows. Our Roman Catholic friends talk about the wood of the cross, but there is none. He left us no such relics as that:

"Around a table, not a tomb,
He willed our gathering-place should be.
When going to prepare our home,
Our Saviour said, 'Remember Me.'"

Absalom said in his lifetime, the beautiful Absalom you remember, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." And so he piled a heap of stones, and it is called "Absalom's Pillar", the Scripture says, to this day. I knew a certain prominent religious leader — I never was very much impressed by him, and I was not surprised when somebody confidentially told me of one item in his will that was never published — he left five thousand dollars in his will for the erection of a monument over his grave in the cemetery. Well if you have nothing else for which to be remembered you had better get a monument. But I like this better. "This do in remembrance of me."

"Of no fond relics, sadly dear,
O Master! are Thine own possessed:
The crown of thorns, the cross, the spear,
The purple robe, the seamless vest.

"Nay, relics are for those who mourn
The memory of an absent friend;
Not absent Thou, nor we forlorn:—
'With you each day until the end.'"

III.

But I must hasten, for I have another word I must say to you. There is a further reason why we should remember Him, and why we should remember Him specifically after this manner. He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE DO SHEW (OR PROCLAIM) THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME." My dear friends, we do not need any other gospel, do we? We must go on proclaiming the Lord's death. I become a bit weary of reading in reports of certain religious gatherings of the appointments of boards and committees, and all the setting up of a great ecclesiastical machine of some sort. To do what? To do what only the Spirit of God can do — make new creatures in Christ Jesus. You cannot make them by machinery. They are not turned out on the assembly line. I will tell you how they are made, — "we do (proclaim) the Lord's death." That is all. That is our business. That is the central truth of Divine revelation; it is all-encompassing. He, the God-man, is the Centre of this Temple of Truth, we call the Bible; and the centre of all that He is and was and did was His death. You saw it in the baptism this evening, and it is here in this ordinance. You may forget other things perhaps, but never forget that Jesus died for you. Never forget that we live by His death. And "as often as (we) eat this bread, and drink this cup, (we proclaim) the Lord's death."

"Oh thou, my soul, forget no more
The Friend Who all thy sorrows bore;
Let every idol be forgot,
But, O my soul, forget Him not!"

How long? Until they have time to revise and revamp and rewrite the gospel, and even publish a new version of the Scripture? I have not said much about it, I think I shall when I have had time thoroughly to examine it. The Apostle to the Hebrews quotes the forty-fifth psalm in support of the thesis that Jesus is God thus; "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." But this pitiful Revised Version says, "Thy divine Throne endures for ever and ever." Do we need such amendments? A High School teacher came to me a year or so ago and said, "I would like to have your help." I said, "What for?" She said, "I would like to re-write the Bible, especially the New Testament, so that children can understand it." I said, "I think you will discover that the Spirit of God knows how to make Himself known to a little child better than you do." What nonsense! "Ye do (proclaim) the Lord's death," that central eternal fact of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. How long? "Till he come." Till the white horse and his Rider shall come down the skies, and all creation shall be heard exclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Let us abide then by the gospel.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none.

"The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat:
Its truths upon the nations rise;
They rise, but never set.

"Let everlasting thanks be Thine
For such a bright display
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

"My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of Him I love,
Till glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above."

SINGLENESS OF AIM

That eminent ornithologist, M. Audubon, who produced accurate drawings and descriptions of all the birds of the American Continent, made the perfection of that work the one object of his life. In order to achieve this he had to earn his own living by painting portraits, and other labours; he had to traverse frozen seas, forests, canebrakes, jungles, prairies, mountains, swollen rivers, and pestilential bogs. He exposed himself to perils of every sort, and underwent hardships of every kind. Now, whatever Audubon was doing, he was fighting his way towards his one object, the production of his history of American birds. Whether he was painting a lady's portrait, paddling a canoe, shooting a racoon, or felling a tree, his one drift was a bird-book. He had said to himself, "I mean to carve my name amongst the naturalists as having produced a complete ornithological work for America," and this resolution ate him up, and subdued his whole life. He accomplished his work because he gave himself wholly to it. This is the way in which the Christian man should make this one thing, "That I may finish my course with joy, that I may deliver my testimony for Christ, that I may glorify God whether I live or die."

—C. H. SPURGEON

"FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto

Sunday Morning, February 1st, 1953

(Electrically Recorded)

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."—Galatians 3:27.

I FREQUENTLY have inquiries, very often from persons whom I do not know, as to what they shall do to be saved. No more important question could engage the thought of men than to know how to be saved, and what salvation really is, and what it really does.

Need I tell you we are not saved by any external ordinance, we are not saved by baptism, nor by the observance of the Lord's Supper, though there are not wanting people who believe both these things. Salvation is a spiritual experience. As we came to the pulpit this morning you were singing the hymn, "Ye Must Be Born Again;" and it is forever true that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Therefore we must be born from above. Christ must be formed in us, the hope of glory.

I.

HOW THEN IS SALVATION RECEIVED? The Scripture teaches that *salvation consists in the reception of Christ*: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . . which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We are begotten by the word of Truth, by the Holy Ghost. A new life is implanted within. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." He is made a new creature just as man was created in the beginning, when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." So then no ordinance, no church, no preacher, no kind of human influence or persuasion, can avail to make one pass from death unto life. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." And whenever and wherever a soul passes from death to life, a miracle has been wrought — the miracle of the virgin birth, the miracle of the resurrection. These have been repeated in the experience of one subject to the gracious power of the Holy Ghost.

Now I want to make that very plain, that *first of all we must receive Christ, we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we must accept Him, appraise Him, estimate Him, at His own valuation*. We must receive Him as One Who comes to do exactly what He said He had come to do. He came to give life. That is the question for every one of us — Have we really received Jesus Christ?

II.

Then if we have, **MANY OF US HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED, AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN BAPTIZED, WHO HAVE BELIEVED ON THE LORD JESUS, OUGHT TO BE**. In New Testament times that stood on the very threshold of Christian experience. It followed always, without any exception, as a matter of course. Jesus commanded His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

My question this morning is, having received Christ, and having, as I hope, been baptized into Christ, or if we have not, desiring to be baptized into Christ, what follows? *What does it mean to be a baptized believer?* "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Baptism is a divinely ordered method of confession. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." And all through the New Testament that order was observed. We are to confess Christ in His way. That is what baptism means. It means a confession of our union with Jesus Christ. I have often put it in this simple fashion. The person baptized confesses, "I recognize in the death of Jesus Christ my death; I was crucified with Him. He bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and when He died I died in Him." But being baptized means more than that. It means that *we have been buried with Him*. We have said Good-bye to the old life. "We are buried with him by baptism into death." We are henceforth to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our Lord speaks very explicitly about the duty of confessing Him. He says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," which does not mean I believe only that in the day of judgment He will confess us before the Father. It means that even now, the moment, having received Him, we here confess Him before men, at that same time He confesses us before the Father and His holy angels. That is what He said about repentance you remember: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God — not there shall be, but there is always — over one sinner that repenteth." And similarly there is joy in the presence of the angels of God when our Lord Jesus identifies Himself with us, and confesses us before the Father. "He is not ashamed," the Scripture says, "to call (us) brethren." How strange, how utterly foolish, that any man should ever, under any circumstances whatsoever, be ashamed to acknowledge Christ! "He is not ashamed to call (us) brethren." And I believe that when we are baptized God does then hear the confession of His Son in our behalf.

I have often said to you I recall my own baptism. It was the first experience of spiritual joy I had. I did not see heaven open, and I did not hear a voice from heaven, but I had the assurance at that moment that God, in the infinitude of His grace, had made it possible for this poor sinner to do one thing with which He was well pleased. That act of obedience brought me "the answer of a good conscience toward God." Oh, there is no joy like that, to have the overwhelming assurance that we have been brought into divine favour, and that now we are one with God. What a blessed thing it is to know that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. So as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have made confession of Him, and He has confessed us before God.

III.

But it is more than that too; it is all that in respect to Heaven, and the things of the spiritual world. **BUT IN OUR BAPTISM BEFORE MEN WE IDENTIFY OURSELVES AS BEING CHRIST'S MEN AND CHRIST'S WOMEN.** The soldier enlists in the army, and he receives his shilling, or whatever it is, a token of his enlistment. But you meet him on the street and you do not know him from any other civilian. But presently he puts on his uniform,

and he identifies himself as a soldier of the Queen. Now "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." We have put on the uniform. We have said to the world, "I am identified with Christ. I accept all the responsibilities of that position. I am Christ's representative; I am His agent; I am here to do His will. Henceforth I shall not complain if you expect from me such conduct as is worthy of a disciple of Jesus Christ." That is what it means to put on Christ — to be identified with Him, to wear His livery.

The man who comes to read your gas meter or your electric meter wears a uniform. What for? Just that you may recognize him as identified with the company to which you owe an obligation. He comes to write down your obligation, and the name of his company is upon his hat. A delivery man comes to the door, and you do not know who he is, but he wears a uniform, signifying that he comes from such a store, or such a company. So, my dear friends, we are identified by our baptism with Jesus Christ. We represent Him. Some of my ministerial brethren wear what they call a Roman collar, a clerical collar. I have no objection to it; let anyone wear it, and a robe besides if he wants to, if that is necessary to identify him. But I cannot help believing that a minister of Christ ought to be such a man that he will be identified without any distinctive garb at all. His character, his conduct, his spirit, his whole demeanor, ought to mark him out as being Christ's man. And that should be equally true of every believer.

I remember having an amusing experience when my wife and I, in company with Dr. McCaul, were motoring down a little distance in the Southland. We went to a Motel to find accommodation, and a woman came out of the office, and as she looked at us she said, "You are two clergymen, aren't you?" I said, "What makes you think that?" She said, "My daughter looked out of the office window, and she said, 'Here come two preachers.'" I said, "We wear no distinctive garb. What makes you think so?" "I do not know," she said, "just instinct I guess. But we knew you were." There was not much in that, because it was just an impression before ever we had spoken. But I should be sorry to company with anyone for days together and for them to fail to recognize that I was a Christian, or a minister of Christ. There would be something sadly wrong with that.

There was a man I knew well. When I came to this church he put both arms around me, as though I was the only thing alive. But after a while he became restive under the ministry, and he left and went somewhere else. He became in due course a deacon of a certain church. A certain man went camping with him and some others, and this man told me this himself. This other man was a doctor, and he said to this former Jarvis Street member, who felt so uncomfortable here: "So and So, are you a Christian?" "Why," he said, "I am a Deacon of such a church." He said, "That is not my question; I know that. But I am asking you, are you a Christian?" He said, "What makes you ask that?" He said, "Because I have lived with you for two weeks, and I have not seen one thing about you to suggest that you are a Christian." Ah, my dear friends, that ought to be impossible to any of us, "for as many of (us) as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And we should have put Him on in such a way as to make it impossible that He should be disguised. Have you put on Christ? Are you marked everywhere as Christ's men, or Christ's women?

There is another thing. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," means *they have advertised their separation unto Christ from the world*. We are dead to the world by the body of Christ. If you had a very dear friend for whom you had the highest possible respect, and if that friend was murdered, and if it were possible for his murderers to escape custody, and still to move among their fellows, knowing that his blood was upon them could you keep company with the murderers of your friend? Can you keep company with the world that crucified your Saviour, and would crucify Him again, who do in fact "crucify . . . the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame"? Could you keep company with those who deny His Name? We are dead to sin by the body of Christ. The cross and His empty grave stand between us and the old life. Buried with him, we are risen — what for? To walk in newness of life, entirely separated. Nothing should ever characterize you anywhere or at any time at work or at play that is unworthy of a man or woman who is absolutely divorced from the world and shut up to Jesus Christ.

You say, "That is a narrow conception of Christ." Yes, I expect it is. A woman has many friends; she is free to go where she likes. Then at last she accepts the proposal of one man, that they shall no longer be twain but one. Their interests are identical. You talk to her after that: "Could you come to so and so?" Perhaps sometimes she may, but if you want to be sure she will come you say, "Could you and your husband come and see us?" You had better invite him too, for if you invite her alone very often she will say, "You know I cannot very well go just where fancy takes me now; I prefer to be where my husband is. I shall have to talk to him about it, and if it suits his convenience and his pleasure we could come together." You say, "O you live that narrow life; you are shut up to your husband's company?" She says, "That is what my marriage vows meant; I am shut up to one man. I live with him and for him, as he lives with me and for me. We are inseparable." Do you call that a narrow life? It is a perfectly normal life.

My dear friends, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are married to Him, and you have no right to have any interest that is alien to His interests, to go anywhere that He will not go, nor where He is not invited, or to do anything that He will not do. You have put on Christ.

I have quoted my good friend Dr. Philpott in a very simple observation, and I quote him again to the same effect. One Sunday morning when I was indisposed I heard him over the radio, and he was urging upon young people the necessity of being wholly given up to Christ. He assumed somebody's saying, "But Dr. Philpott, if I do that I shall have to give up all my friends." "O no, you will not," he said, "you let all the world know that you belong to Christ and the world will give you up." And so it will.

When I became Pastor of this church within about two or three months they had put me on every Interdenominational Committee in town. I used to get postcards notifying me of Committee meetings, sometimes a sheaf of them in a week. I said to my associate at that time, "If I attended these meetings I should have no time to do anything else." I know some preachers who do. A ministerial friend, speaking of another minister, said, "He is committing his way to Heaven. He is so busy attending to all these things that he hasn't time for his own work." I knew a good woman — I had been her guest.

Her husband was a very fine sort of human cipher, and she was the head of the house. But every time I met her she told me of her having been elected to another board. She was on this board and on the other board, and on this committee and the other committee, and she was appointed to pour tea, and to do this and that and the other. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! That was her life, and she was as proud of her supposed distinctions as any peacock of its tail. She was committing her way to Heaven, professing to be a Christian.

I said I belonged to all the boards and all the committees. They said, "We will have to have the Pastor of Jarvis Street." But I found it necessary to take my stand for the Bible, and I did not need to resign from the Boards. I have not had an invitation to a ministerial association for more than thirty years. They do not invite me. Do you think I am offended? No, I am highly complimented. Do you know why? They say, "What is the use; he would not come." Do you know why I would not go? Because I found that when I went I had either to fight, or else leave the company with a guilty conscience, for having been silent when the Deity of my Lord, or His veracity, and infallibility were denied. Too often time was spent tearing my Lord's Book to pieces, or dishonouring His Name. At last I said, "I cannot be with them."

My dear friends, if you go without the camp with Jesus Christ, the world will cross you off its calling list. They will not send you any invitations, and you will be all the happier. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." They will say, "He is a fanatic; he is religious seven days of the week." So be it. God grant that it may be so. "He is very narrow." Yes, just as narrow as this great Book. "He is intolerant." Of course he is; he is intolerant of anything that impugns the authority of his Lord, or dishonours His Name. We will have none of it. The apostle Paul was hail fellow well met, you know. He belonged to the intelligentsia, a great scholar, and a great religious leader, until he met Christ and thereafter "straightway preached Christ in the synagogue that He is the Son of God." When he said that, they said, "We have done with him." Be loyal to Christ, and the world will have nothing to do with you except to persecute you.

I wonder if any of you young ladies find difficulties sometimes in the office? I will tell you how to avoid

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the difficulty. Put the flag to the top of the mast before the crisis comes. Let everybody know that you have put on Christ, no matter what they call you. Then you will find them over in the corner whispering. "Let's see, whom shall we invite?" They are going to have a party, or they are going to have a dance. They will say, "It is no use to invite her; she wouldn't come." Ah, may you deserve that compliment! Be so definitely and distinctly marked as belonging to Christ that it will be impossible that anybody should mistake you for anything but a sincere Christian. Then you will be invited only where Christians are welcome.

A certificate of membership in a Baptist church ought to be tantamount to a certificate of one's spiritual character. I rejoice to bear this testimony. I have recom-

mended people to places of employment before now, and they ask, "The person I speak of is a member of your church? Well send him along." Why? We may be narrow, we may be bigoted, but when a responsible organization wants somebody of conscience, who will bear responsibility, they will go somewhere where people have been so taught, and where they so profess.

Oh, that God may help us increasingly as a church, and as individual members, to give an unmistakable and invariable testimony to our supreme and absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us pray.

We pray Thee, O Lord, to forgive our sins. O make us to be better men and women, more Christlike in all the relationships of life. May we all live without the camp, and there we shall live with Thee, and that will be Heaven below. Grant us Thy blessing now, for Jesús' sake, Amen.

THE GREAT CONTENTION

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

By Dr. T. T. Shields

SOME of my readers may wonder that I should have troubled to show the teaching of Professor George Burman Foster, who left McMaster University in 1895, and Professor George Cross, who left McMaster in 1910. They may say, "What has the teaching of men so long since removed from McMaster University to do with the affairs of our day?"

Such a question would reveal a failure to recognize some of the fixed principles of history. It was Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, who introduced idolatry to Israel by setting up golden calves, the one at Dan, and the other at Bethel. And it was some centuries later that the full effect of that introduction of idolatry registered itself in the life of Israel, so that the prophet Hosea, viewing the moral and spiritual, and, indeed, national bankruptcy which that idolatry had produced, exclaimed, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off."

Our Lord also laid down a certain principle, when He said: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this."

No one knew the tares had been sown until "when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also."

It is thus false teaching perpetuates itself in succeeding generations, and poisons each generation at the root. It may be that Professors Cross and Parsons imbibed somewhat of the heresies of Professor G. B. Foster, for both were students at McMaster University. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation; and that is equally true academically and educationally. We do not know how Frank H. Sanderson was turned aside from the faith: He, too, may have been a direct or indirect product of McMaster

University. But this we know: somebody poisoned the educational springs. Of necessity we shall have to refer to this principle of the long result of departure from the truth.

In our issue of December 25th, 1952, we touched upon the appointment of Rev. I. G. Mathews to the Chair of Hebrew, and the protest of Dr. Elmore Harris against his appointment. In our issues of December 11th, and December 18th, 1952, we dealt with the Bloor Street Convention of 1910; when a Statement of Faith by the theological professors of McMaster University was approved by the Convention, and which included the signature of Prof. I. G. Mathews. For nine years thereafter Prof. Mathews carried on. He was like all the other Modernist professors: he assumed an attitude of superiority over Evangelical orthodoxy, and of utter contempt for all who believed the Book.

Anyone at all familiar with the social trends of college life knows that that sort of thing is just as deadly as false teaching. We have before us the case of two young ladies, one the daughter of a China Inland missionary, who came from England to attend McMaster University, and the other, a student in the University of Edmonton. The lady from McMaster University frankly told us that she was not strong enough to withstand the social pressure, the ridicule, and contumely, that was heaped upon everybody who believed the Bible. The Edmonton young lady met us at the close of a lecture in Edmonton, saying she was writing to her mother that night, to tell her that she had returned to her mother's God. I asked her to tell me what had influenced her in turning her away from the truth. She said it was not the teaching of the professors, though much of that was erroneous enough: but it had been the social pressure of her fellow students that treated Christian orthodoxy with contempt. Ridicule is one of the favourite weapons of Modernists; for what young man or young woman, going to university, does not desire, if possible, to keep step "with the Joneses"? Multitudes of students have been laughed out of their faith in this way; and not a few ministers have departed from the faith, not from any

discovery or conviction of its falsity, but simply because they could not bear to be spoken of as being "old-fashioned" and "narrow".

Dr. Mathews continued on the theological faculty of McMaster University nine years after the Bloor Street Convention; and in all that time he disseminated the poison of his unbelief among his students. During those nine years several classes were graduated from McMaster University, not as ministers, but as candidates for the various professions, law, medicine, and even finance; and in the University they were brought up on the Mathews brand of unbelief. Many of them were scattered far and wide, but many of them were members of Toronto Baptist churches, and many of them, as we learned from experience, were utterly destitute of any spiritual life. Their supreme loyalty was not to Christ: their religious profession was merely a nominal thing. The highest allegiance they knew was to McMaster University. These men would never take the field and contend for an issue, or against it. They were obsequious satraps, and McMaster was their liege lord. They did not bother to inquire respecting any issue — their philosophy was, McMaster, right or wrong.

Thus the nine years of Professor Mathews produced a very considerable number of McMaster graduates who were utterly devoid of spiritual life, or spiritual perception, and they were ready to go to war at McMaster's bidding; and to war they went. I speak from personal knowledge. We had a good number of them in the membership of Jarvis Street Church, and I found they had no spiritual interest whatever, and were incapable of any spiritual endeavour. What work they did, and they did a little, was for an institution — "Dear old Jarvis Street!" but nothing for Christ, or His gospel.

I shall not weary my readers with extensive quotations from Professor Mathews. When his lectures were reported in 1910, the accuracy of the reports was denied. But since that time our adversary has written a book. It is not particularly new. It was published four years after his leaving McMaster University. It might almost be a "tape recording" of the sayings of all the other professional unbelievers.

We must frankly confess that in our view the book is devoid of any real merit, and we make that appraisal, we are sure, without prejudice, and not because we so completely disagree with what is written therein.

We make these quotations from *Old Testament Life and Literature*, by I. G. Mathews, Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis, Crozer Theological Seminary.

One Sinner Destroyeth Much Good

During the period of nineteen hundred and ten to nineteen hundred and nineteen, there were those who said, "Why make such trouble over one professor? Granted that Professor Mathews is not sound, surely there are enough of the other sort to counteract his influence? What about Doctors Farmer, and Keirstead, Professor P. S. Campbell, and others? These are all sound men, and surely their presence, and teaching, will neutralize the influence of Professor Mathews sufficiently to render him almost harmless?"

That may, to the unthinking, sound plausible. But it does not take many matches to destroy a great building. A tiny mouse nibbling at a match's head, may be sufficient. But what saith the Scripture? There is a significant passage in Haggai, chapter two, verses eleven to thirteen: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ask now the

priests concerning the law, saying, if one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean." The principle there enunciated is that one ceremonially unclean may transmit his uncleanness by contact. But on the other hand, one ceremonially clean has no power to communicate his ceremonial cleanness to another. It is far easier to transmit evil than it is to communicate good. If there be but one bruised and rotting apple in a barrel, the sound apples will not make the rotten one sound. But the rotting apple will corrupt the whole barrel. Thus "one sinner destroyeth much good." D. L. Moody is reported to have said that a lie can travel around the world while truth is getting its boots on. Untruth, error, evil, are indigenous to this sinful world. Wherever they go they are helped by their own kind. One bad boy in a school may corrupt the whole school. One heterodox professor, though he be in every respect inferior to a half dozen other professors, who are Evangelically sound, yet the error of that man will outweigh the influence of all the others.

So was it in McMaster University. Arts students were required to take some Bible study, a smattering of it, and I suppose came under the influence of Professor Mathews. And such an one would find it much easier to confirm students in their unbelief, than all the others together would find it in turning students from error to truth and faith. The evil effected by the false teaching of Professor Mathews cannot possibly be estimated.

But let us look at Professor Mathews' teaching in quotations from his own book:

On page twenty-six he says:

"Moses may have written a decalogue, or may even have gone beyond that, but the wilderness experience was neither in its needs nor its culture a literary period, and a Pentateuch written by Moses is an assumption that neither the conditions nor the Biblical material warrants. Such a supposition throws all the rest of the Old Testament into confusion."

"Moses may have written a decalogue;" but that he wrote the "Pentateuch" is an unwarranted assumption!

Had we time to examine the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses, I think we should find that the Mosaic authorship of at least a large part of it is as clearly indicated as anything could possibly be. If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, it was written by one or more of the most infamous liars known in history. And so far from throwing the whole Old Testament into confusion, the denial of the Mosaic authorship most certainly does that. Our Lord throughout assumed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He specifically said that "Moses wrote," and so completely does our Lord wrap Himself up, if we may so say, in the Mosaic tradition, that He put into the mouth of Abraham the words: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Of course, if we cut loose from scripture entirely, and deny that we have any reliable record of what Jesus said and taught, it is left to men to believe just whatever they like.

On page thirty-one he says:

"In 572 B.C. he (Ezekiel) wrote his vision (Ezek. 50 to 58), the new ritual requirement for the new Judaism. A like-minded contemporary, perhaps about the same time, collected, arranged, and perhaps revised a code of ritual practices (Lev. 17 to 26), now called Holiness

Code (H.C.): This was the beginning of a long development which, so far as our canon is concerned, reached its completion in the books of Chronicles about one hundred years after Ezra. So far as the Hexateuch is concerned, Ezra and his school mark the closing of an epoch and practically the closing of the book. The literary product of this school, which was included in the Hexateuch, was of a priestly cast, and is designated by P. P. itself, which embodies the activity of more than two centuries, contains within itself different units of law and slightly different points of view. Suffice it here to say that this school gathered up, organized, interpreted, and reinterpreted the ritual of ancient Israel, using all the oral and written sources at their command. They also rewrote the early history of their people, beginning with the creation (Gen. 1, 2, 4a), supplementing the JED. story where they felt it necessary, inserting in what they believed to be the proper places the story of priestly institutions and the mass of ritual, of which they were the inheritors, and arranging the whole according to an orderly, priestly, chronological scheme."

This paragraph speaks for itself. Mathews commits himself to the theory of the composite character of the Pentateuch, which would make a large part of the Old Testament a mere forgery. Leviticus completely loses its value because it is dated, according to Mathews, subsequent to the Exile.

Thus Leviticus is dated about eight hundred years after Moses, and subsequent to the Exile. But again on page thirty-six:

"Abraham went at least part way in offering the not unusual child sacrifice. In all these things they were but following the common practices of ancestors and neighbours."

The implication here is that Abraham did not really hear God's call. He perhaps fancied he did, and followed the customs of the heathen roundabout him. The New Testament, of course, says the opposite: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Speaking of Moses he says:

While we have long pages presenting the life and doings of this great leader in Egypt and in the desert, those earmarks, which a writer contemporary with the events would have left, are all but lacking. The whole background is very vague. Who was the princess who rescued the babe? Where was she bathing? In what part of the land were the scenes enacted? Who was Pharaoh? Is the general name used loosely for the ruler of one of the districts? Or does the tradition lift a local experience up into national significance? Where did the Israelites cross the Red Sea? Where is Mount Sinai, or Horeb? So might we continue to ask questions, but definite information is not to be had, and reconstruction is all but impossible, save in large outline."

He holds up to scorn the "long pages presenting the life and doings of this great leader in Egypt and in the desert, those earmarks, which a writer contemporary with the events would have left, are all but lacking". And about these "long pages", he says, "So might we continue to ask questions, but definite information is not to be had, and reconstruction is all but impossible, save in large outline."

Of the Exodus he says (pp. 40-41):

"The fearful and unwilling people were inspired for the journey by the wonder-working God. Yet, no doubt, natural causes were at work. The people were, tired

of the locality that now, under the military policy of Ramses II, was more than previously under the direct rule of Egypt. They longed for the ancient freedom of the well-known desert. The plagues, all of them more or less common to the Nile valley, added to their eagerness to withdraw (Ex. 7 to 9). Escape was never difficult. Roads led from Egypt into the desert in at least three different places. Their flight apparently led them down the wady Tumilat a few miles, then they seem to have turned southward into the Egyptian desert to avoid the pursuing army (Ex. 13:37 and 14). AS THEY HESITATED, PERHAPS AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE BITTER LAKES, THE SPRING WIND BLOWING FROM THE SOUTH OR SOUTH-EAST GREATLY AIDED THEM, AND LIKEWISE IMPEDED THE CHARIOTS OF EGYPT. Thus, most probably in the early years of the reign of Merneptah (1225-1215 B.C.), in a marvellous way they escaped from a hated and feared foe to a new-found liberty.

"Many glimpses of natural motives and the naturalness of the deliverance have been preserved in the documents, but that was not the main thought of the storytellers. They found a deeper and richer meaning in all the experiences of their founders. To them those were no ordinary days. Yahweh was in the burning bush and in the plague experiences. He delivered them from Pharaoh, and rolled back the waters of the Red Sea. They conceived, and rightly so, that the chief glory of their national birthday was the manifestation and the guidance of their God."

What a large place the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt has in the Old Testament! It was repeatedly referred to as the greatest of all manifestations of divine power. The miraculous character of that event is asserted in the New Testament as well as in the Old. But Professor Mathews implicitly denies the supernaturalism of the event, and reduces it to a merely natural episode. We may ask for a reason for this interpretation. Does the Professor suggest that there is something erroneous in the record which he must set right? There is but one answer. His interpretation is a groundless imagination of an evil heart of unbelief. Would it be reasonable to expect that anyone exposed to this teaching could continue to believe in the divine inspiration of scripture?

"No less thankful were they when the manna—literally "What is it?"—fell (Nu. 11:7, 8). Whether this was the exudation of the tamarisk tree, which the monks of Sinai still gather and sell, or an edible lichen found in the desert, matters not. The people rejoiced in what they believed to be a wonder wrought by Yahweh, their God.

"Water, likewise in a moment of great need, was unexpectedly provided them by their leader (No. 20:2-13). Whether the sweetening of the bitter waters, or the bringing of the water from the rock was the uncovering of an old spring, the discovery of a fountain hitherto unknown to the tribes, or the releasing of a new current of water, the thirsty nomads neither judged nor cared."

The manna was either "the exudation of the tamarisk tree," or "an edible lichen found in the desert". But what does the New Testament say about this? Let us see what is said in John's gospel: John, chapter six, verses thirty-one and thirty-two: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven". No one can possibly read the sixth chapter of John without concluding that the Lord Jesus accepted the Exodus account of the manna coming from heaven.

Equally Professor Mathews implicitly denies the miraculous element in the provision of water: It may

have been "the uncovering of an old spring", or "the discovery of a fountain hitherto unknown to them". At every point Mathews implicitly repudiates the supernatural.

"Later, devout interpreters easily turned the staves and the scepter into the rod of Moses, and duly exalted him against whom their fathers had so often rebelled."

The story of the miracle-working rod of Moses is not historic: it was an ancient story of some kind, and then "later devout interpreters" easily put another interpretation upon it!

"That, during this period, such achievements were brought well under way, is nothing short of miraculous. That later religious interpreters should conclude the story of each struggle with a picture of divine intervention in some supernatural form, is not strange."

Once again "divine intervention in some supernatural form" is attributed to later religious interpreters.

"The student, of course, does not take all of this seriously. From what already has been indicated, it may be questioned whether any considerable part of the tradition has the warrant either of Scripture or of historic probability. Nomadic peoples living amidst such conditions as are found in the wilderness neither possess a high civilization, nor produce literature."

Discounting the authorship of Moses he says, "The student, of course, does not take all of this seriously." The tradition of the Mosaic authorship is without historic probability! People living in such conditions as then attended the Israelitish people, do not "produce literature"!

I feel like apologizing for detaining my readers with quotations from this utterly useless book, but I have done so, not because the vagaries of Professor Mathews have any value, but to show how utterly unscriptural was the position of those who defended him as an orthodox Evangelical.

I wonder whether Dr. McDormand thinks such drivelling unbelief deserved a protest, or should it have been allowed to continue for the further demoralization of the religious faith of all those who came under his influence?

I shall make but one other reference to this book. On page 141 he says:

"The dramatic colouring of the Elijah stories makes it difficult sometimes to discern the historic thread."

Mathews recognizes the value of these "stories", but says:

"Stories any less ornate would have poorly served to preserve the true worth of this superbly imposing antagonist of an encroaching paganism."

It will be seen that Professor Mathews goes out of his way to cast doubt upon the historic accuracy of everything he touches.

But that is enough. Anyone having a knowledge of the New Testament will instantly see how the New Testament in general, and the authority of the infallible Christ in particular, completely annihilate such theories as Professor Mathews held and taught.

This was the state of things in McMaster University up to the end of the university session in the Spring of nineteen hundred and nineteen.

In our issue of January 1st, under the head: "Contributory Skirmishes", we published the controversial correspondence which appeared in *The Canadian Baptist*, between Rev. E. E. Shields, Rev. Edgar Watson, and Rev. A. P. Wilson, the last and the first in opposition to Mr. Watson.

In our issue of December-25th, 1952, I published a letter which I sent to the then Chancellor of McMaster University, Dr. A. L. McCrimmon. That letter was not made public, and was quite unknown to the controversialists who wrote in *The Canadian Baptist* during the Summer of 1919.

My readers will remember that I am combatting the idea that Dr. Shields "engineered" the division in the Convention. In what I have already written I think I have given abundant proof that I did everything humanly possible, short of an abject surrender to the forces of unbelief, to excise the cancer, that the body might be restored to health.

In the next chapter I shall show how the controversy was further accentuated by an editorial in *The Canadian Baptist*.

(To be Continued)

MORE R.C. PERSECUTION IN COLOMBIA

TWENTY-SEVEN different incidents of violence against Protestants are reported in the Bulletin Number 6 of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia, South America, covering the period between September 1 to October 31, 1952. These reports have been investigated by the above-mentioned Confederation and have been taken from signed statements made by eye-witnesses and victims, or by people with first-hand knowledge of the events. They include such acts as the arrest of Bible Society colporteurs, the closing of Protestant schools, the bombing of church buildings, the jailing and beating of those attending non-Romanist religious meetings. One man is reported to have been killed.

We do not reprint the grisly details of these atrocities here for many similar stories will be found in the history of the Medieval Inquisition, and more recently our newspapers have carried accounts of persecutions of the Protestants in Spain which resemble them closely. Our own "Catholic province" of Quebec from time to time undertakes to demonstrate the genuine spirit of Romanism when it arrests those who distribute the Bible or who preach on the street corner. All these tactics rightly belong to the armoury of Roman Catholicism as its chiefest weapons of defense, for they constitute its own unconscious admission that its best and final argument is force. That is why when it was supreme it made the hangman, that is the Inquisition, the final arbiter in matters of faith.

The following "Observations" conclude the report to which we refer, and although the statements it quotes from Roman Catholic journals are not as vivid as the detailed accounts of acts of violence; yet for those who would weigh the evidence carefully they are even more damning as overt admissions on the part of high authorities to pursue a systematic policy of repression against all save the official Roman Catholic religion.

Observations

From CEDEC Persecution Bulletin No. 6

The American Embassy sent notes to the Colombian government concerning the bombing of the Palmira Evangelical Church, the Palmira Adventist Church, and the Buenaventura Church. The government replied with polite notes, regretting the incident and promising investigations.

An editorial in *El Siglo* of Sunday, October 19, told of a resolution of the Ministry of Education closing nine more Protestant schools. The editorial congratulates the Ministry for this work of "social hygiene," and asks that the

measure be extended to all parts of the country. The article goes on to say that according to the Constitution the only right enjoyed by the Protestants is that of worshipping in their churches, and concludes, therefore, that they have no right to found schools, where they "preach subversion, eulogize adultery, discredit the homeland, and ridicule Catholic institutions."

According to *El Diario de Colombia* of November 1st, a project was presented to Congress by Dr. Daniel Góngora to nationalize primary education. If this should be put into effect, the government would finance and have exclusive control of the administration and orientation of primary education in the nation. This law would automatically close all Protestant schools, and the children of Protestant parents would then have to attend public institutions where they would be obligated to attend mass, study the Catholic religion, and receive first communion when of age, in order to learn to read and write.

New details are constantly coming to light regarding the educational situation in Colombia. *El Tiempo* of October 8th reported that the Director of Education of the new Department of Córdoba, Dr. Alonso Rhonias Segura, revealed that of the 91,292 children in the Department between the ages of 7 and 14, there are only 14,299 studying in educational institutions. *El Tiempo* of October 18th reported that an estimated 50% of the children of the city of Bucaramanga cannot read. The next day in an editorial *El Tiempo* called attention to the fact that only 4% of the population are able to read and write with any degree of facility. Still, in the light of these facts, the government continues to close Protestant schools.

Yesterday morning the governor of the Department, Sr. Arango Ferrer, sent a communication to the President of the Republic in which he informed the President that Protestantism had grown in this section of the country to alarming proportions, especially in the region of the lower Cauca. As a result of this situation recently denounced by the Bishop of Santa Rosa de Osos, Most Excellent Senor Miguel Angel Builes, in a recent circular to the faithful, the governor solicited protection from the central government in order to stop the propagation of such doctrines as are, in his concept, an affront against morals and good customs."

Several articles appeared in *El Colombiano*, of Medellin (October 7, 8, and 10) complaining of the increase of Protestantism in Antioquia, which has always been considered a solidly Catholic Department and urging the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to take steps to stop its growth. The articles accuse the Protestants of going to backward areas, like that of the lower Cauca, where there are no priests and police inspectors to protect the faith of the people. There they establish schools for the children, install light plants, give medical attention, and hold worship services.

In the face of such gross bigotry, it is little wonder that many sincere and enlightened Roman Catholics in Colombia and throughout South America, stand appalled at the blind hatred displayed by their priests against innocent men and women whose sole crime is to give light of mind and of spirit to countless millions who have been left in ignorance and poverty by those who now jealously claim the sole monopoly of their spiritual care.

Roman Catholics in North America are frankly told that their fellow-religionists in South America stand in need of missionary priests. It is recognized that more than four centuries of domination by the Church of Rome have left the neighbouring continent in a deplorable religious condition, even from the standpoint of Romanism. Yet when Protestant missionaries undertake to teach the oppressed masses to read and write, in order to put the open Bible in their hands, they are greeted with the bitterest persecution. It is evident that Rome knows that when her darkness is compared to the light of the Word of God, the decision of her own people will go against her.

Romanism in Canada and the United States complains bitterly that it is suffering "persecution" when the state treasuries, largely filled with taxes from Protestants, do

not subsidize the sectarian confessional schools under the aegis of the priests. In Spain, the same church closes private schools simply because they are supported and directed by Protestants, at no expense to the state. The jewel of consistency is one that is conspicuous by its absence in the gaudy dress of Romanism.—W.S.W.

THE CORONATION YEAR

From *The Christian Irishman*, January, 1953

UNDOUBTEDLY the year 1953 will be one of the most momentous years in the Christian era. Events may happen before it ends that will change the whole current of the economic, social, and religious life of the human race for centuries. It may, indeed, mean a return to the medievalism of the "dark ages", and the destruction of modern civilization with its untold blessings of education, culture, philanthropy and Christian morality. It is not, however, merely in such changes as these that we, as Protestants are thinking most deeply as we cross the threshold of the Coronation Year. In these perilous times through which we are passing, when evangelical Protestantism is being attacked on every side, the real significance of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II for us lies in the fact that England is openly declaring to the world that our nation is uncompromisingly Protestant and it is determined that Protestantism shall be maintained.

For centuries prior to the Reformation the Papacy had been putting forth every endeavour to make the English Throne subservient to the Vatican. This was for years attempted with Jesuitical subtlety by seeking to form marriage alliances between the sovereigns of England and the Roman Catholic rulers on the Continent, in which Mary Queen of Scots and Mary Tudor of England and James II played a prominent part, but all these ended in failure. Again more drastic measures were taken in seeking the conquest of England by force of arms. France, using Ireland as a basis of attack, attempted this in vain and later Spain once again seeking to use Ireland as an ally, made an abortive effort which ended in the complete destruction of the Spanish Armada, as declared by Queen Elizabeth I, who had a medal struck on which was the inscription: "God blew His wind on them and they were scattered." What, however, Rome failed to do by outwardly attacking England, she sought to accomplish by inward intrigues and Roman Catholic infiltration. Large properties and estates all over England were acquired and transformed into Monasteries and Nunneries, each a centre of Romanizing influence and a source of Papal income.

It is estimated that at least one-third of the property of England was in the hands of the Church of Rome and that the Annual money sent to Rome was more than the whole Royal revenue.

The position had become intolerable.

But when the enemy "was coming in like a flood," God was "lifting up a standard for the people."

A little band of reformers, at first under Wickliff, himself a converted Roman Catholic priest of exceptional intellectual power and wide reading, later influenced by the Reformed teaching of Luther and Calvin, was gathering at Oxford, and their evangelical teaching, largely due to the printing and circulation of the Scriptures, was spreading among all classes of the people.

This evangelical movement came to a head in a widespread revolt against the Roman Catholic Clergy and finally reached a climax in the Revolution of 1688, when an invitation was sent to William Prince of Orange to come to England as King and as the Defender of the Cause of the Protestant Faith in this Realm.

On 5th November, 1688, he landed at Torbay, flying at the mast head of his ship the Ensign bearing the words, "I will maintain the Protestant religion and the liberties of England."

The first act of William in becoming King of England was the passing of the "Bill of Rights and Act of Settlement" as a result of which the Crown of Britain has since been strictly reserved for a Protestant head. In this Act it is stated:

"Whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish Prince or by any King of Queen marrying a Papist. . . . Every person who is or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with, the See or Church of Rome, or shall marry a Papist, shall be excluded and be forever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the Crown of Government of this Realm and Ireland: and in every such case the people of these Realms shall be and are hereby released of their allegiance."

(Act 1, William and Mary, cap. 2, sec. ii, 1689)

Since then every reigning sovereign has signed the following Accession Declaration and Coronation Oath:

"I do solemnly, and in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my power, according to law."

When, therefore, Queen Elizabeth on her Coronation on 2nd June, 1953, shall be asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury:

"Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?"

Her Majesty, laying her hand upon the open Bible will answer: "All this I promise to do."

As we witness our beloved Queen thus solemnly avowing her determination to keep this oath, well may we unite in praying:

God save our gracious Queen;
Long live our noble Queen;
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the Queen!

Thy choicest gifts in store
On her be pleased to pour;
Long may she reign;
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice,
'God save the Queen!'

PERSECUTION CONTINUES UNABATED IN SPAIN

From *The Conservative Baptist*, the organ of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society of U.S.A.

PROTESTANT work in Spain is carried on under the constant shadow of police interference, imprisonment, and seizure of property. This was the unanimous report of more than a dozen missionaries representing several different denominational and interdenominational groups in Spain when CBFMS Missionaries Sam Faircloth, Art Lewis, and John Oliveira visited Spain a few months ago.

They saw firsthand evidence of the intolerance which arises in a country dominated completely by Catholicism and in which the government and the Catholic church work hand in hand.

Because publicity brings increased persecution, no specific names and places can be mentioned, but the following facts and incidents were among those reported to the group.

No Protestant weddings, funerals or baptisms are permitted in Spain.

Although the Minister of the Interior recently said that Protestant churches may stay open but that no proselyting is permitted, this actually means nothing. If the police find a group of 30 people in a church or hall one week and 35 the next, they can close the hall on grounds of proselyting. "Where did the five come from?" they ask.

The law forbids giving away or selling Bibles, tracts, or Protestant literature.

Last spring two police came to the office of a Bible society, seized 2,000 New Testaments and took them away in a truck. Then they proceeded to confiscate everything in the office—including the furniture. Only the intervention of the British Consul halted the confiscation. When the society wrote the Spanish Minister of the Interior to ask why the Testaments were taken, he answered, "Because you have no permission to sell or give away Protestant Bibles." Telephone conversations of the society are always censored and every possible conversation recorded for the officials. All mail is subject to censor and is frequently opened.

At present, the most effective work in Spain appears to be that carried on by the Plymouth Brethren. One such assembly has Sunday evening attendances of 500 to 600. The chapel in which they meet is in the rear of a large apartment house and is entered unobtrusively through an alley door.

Many of the halls and chapels of evangelical groups have been closed by government order. The government makes it very difficult for Protestants to have buildings for meetings or to acquire property.

In April, 1952, one small church of fourteen members was holding a service when police appeared and took the entire congregation, including children, to jail. They were kept there for a day and a night. After they were released, the order was given that not more than three persons could meet at the church at any one time. At present, the people come to the pastor's home a few at a time, taking turns for worship and prayer.

One large evangelical school which once enrolled as many as 270 students is now forced to carry on secretly with a student body of only 12.

Missionaries reported that it was difficult to receive and keep permission to stay in the country. One man who had worked in Spain for 32 years took a rest in

England. When he was about to return to Spain, he learned that an order had gone to all border posts to refuse him entrance. However, he passed through before they received the order.

A woman missionary said that she was ordered to be expelled from Spain after a man in her community had protested to the bishop against her work. (The man's wife and son had become evangelicals.) She obtained temporary asylum at the British Consul while an appeal was made. She finally was permitted to remain in Spain (where she had been working for 28 years) but was forbidden to return to her old home.

New missionaries may enter on six-month tourist permits but after the six months they usually have difficulty giving a "reason" satisfactory to the government for staying.

One worker reported that "pressure" in Washington hurts rather than helps the cause of evangelical missionaries and Christians in Spain. "Each time pressure is used diplomatically," she explained, "the Roman Catholic church further influences the Spanish government and more incidents occur. You are undoubtedly familiar with what is taking place in Colombia. Recent incidents in Spain are no doubt the result of an alarmed Roman Catholic church."

Because there is no adequate way of training Spanish men for the ministry in Spain, several of the missionaries encouraged the idea of the CBFMS seminary in Portugal accepting Spanish students and training them to return to their own country.

At present, the Leiria seminary has four such students. One of them saw his own father, a Baptist minister, shot to death in the pulpit. The son wants to prepare to take his father's place.

Because the Catholic church has such control of the people and the government, very little direct missionary work by foreigners is possible at present.

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.

We earnestly solicit the co-operation of all our readers in making this story as widely known as possible. In order to give currency to it we will send **THE GOSPEL WITNESS** containing this story week by week for the full time of its continuance — not less than six months — for \$1.00. Send in your subscription immediately, and all subscriptions will begin with the first instalment in the issue of Thursday, November 20th.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC MONOPOLY IN RADIO STATIONS

Translated from *Le Devoir* of January 28, 1953

Ottawa, January 27—The Board of Governors of CBC, which held a session in the federal capital last weekend granted a permit to a new French station requested for Eastview, a suburb of Ottawa. There was strong opposition, coming principally from the newspaper *Le Droit* which already owns station CKCH in Hull.

A rumour was going the rounds that the new French station was merely a branch of Station CKVL of Verdun, which is controlled by Mr. Jack Tittleman. Mr. Raoul Landriault and his associates had to conduct a counter-campaign to show that the new Eastview Station would be under the direction of some French Canadian business men of Eastview. Moreover, these business men have the support of the Montfortain Fathers who are in charge of the Parish of Notre Dame de Lourdes of Eastview and the new station will have its quarters in the Parish Recreation Centre. Mr. Jean-Thomas Richard, Member of Parliament for Ottawa East and a graduate of the University of Ottawa, pled the cause of *Le Droit* before the Board of Governors of CBC. He maintained the thesis that French-Canadians of the Ottawa district are bilingual, that they have to read English newspapers, listen to English programmes, and send their children to English schools, and that hence there is no room for two French stations.

Mr. Adrien Pouliot, one of the Governors (of CBC) who is also Dean of the Faculty of Sciences of Laval University, Quebec, interrupted him to ask who owned Station CKCH and also who owned the newspaper *Le Droit*. As Mr. Richard did not reply, Mr. MacQuain, who represented the Eastview group, intervened to say that it is common knowledge that *Le Droit* is owned by the Oblate Fathers. "They have the University," replied Mr. Pouliot, "They have Station CKCH, they have *Le Droit* as well as other papers, they have just acquired *La Frontière*. That is a monopoly indeed!"

The people of Eastview obtained their French Station despite the opposition of *Le Droit*.

Is Rome Undivided?

Roman Catholicism boasts that it is one and undivided, and its advocates love to contrast the many sects and schisms among Protestants with the alleged peace and unity of the papal church. There is, we doubt it not, a certain peace in the bosom of the Roman Catholic system, just as there is a deep and profound peace in the cemetery. But this kind of deep and peaceful slumber has no attraction for a red-blooded man in good health and in the full possession of all his faculties. The peace and unity of which Romanism boasts are of the same sort that is enforced in Soviet Russia by authoritarian decree and at the expense of the free consent of enlightened minds. Underneath the surface, from time to time observers see clearly defined marks of inward rifts that indicate that though the slaves are not allowed to think for themselves yet old Adam still asserts itself in internal strife in the inward parts of the gigantic machine.

A case in point is given by the account translated from *Le Devoir*, which precedes this article. It tells that two "religious orders", namely, the powerful Oblate Fathers and some newcomers, the order of Montfortain Fathers, battled for the possession of the monopoly of French broadcasting in the region of Ottawa. As a result, the public hears the accusation of "monopoly" thrown in the teeth of the priests of the Oblate Order. It is said that they own Radio station CKCH which serves Ottawa and Hull, and also the daily newspaper *Le Droit*, which was founded to lead the fight for state-supported French Romanist schools in Ontario. In addition to this they have recently acquired control of another paper in Northern Quebec, while they also direct *l'Université d'Ottawa*,

which includes the French and Roman Catholic Normal School, supported by the Ontario Provincial Government. These ubiquitous priests are not satisfied with these rich spoils; they now demand that their radio station be granted a monopoly of French broadcasting in the neighbourhood of the Capital City of the Dominion.

It is worthy of note that the governor of CBC who commented on the monopoly of the Oblate Fathers, is himself a leading member of the Faculty of Laval University of Quebec City, another Roman Catholic institution. He was apparently unwilling to continue the monopoly of the Oblates, and hence the CBC allowed the Montfortain priests to have their radio station. Incidentally, we remark on the tender care shown by the Canadian government in providing an official of the Roman Church to sit on public boards such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in readiness to judge in such ecclesiastical quarrels as this. The policy of the Oblates with respect to the use of the French language has been the subject of severe and even bitter criticism by *Le Devoir* and other French Romanists, and we have no doubt that the emergence of the new radio station marks another step in the progress of the intestinal dispute between the Oblates who appear to favour the use of a little English, sometimes, and the others who are determined to keep unbroken the sacred wall of the French language they have erected as the guardian of the faith.

The upshot of the struggle is that the monopoly of the Oblates has been broken by the representatives of the Hierarchy merely to be handed over to another order of priests. But as far as non-Romanists are concerned, the monopoly still exists for French radio Broadcasting in the Ottawa-Hull district, remains in the hands of priests of various orders who will make sure that no Protestant voice is allowed to reach the ears of their listeners. Like the other French radio stations in Canada, these two in Ottawa are, in effect, simply two branches of the papal station in Vatican City.—W.S.W.

CHURCH AND STATE IN ITALY

Translated from a report of the Italian correspondent of *La Vie Protestante*, of Geneva, Switzerland

A debate took place in the Senate on the bill to authorize the State to share in the expense of building new (Roman Catholic) churches. The Demo-Christian party declared itself in favour of the bill as "being inspired by profoundly idealistic reasons". Senator Labriola, left-wing Independent, opposed the bill since it was solely a religious question. "Idealism," he said "is not an exclusive monopoly of one class or of one party. The Papal State" he added, "has not built churches itself, leaving this duty to private persons or to its patrons. Is it not symptomatic that clericalism obtains under the Republican Government what it has not been able to realize under the monarchy? The other churches would then also have the right to ask state aid for their building programmes." To which a Demo-Christian Member of Parliament replied, "But they do not ask for it!"

Socialist Senator Tonello went farther than Senator Labriola in asserting that "the more priests there are, the weaker religion is." To which Senator Valmare, Demo-Christian, replied by describing the difficult conditions in which priests lived and saying that the building of churches would give work to artists.

In the House a debate took place on religious liberty in connection with a more general discussion on Communism. A Socialist member of Parliament declared that day after day the action of the government is contrary to religious liberty. "We have not got beyond the Lateran Pact between the Holy See and Mussolini which often takes precedence over the present Constitution and directs the police."

Clerico-Fascism Still Rules Italy

The above account provides one more example of Roman Catholic greed for public money and the success of its priests in obtaining it whether from Fascists such as Mussolini, who was helped to power by the priests, or from the present Italian government, which owes its existence to the force of Allied arms. The so-called "Demo-Christian" party referred to in the above account is the clerical party now in the saddle in Italy. It is often true that Romanism manages to wheedle greater favours from nominally democratic régimes than from those that are her own creatures. In Ontario, a province that is preponderantly Protestant, the Roman Catholic minority have schools provided at public expense in which the priests inculcate their dogmas into the minds of little children. In Italy, Protestant Churches are barely tolerated and no government support whatever is given Protestant schools. In Spain, Protestant schools are not even permitted to exist, even when they make no request for state support, and Protestant Churches are closed or opened by governmental decrees, while their members always are subject to many galling restrictions, and oftentimes to outright violence.

The greedy arrogance of Roman priests does not entirely escape the supposedly docile masses of their "faithful". Even in Italy, the homeland of the popes, radical members of parliament dare to voice their disgust with Romanism and to point out that the spirit of Fascism, as expressed in the Lateran pact between Mussolini and the pope, still denies religious liberty to all.

—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 First Quarter Lesson 8 February 22, 1953

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

THE SAVIOUR OF THE HELPLESS

Lesson Text: John 5:1-14.

Golden Text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."—John 5:24.

I. The Gracious Saviour: verses 1-9.

After our Lord's ministry in the northern province of Galilee (John 4:3, 46, 54), He returned to Jerusalem at the time of the feast. This was probably the Feast of the Passover (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). On such occasions where large multitudes were gathered together, many would be in need of healing, and these would congregate around the famous pool of Bethesda ("House of Mercy"), which was situated by the sheep gate near the temple on the east side of Jerusalem (Neh. 3:1, 32).

Five porches or cloisters formed shelters around the pool, noted far and wide for the miraculous healing powers of the waters at certain set times, thought to have been marked by the presence of an angel. One can imagine the excitement, the anxiety, the rivalry, the eagerness, the triumph of some and the disappointment of others, as blessing came to the one who first stepped into the pool. But all were in need of healing, just as all to-day are in need of spiritual healing. The Scriptures declare that all we like sheep have gone astray (Isa. 53:6), and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 6:23).

In this crowd of sick folk was one who was singled out for healing by the Saviour. The individual is never lost in the crowd, so far as the Lord is concerned; He graciously

notices and summons those whom all others would overlook (Mark 10:47; Luke 19:5). For thirty-eight years this man had suffered from an infirmity. This fact is mentioned that we may see how great is the power of God. He could heal the sick man immediately, although the disease was of long standing. Although sins may be as scarlet, they may be washed white as snow (Isa. 1:18); Christ can save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

The helpless and hopeless condition of this sick man was known to the Saviour. In tender sympathy the Master questioned him: "Wilt thou be made whole?" To the unbelieving that would seem to be an unnecessary question, but the Lord, Who knows our need (Matt. 6:32), ever seeks to invite a confession of our need, that we may be prepared to receive a blessing (Mark 10:51). Moreover, by this suggestive question He led the sick man to have hope of recovery, and to have confidence that Christ could heal him. Christ was ever ready to heal, but He exercised His power only when men believed on Him (Matt. 13:58; John 5:40). The tragedy of sin is that many who are steeped in iniquity have no desire to be made whole, for they become entangled in cruel bondage (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16).

The man explained that it was not the lack of will, but the lack of means which prevented him from being healed. But, man's extremity is God's opportunity (2 Cor. 12:9). Christ perceived that the man had faith in Him, despite the many discouraging outward circumstances (Prov. 13:12).

Our Saviour never asks us to do the impossible, for His commands are always enablings. He told the helpless man to rise, and His word was one of sovereign power which bestowed upon the man strength to do that which was humanly impossible (Matt. 19:26). This is an illustration of the workings of grace in the heart of the sinner (Rom. 8:3, 4), for grace is described as the bestowal of blessing which is undeserved. To hoist the portable couch upon his shoulders was just as impossible for the cripple as to rise, and the same is true of walking. But in response to the word of the Saviour, the man rose up immediately from his couch, lifted it to his shoulders and walked away. He had been cured instantly, miraculously and completely.

II. The Critical Jews: verses 10-14.

It is ever true that the wicked hate the righteous (Psa.

35:11-16; 37:12; 109:1-5). The Jews, envious of the power and reputation of Christ, found fault with Him on every conceivable ground. On this occasion they challenged the man for what they considered an infringement of the law. By carrying his couch, the man had, in their eyes, broken the law that no burdens must be carried on the sabbath day (Neh. 13:15; Jer. 17:21). But, he was obeying a higher law, the commandment of the Saviour, Who had shown His right of authority by healing him.

Filled with the new joy of being able to walk, this man made his way to the temple to praise God (Acts 3:8). There Christ found him and revealed Himself as Jesus the Saviour, the Son of God (Matt. 1:21). We may wonder why Christ did not tell him who He was at the very first, but possibly the reason was that the deliverance from the power of disease might prepare him for freedom from the servitude of sin (Luke 5:24). Christ pronounced him whole (Mark 5:34), and the fact that spiritual wholeness or salvation was included may be inferred from the circumstance that our Lord pointed out the lesson to be derived from his former malady and infirmity. Sin, if unchecked, would make more havoc in his spiritual life than the disease had made in his body.

On this occasion Christ did not use a human argument in answer to His critics (Luke 14:5), but made a clear pronouncement of the ground of His authority—His identification with the Father (verses 17-23).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Feb. 16—The Saviour of the Helpless Rom. 7:15-8:4.
 Feb. 17—The Saviour of the Hopeless Luke 13:10-17.
 Feb. 18—The Saviour of the Weak Rom. 5:1-11.
 Feb. 19—The Saviour of the Sinner Mark 2:1-12.
 Feb. 20—The Saviour of the Penitent Luke 15:1-7.
 Feb. 21—The Saviour of the Lost Luke 15:11-24.
 Feb. 22—The Saviour of the Soul and Healer of the
 Body Psalm 103.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Come, every soul by sin oppressed. Come, ye sinners, poor and needy. I need Thee every hour. Depth of mercy! can there be! Redemption! oh wonderful story. Father, I stretch my hands to Thee.

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