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**KING'S  
CROSS**

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**THE STORY OF THE WORLD IN  
THE LIFE OF JESUS**

Not long after this happened to me, I came across an article in a magazine entitled “The Book That Understands Me,” by Emile Cailliet, professor of philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary.<sup>9</sup> In his college days in France, Cailliet had been an agnostic. He graduated from university without having ever actually seen a Bible. Then he served in the army during World War I. “The inadequacy of my views on the human situation overwhelmed me,” he wrote. “What use . . . the philosophic banter of the seminar, when your own buddy—at the time speaking to you of his mother—dies standing in front of you, a bullet in his chest?”

Then a bullet got him as well, and he began recuperating during a long stay in a hospital. Reading literature and philosophy, he began strangely longing—“I must say it, however queer it may

sound—for a book that would understand me.” Since he knew of no such book, he decided to prepare one for himself. He read widely, and whenever he found a brief passage that particularly struck him and “spoke to my condition,” he would carefully copy it down in a leather-bound pocket-size volume. As time went on and the number of quotations grew, he eagerly anticipated sitting down and reading it from cover to cover. He expected that “it would lead me as it were from fear and anguish, through a variety of intervening stages, to supreme utterances of release and jubilation.”

One day he went out to sit under a tree in his garden to read his precious anthology. As he did so, a growing disappointment came over him. Each quote reminded him of the circumstances in which he had chosen it, but things had changed. “Then I knew that the whole undertaking would not work, simply because it was of my own making.”

Almost at that very moment, his wife appeared after a walk with their child in a baby carriage. She had with her a Bible in French that she had received from a minister she had met on her walk. Cailliet took it and opened it to the Gospels. He continued to read deep into the night. The realization dawned on him: “Lo and behold, as I looked through them [the Gospels] the One who spoke and acted in them became alive to me. . . .