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chapel 1/22/76 THAT I MIGHT KNOW HIM

(Napoleon's Testimony Concerning Christ)

(Dr. Newman led in special prayer for Dr. Jack Murray.)

I'd like to read to you from Phil. the third ch. starting in the middle of v.4. (Phil.3:4-8.

We are now approaching the end of a rather busy part of the school year. Exams are just ahead. I thought when I was in seminary that that was a very special time to be careful not to neglect my devotional life. There is a great temptation at that period when things crowd in on one to catch up which perhaps should have been done a little earlier, and exams are just ahead - there is a very great temptation to neglect our spiritual life.

I think at such a time it is very important to think particularly about the fact we are not here simply to learn facts, we are not here simply to learn to understand theology. We can understand all these things; we can understand the mysteries of the universe and it could profit us absolutely nothing. All this is worthless unless we know Christ as Paul did.

Christianity is not a system of doctrine. Christianity is a Person. Dead orthodoxy in my opinion is far better than heterodoxy -- living heterodoxy, but dead orthodoxy is in God's sight worthless. Christianity is not belief; it is a Person, and it is very important that we know that Person ourselves and know Him intimately.

Someone has said, All roads lead to Rome. That certainly was true in the days of the Roman empire. Well, all the Bible leads to Christ. He is the center of every part of it. All of it finds its focus in Him.

Napoleon was one of the great conquerors of the world's history. Napoleon conquered most of Europe; practically all of continental Europe was in his hands. Then it all collapsed and he was defeated at Waterloo and he was sent to St. Helena island where he lived for 5 1/2 years until his death at about the age of 50 or shortly after. Toward the end of his life, Napoleon spent a great deal of his time reading the Gospels. He had a few friends with him there and one time he made some statements about the Gospels and about Christ which one of them wrote down and preserved. I'm not sure whether he was giving a speech there to a small group of his friends or whether he was talking to an individual. Some of his remarks, I thought, were very striking and I would like to read you a few of his statements.

He said: "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires or the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and every other religion the distance of infinity. Everything about Christ astonishes me. Between Christ and everyone else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself. I searched history in vain to find one similar to Jesus Christ, or anything that can approach the Gospel.

[to be completed]