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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

SHOULD WE CONFESS TO A PRIEST?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 1st, 1941

(Stenographically Reported)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I John 1:9.

I suppose there are people here old enough to remember a day when certain articles entering into the ordinary life of ordinary individuals had to be made to order. We now live in a day when everything is readymade. We walk in readymade shoes; we wear readymade clothes—that is, if one is not too long! Even the ladies wear readymade hats: I thought that day would never come. We live in readymade houses, ride in readymade cars. Everything is standardized. The average man and woman finds no difficulty in getting whatever he or she may want ready for use. That is very convenient.

The habit of resorting to the readymade affects the speech of many people. There are many who use readymade phrases, phrases that are not their own. Hence the popularity of certain colloquialisms or slang, readymade phrases, catch words, that you hear on everyone's lips. I remember when I first became acquainted with this country, I wondered at the meaning of certain sounds that were not words, "Uh-ha". I wondered what that kind of grunt was intended to signify. When a positive statement was made, almost invariably one was greeted with, "Is that so?" I felt like saying, "Of course it is, or I would not have said it." It seemed to me that Canadians were more accustomed to using exclamation and interrogation marks than commas, semicolons, or periods.

A little while ago it was common to hear people speak of things that were "absolute". A person who wanted to be positive in his declarations asserted that a certain thing was "absolutely" true. Sometimes you had to be content with the adverb without any qualifying substantive. "Are you sure?" "Absolutely"! That is a very strong word. But "absolute" and "absolutely", like

some huge battleship, have been retired to drydock for repair.

Now everything is "definite" or "definitely". I heard it in England some years ago, and it has reached us here now. People, to be emphatic, insist that a certain statement is "definitely" true. The word, *definite*, properly used, describes something that is clearly and emphatically definable and defined. It is definite, it is different from anything else; it does not belong to the common things—"definitely so". But talk to the same person who is so definite, and ask his opinion on right and wrong, and he will probably say, "Well, that all depends." If you raise the question of religion, nothing is definite, still less is it absolute—except in Oxford Group parlance. They have "the four absolutes", or they had. But in the realm of religion, things are very different.

"Is that north?" "Yes." "Are you sure?" "Definitely." "How do you know the difference between north and south?" "There is a very definite difference." Is there? And between black and white, red and blue? Differences of quality and direction, are there? But in the realm of morals and religion, we are asked to believe there is nothing definite, there can be nothing definite. In fact, one might fairly assume that religion defies definition; it makes no difference what you are, or what you believe, one religion is as good as another.

In Toronto this very day a conference is being held which is called the North American Ecumenical Conference. The word, *ecumenical*, means whole, universal. It is supposed to be a North American Conference composed of representatives of the whole Christian world, including Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, every branch of Protestantism—I suppose everything from

Roman Catholic to Unitarian. The idea is that we should all get together; we should not be definite about anything, for after all, nothing matters very much!

One of the meetings of that so-called Ecumenical Conference is to be held in a Baptist church. I venture the assertion that thirty years ago there could not have been found a Baptist church in the world that would have entertained such a conference. They would respectfully have said, "There is a certain body of truth of the scripturalness of which we are convinced, and which we believe profoundly, and which we have no intention whatever of surrendering. It would be a waste of your time and ours to meet in conference to try to decide how Baptists and Roman Catholics can work together."

Nearly always these conferences are held after the initiative has been taken in secret. If you knew all the manipulations of it, you would find it is Rome working to effect "reunion" as they call it; but the union of any person or religious body with the Catholic Church is effected only on the terms of unconditional surrender always. But why not unite with Catholics? One might as well ask why Britain should not co-operate with the Nazis in effecting a new "world order". If I were to ask you why we cannot, I think you would say, "In the Nazi conception of things, a new world order would be a world enslaved and in subjection to Berlin." And what would a British new world order be? A world of free men, not subject to anyone but to God Himself. Between those two conceptions of human life there is all the world of difference, just as there are incompatibles in the natural world. There are certain chemicals that will not combine, and if an attempt is made to do so, it involves the annihilation of some, and the deterioration of others.

Where God has made a difference, it is for us to recognize the difference, and not to try to join what God has for ever put apart. There can be no concord between Christ and Belial, between him that believeth and an infidel; there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols, no fellowship of light with darkness. It is for the believer in Christ to take his stand for the things he believes, and to say to all others, "Here I stand, I can do no other; so help me, God." We need to be always on the lookout to avoid the adulteration of the simple and pure gospel of the grace of God.

The word, *confession*, has many meanings. It is applied to Christ when He promised to confess us before His Father Who is in heaven; which means that He will acknowledge us as being His own. It is applied to believers, when we confess Christ before others, as did these disciples this evening who were buried with Christ in baptism. By that act, they confessed their identification with Christ in death and burial and resurrection.

My subject this evening has to do with the confession of sin. I shall assume that we all recognize the reality of sin, that moral plague that has affected the whole world—that has affected us. And I shall assume that we are all ready to subscribe to the scripture that declares, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." That means you—it means me. None are exempt. I shall assume too that we recognize the necessity of confessing sin. "He that covereth his sin", the wise man said, "shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Perhaps I may lay down a further assumption: that useful confession must involve a forsaking of sin. In

other words, that real confession must be an audible and visible repentance. If we really confess our sins, we are sorry for the sins we confess and desire to forsake them, desire divine help that we may be better men and women.

The question is, To whom should we confess our sins? The text deals with that, and as simply as I know how this evening—so that I may make the way plain—I want to tell you what this confession does not mean, then what it really does mean, by the teaching of the Word of God.

I.

Sin, in a sense, is twofold. It is transgression of the Law, and the Law is twofold. It relates us to God, and to our neighbour. This is the fulfilment of the Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And to break one commandment is to become guilty of all.

Sin may be a transgression committed against God alone—an evil thought, something known to the individual and God alone. There are other sins that are not only committed against God, but against our neighbour; and every sin committed against our neighbour is a sin committed against God. David sinned grievously against his neighbour, but when he saw his sin in the light which shines from the face of God, he said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." A sin against society, of any sort, becomes a sin against God; and in the ultimate analysis it would be correct to say that every sin is at last an offence against God Himself.

Confession should never involve advertising our sins. If it is a sin against God, known only to God, surely confession should be made to Him. If it is against a neighbour, the confession should be as public as the sin, and no more public than the sin.

When I was very young—before I knew much of the Scripture—I used to feel an inward protest against some testimonies I heard in prayer meeting, where people recited a catalogue of sins, the things of which they had been guilty. I thought to myself, "That ought not to be. If the man has really repented of his sin, if he is really penitent, has really received forgiveness, he ought to forget it as God has promised to forget it; he ought not to talk about it." Before I had had an extended opportunity to study the Word of God, as a young disciple it seemed to me to be an offence against spiritual propriety to parade one's past life, if it had been evil, before the eyes and ears of people, while professing to be glorying in the grace of God that had delivered from sin.

I can conceive of a situation, a man who has been cleansed by the grace of God, who before his conversion was a great drunkard—he does not say anything about it now. It is among the things that ought not so much as to be mentioned. He has put it away; it is buried in the past. But I say I can conceive of his coming some day upon a man still bound by the chains of sin, still a victim of the same dreadful habit that once enslaved him, leaning over him and in a whisper saying, "Brother, I was right down in the mud where you are. I was just as bad as you are; and God saved me from it—and He can save you." But publicly to half boast of one's former iniquities is surely the essence

of bad taste, to say the least, and is utterly unbecoming in the children of grace.

A little while ago there was a movement known as the Oxford Group Movement, and one of its cardinal doctrines was the duty or privilege of what they called "sharing". They held meetings at which people recited the record of their sins. When they came to Toronto they held a meeting in the King Edward Hotel. I knew if I went I should be known, and would cause something of a stir, so I asked Rev. A. H. Barham who was then our pastoral visitor, to attend some of the sessions and report to me what he found. He went down, and I asked him about his experience. He said, "I would rather not tell you, Pastor." "Why?" "I heard things I hoped never to hear in my life. I heard them from men who are called ministers of the gospel. And I came out as soon as I could, feeling as though I wanted to have a bath."

I have followed its course a little since. *The British Weekly* used to give several pages every week to their activities until one day at a booksellers' luncheon in London an actress, a daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, was asked to speak at the meeting given in honour of Dr. Buckman. She spoke so strongly, so terribly, in indictment against the whole movement that *The British Weekly* dropped it. I am sure their so-called "sharing" is a vicious practice. If it be so you have explored the utmost reaches of the far country and have wallowed in the mire of the swine troughs, ask God not only to forgive but to cleanse your memory of the past, and then, as a prince of the blood, remember it no more. Glory rather in the best robe and the new shoes, never in the things of which we are now ashamed: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?"

We do not hear very much about the Oxford Group Movement nowadays. And the less we hear about it the better. Of one thing I am sure, there is no Scripture to warrant that practice. They did not do it in New Testament times. There must have been among the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost many people who had been great sinners, but there is nothing to suggest that any meeting was ever held to give them an opportunity of unveiling in public the sins of the past. I am sure they never did it. I rather think the blood of Christ was so real to them that as they viewed the past through the medium of the blood they knew their sins and iniquities were remembered again no more for ever.

We occasionally have Roman Catholic friends here. If we have such this evening, I call your attention to the fact that *there is no scriptural warrant for the Roman Catholic confessional either*. There is nothing like it in the New Testament. I cannot find a single passage in the Word of God that conditions salvation upon one's going to a priest and confessing his or her sins to a fellow-mortal, and receiving from such an one an assurance of absolution. It is well to bring all these things to the touchstone of Scripture, and if you cannot find a practice of any sort—whether it be a Romish practice or a Protestant one—if you cannot find it in the Word of God, do not continue it.

If you can find the practice of infant baptism in the Bible, may the blessing of the Lord be upon you. Go on practising it. But if it is not there—as I believe it is not—cease from the practice in the name of the

Trinity anything that the Trinity has never authorized. We used to have in Ontario a very scriptural Baptist minister by the name of Dr. Thomas L. Davidson, a very outspoken man. He was once asked if he would "christen" a child. The significance of that term, christen, is to make Christian by baptism. That is the teaching of the catechism of the Anglican Church—"a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

Dr. Davidson had full sympathy with the parents' desire to dedicate the child they loved, to the service of God. He went to the home, and they brought him a bowl of water. He dipped his hand in the bowl, and sprinkled water on the head of the child, saying, "In the name of the father, and of the mother, and of Thomas L. Davidson, I sprinkle you, John James Blank." The parents were horrified, saying, "That is not baptism." "But you wanted it, and I have no objection to it, and therefore in your names and in mine, I see no reason why I should not sprinkle some water on this child's face and give it a name." "But it must be in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Said Mr. Davidson, "Here is the Bible. If you can find that in the Bible, I will do so. Where is it?" "We do not know." "It is not there, and until you can find it, I will not practise in the name of the Trinity that which the Trinity has never authorized." Baptism is an ordinance restricted to those who believe, to those who deliberately yield themselves to Christ.

I hold in my hand a booklet which has been reprinted after being out of print for some time, a booklet I compiled years ago, a collection of Scriptures, nothing but Scripture. In the back I put every passage in the entire New Testament that relates to baptism. The title is, "Scripture for Seekers and Soul-winners." A friend looked at it once and said, "That is fine, but you could have strengthened it." "How?" "You could have said what John Calvin said about baptism, what John Wesley said, and quoted from these and other great non-Baptists, in which they declared that New Testament baptism is the immersion of the believer, and nothing less." "But that would have weakened it." "Weakened it?" "It would have put side by side with the authority of the Word of God, human authority. I do not care what John Calvin, or anyone else says. I am pointing people to the word of the Lord."

When I was Pastor in London I had an Anglican clergyman for a neighbour, and we were very good friends; but one day he said to me, "I suppose you would not have the slightest hesitation in making Baptists of my people, for I know some of them come to you." "You know my commission." "What is it?" "The same as yours: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' That is my commission, and I try to obey it." "Many of my people go to hear you, do they not?" "I do not know where they come from, but I give them the gospel—which includes scriptural baptism." "Is that fair?" I replied, "If you do not make your services interesting enough to keep your people at home, I am not going to try to make mine dull enough to drive them away." "But how do you do it?" Across the street was a young woman wheeling a baby carriage,

I pointed to her and said, "I baptized that young woman a month or so ago. After a while she came to me and said the canon from the cathedral had come to see her. He told her she had done very wrong to leave the 'church', and join the Baptists, and she asked me what she should have said to him. I asked her if she had a New Testament, and she said she had. I asked her if she were quite awake and quite herself when she was baptized, and she said she most certainly was, that she did it of her own volition. I then admonished her to compare what she did, with the teaching of Scripture, and if she found the two in accord, so long as she had the canon of Scripture on her side she need not worry about the canon of the cathedral." I said to my Anglican friend, "That is how I do it, and I challenge you to send any anxious enquirer to the Bible, and say to that man or woman, 'Read what the Bible says, do what it tells you to do.' They will leave you every time, and you know it." "But I refer men and women to the same Scripture." "Yes, when you are there to try to explain it. But let the Word of God speak for itself."

If we can take the Protestant position, and magnify the authority of the Word of God, and bring all these things to the touchstone of Scripture, we shall not need to read volumes of history on the Catholic position. We shall know at once what is right or wrong by comparing it with the Scripture. The confessional cannot be found in the New Testament. Therefore it is not of divine institution. Furthermore, it is a horrible practice—though I shall not deal with it—of conditioning one's salvation upon his sharing his innermost thoughts with a man; and teaches that unless you come to confession, and confess to a priest, you cannot obtain forgiveness. It is nonsense. It is not in the Word of God.

Equally, we need more assurance than the word of a priest. I want some stronger ground for assurance that my sins are forgiven me than any the words of a priest can give.

II.

On the positive side, we have the privilege of direct access to God. There is only one Priest. It is a mistake to call ministers of the gospel "priests", whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. All believers are clergy or priests in the sense that they offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. But since Jesus Christ, our great high Priest, entered into the holy place, not with blood of others but with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us, since this one Man when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, poor sinful men have never needed another priest. The Archbishop of Canterbury is no more a priest than I am—neither is the Archbishop of Toronto.

We are to confess our sins to God alone. What a privilege! It is a commonplace to us, but if we had been brought up in a separate Roman Catholic school, it would not be. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." We come to God solely through Jesus Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." You do not need to leave the pew where you are sitting, nor utter an audible word. He knows the thoughts and intents of your heart. Sitting right in the pew anyone of you may say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner", and be sure your prayer has gone right to the ear of God. You need no priest, no

church, no minister. We have the privilege of direct commerce with God.

In the Old Testament there is a story of some men who were very nervous coming into the presence of a great governor, to which I delight to refer. They were conscious of sin, and were all brethren standing together. The governor looked upon them sternly, and spoke to them sternly. At last when they had said the one thing for which he waited, the thing that indicated a change of heart on their part, the governor said, "Cause every man to go out from me"; and everyone went out, and Joseph stood alone "while he made himself known unto his brethren." He said, "I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt."

There was no one else present. He forgave them all, and said, "Come near to me, I pray you." One after another they came near, and he put his arms about them and wept upon them until the house of Pharaoh heard. It was a glorious reconciliation between the governor and the sinners who had offended—but there was no one there but Joseph. When a soul is converted, the naked soul comes into the presence of God through Christ, bares his heart to the great Mediator and says, "Forgive me"; and being forgiven, he is assured of it by the Governor Himself.

Let us hold fast to that privilege, for as surely as we come, *we come to a throne of grace*. There is nothing to pay. Let me repeat it, nothing to pay! The Roman Catholic Church takes toll on everything. A man said to me the other day, "I am a veteran of the last war, and one day as I came out of the trenches my socks were worn out, I was covered with mud, hungry, and weary. I got back of the line and went to a certain hut where refreshments were served and bought a cup of tea. Then I asked the attendant if they had any socks, and he said they had but that I should have to pay ten pence for them. I paid the ten pence, and took the socks. Another poor fellow came out of the line who had no money, but they would not give him a cup of tea without pay. I went to a place where I could change my socks, and as I did so I found in one of the socks a letter from the woman who had knitted them, some charitably-minded woman of Toronto who had sent them over as a free gift to some poor soldier. But someone had got them and charged ten pence to pass them on."

That is the Roman Catholic Church. You must pay for everything—pay for baptism, pay for marriage, pay for burial, pay for mass. It is an institution that plays middleman, and makes merchandise of the souls of men.

But remember, you need come to only one Priest, and a Priest Who sits on the throne of grace. Salvation is all of God, and you have absolutely nothing to pay. He does not forgive you on condition that you promise to do this or that: He freely forgives you all. It is of the very nature of grace to forgive.

And *God is faithful*. He will keep His word. If He says, "Thy sins and thy iniquities are all forgiven, go in peace and sin no more", He has pledged His word, and you can abide upon his faithfulness for ever. That is faith, just taking the word of God as it is. As they say down south, "Just as is"; "I believe the Bible just as is." Take it as it is, and when He promises forgiveness, accept it.

And He is *just*. May I say, God has to forgive us; He is bound to forgive us if we really repent. I remember when that great truth came home to me, when I

saw that the justice of God which I feared so much had become my best friend. When my debt had been paid, the very justice of God compelled him to forgive me, so that I had not only the love of God, but the faithfulness and the justice of God on my side:

"Payment He will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

And last of all there is power in the grace of God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—to make us clean in the sight of God. Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we have neither hell nor a man-made purgatory to fear.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For Who ought to my charge shall lay?
While through Christ's blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame!"

Why should we spoil the simple gospel of the grace of God by all these human complications? We have but to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Him with all your heart, and you shall never perish but have everlasting life.

You who come to the Table to-night rejoice that this is not a Mass, not a sacrifice. The sufficient Sacrifice was once offered, and it has never been repeated. This is but a memorial feast. That bread is not the body of Christ; that wine is not the blood of Christ. It is a symbolic representation of the body and blood of our Lord, by which our memories are refreshed and our hearts inspired. And once again we say, Hallelujah; the glorious Lamb is before the throne of God for me. I cannot see Him, but I know He is there; and until I can see Him again, He gives me this memorial feast, having compassion on my short memory. So we shall come with hearts full of gratitude, not to earn salvation, but to celebrate a salvation that is ours for ever by the free grace of God.

Marshal Pétain a Roman Catholic

Few Protestants are aware of the extent to which Marshal Pétain is regarded by Roman Catholics as a religious hero because of the way in which he has brought about a Catholic revival in France. It is scarcely necessary to add that the revival which appears to give Roman Catholics so much ground for joy is chiefly visible in its legislative form—the extension of all sorts of special privileges to the Roman Church at the expense of the State.

The following letter appeared in a Catholic Action daily, *Le Devoir*, in its issue of May 10. We print it here because it is a comprehensive summary of some of the salient proofs of the fanatical Catholicism of Marshal Pétain. The writer of the following letter is not a member of the staff of that paper but he could easily produce reams of pages from that same publication in proof of his statements. Every day this prominent Catholic organ in Montreal has been busy feeding its readers with evidences of the Catholic Revival that is being operated in fallen France through the legislative decrees of the Catholic Pétain and Company, and every day it is becoming more and more evident that these same Catholic Revivalists are nothing more nor less than the tools of Hitler and his bloody gang. We gladly concede to *Le Devoir* and all other Catholics any honour they can find

in proving that such men as these are devoted Catholics who are following the programme of Catholic Action as laid down by the papacy.—W.

The Catholicism of Marshal Pétain

Translation of part of a letter which appeared in *Le Devoir*, May 10, 1941.

"*Le Devoir* has every claim to all the gratitude of honest men, and in particular of our compatriots and fellow Catholics, for having kept us so well informed on the events in France since the fall of France in June, 1940. It has given us the truth which delivers, the light which lightens in these dark days of obscurantism when a frantic propaganda delivers the too credulous spirits to every wind of doctrine.

"Well informed concerning the patriotic and religious renewal of our ancient mother country, we give our admiration and our confidence to that providential man who is saving France, Marshal Pétain. As in the case of the saint of the fatherland, Jeanne d'Arc, the trials of contradiction only prove the benefit of his work. In some circles attempts are made to discredit Pétain, as a little while ago they were made against the saviour of Spain, the well named Franco: a Masonic propaganda which unfortunately misled even some members of our Catholic élite.

"General Franco was treated as 'a Free Mason, an insurgent, a rebel, an inquisitor . . .,' accusations which return on his enemies, the Red Communists, to their shame, for truth always triumphs. In the same way Pétain is now treated as 'a bad Catholic, a traitor, a pro-nazi . . .'. And there are among us some well-meaning men, simple enough to re-echo these slanders even without having verified the sincerity of his accusers.

"Pétain a bad Catholic? One has only to look at all the laws favourable to the Catholic Church that he has just decreed: the recalling of the Catholic Orders, restoration of property to monks and nuns, liberty for confessional schools, repression of pornographic literature and of anti-religious propaganda, appeasement of class struggles, suppression of communism and of Free Masonry, and finally, abolition of the famous *lay laws*, veritable anti-catholic laws according to the authors of them. These are the acts of a Catholic statesman of far reaching effects. They recall to us the energetic action of Garcia Moreno in Ecuador.

"Some impenitent republicans, lost in the clouds of abstractions, (such as M. Maritain) claim that these legislative measures of Pétain have little importance because the (Catholic) Church already enjoyed a certain degree of toleration under the last republican governments. Simplicity or blindness? And do they not see in what bad company they find themselves when they regret the fall of the Masonic republic?

"A little reflection, a little experience, a little realism, would be enough to make clear the power of the threats against the (Catholic) Church of laws which sleep in the statutes and which the sects could brandish over the heads of Catholics at the opportune moment: the simple threat is enough to restrain militant Catholics while it paralyzes the rest with golden chains . . . as so many other Masonic rulers have done in France and elsewhere. We saw how the infamous Calles made use of the 'cleeping' constitution of Carranza to persecute the (Catholic) Church in Mexico.

"And again, witness the rage of the Jews and the Masons in France to hinder the overthrow of the *lay laws*, which says much concerning the importance of a legislation which is frankly Catholic, such as those which Franco, Salazar and Pétain have had the courage to establish.

"Finally the Catholic value of the legislative work of Pétain has been confirmed by the apostolic benediction of His Holiness Pius XII, and by the unequivocal testimony of the entire episcopacy of France (*Le Devoir*, April 24, p. 7). Already the speeches of the two eminent cardinals, Gerlier and Baudrillart have rendered the most eloquent testimony to Pétain.

"That is truly sufficient to class Marshal Pétain as a Catholic statesman in his public life, whatever certain propagandists blinded by party feelings, may say who seem to think they are better informed than the heads of the Catholic Church who have remained on the spot.

"But it is said, 'Does not Pétain by his private life contradict his public avowal of Catholicism?' It is easy to reply first of all by the argument from authority: the high approbations received by Pétain the statesman reflect his Catholic spirit and constitute at least a strong presumption in favour of his private life. And in addition, here are two typical facts which will, without doubt, pass into history, as did those concerning Marshal Foch. And they throw a light on the Catholic faith and the religious practice of Marshal Pétain.

"At the time when he was a simple colonel, the ministry of War, then directed by a notorious Free Mason, requested Pétain to make a report on certain of his officers who went to Mass. (i.e., on those who attended Mass in uniform, which was at that time forbidden by French Army regulations. Note by G.W.) Pétain made this proud reply: 'The colonel attends mass each Sunday, but as he takes the front row, he cannot see those that are behind him.'

"On the thirteenth of June, 1940, Generals Weygand and George asked for an armistice. The ministers talked of moving to Africa. Pétain supported the former and condemned the ministers. After the meeting of the Council, Pétain and Weygand went to their hotel and continued the debate until far on in the night. The situation seemed desperate. The dawn had come in through the closed windows when all at once, the Marshal rose and took Weygand by the arm: 'Come,' he said, 'let us go and seek the aid of Him who will never betray us, the help of the God that we worship.'

"There was a church near the hotel. There the two captives fell on their knees and fervently asked God for light and strength both for themselves and for their beloved country. . . . When, at last, the hero of Verdun rose, he was deathly pale, but a new light in his tired eyes. 'I know now what I ought to do . . . and by God, I shall do it,' he said slowly in the manner of the Maid of Orleans.

"These two stories appear to be authentic. Other facts are added from day to day, as for instance the recent pilgrimage of Pétain to the shrine at Lourdes and so may other gestures which demonstrate the Catholic faith of the Marshal. . . ."

On the Making of Errors

Without entering into the discussion on "Fiddling While the World Burns" recently carried on in *The Christian Standard* of Cincinnati, John G. Alber of Nebraska introduces his recent article with a good story. Letting him tell the story in his own way, we publish it verbatim as he tells it:

Regarding the charge of "error" made in an editorial in *The Christian Standard* of June 8, 1940, let me say I am reminded of the story of the little girl, who, coming home from a Christian Science Sunday-school, was asked by her mother to change her dress.

Picking up her little dog Fido, she ran upstairs, changed her dress, and as she started down she tripped and fell. The mother came screaming, "Darling, are you hurt?"

She replied, "No, Mother! Every time I hit a step, I said, 'Truth! Truth! Truth!' but poor Fido must be almost killed, for, every time he hit, he yelped, 'Error! Error! Error!'"
—*Western Recorder*.

Quebec Catholic Privileges

"The Catholic Church enjoys in our Province of Quebec a body of privileges that more than one country might well envy. Thanks to the good understanding between the spiritual and temporal powers, the Church can live its own life, and develop without hindrances. The nominations of bishops and parish priests, and of other ecclesiastical positions are made without interference from the State. The ecclesiastical, or religious institutions, can receive the civil authorities without being submitted to annoying formalities, and may acquire temporal property as easily as can secular institutions. The Church controls public education of all grades; it controls the greater part of the charitable organizations. Our soil is covered with a multitude of organizations of every kind called into being by the powerful voice of the Church, submitted to its influence, receiving orders from it: universities, seminaries,

colleges, convents, academies, schools, patronages, orphanages, hospices, asylums, infants' homes, creches, etc., etc."—*From The Catholic Press* by Mgr. Elias Roy, Montréal, September, 1925.

Nothing Nicely Done

A London literary journal publishes a review of a slender volume of poems by a young poet who sings of

"the end of nothing,

Of nothing nicely done and dearly cherished."

That sums up more lives than it is pleasant to contemplate. It is tragic enough in the lives of the unsaved who cherish their daily round of doing nothing, but how much more tragic to contemplate the wastage of those who are indwelt by the life of Christ and who compel Him to silence with them when He would be going forth in great action. It is true that "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17). But what shall be said of the Christian who keeps on doing nothing nicely? "Wood, hay and stubble" is his building that must be swept away in the great moment of shame when the Lord comes forth.—*Revelation*.

The Neutrality of Eire

Rev. D. James Little, M.P., describes Southern Ireland as "the only dark spot in all the vast British Empire," in view of the fact that Eire persists in "neutrality" so far as the present war is concerned. There appears to be a continued agitation to unite Ireland North and South, but Mr. Little, writing in the *Daily Telegraph* describes this as foolish, hopeless and ill-timed, owing to the neutral attitude of the South "in the war for the triumph of Christianity and civilization." He quotes a well-known Southern Roman Catholic lawyer as having said: "If England wins we shall be eternally dishonoured; if Germany wins, we shall be eternally enslaved." The people of Protestant Ulster, says Mr. Little, will never have any alliance with a country that has turned its back on the Mother Country, which has nourished it, in the hour of danger and peril. Northern Ireland, he adds, "will go side by side with Britain until victory has been won and a righteous peace established on the earth."—*Christian Herald*.

Oldest Bible Fragment

What is stated to be the oldest known fragment of the Bible—a papyrus roll of the book of Deuteronomy—was acquired in Egypt by the late Dr. J. Rendell Harris, who died recently at Selly Oak in his 90th year. He was one of the most distinguished Biblical scholars and archaeologists in the world, and was the first layman and first member of the Society of Friends to be President of the National Free Church Council. When he obtained the papyri in 1917 from an Egyptian peasant who had it hidden away, Dr. Harris was recuperating from the effects of spending two days in a boat in the Mediterranean after his ship had been torpedoed. Among his contributions to archaeology was the theory that the Egyptians built Stonehenge as a temple for the joint worship of the sun and the dead. He himself was satisfied that the Egyptians settled in Wiltshire, and that they also had something to do with Harrogate.—*Christian Herald*.

Persecution in Spain

"Complete toleration for all Christian communions in Spain will continue to be the policy and practice of the National Spanish Government." This was the clear assurance of General Franco. How is it being carried out?

Halls where the gospel of grace is preached have been raided and people in attendance imprisoned. "A large number of believers are still in prison, and sentences of various terms of imprisonment are still being passed on them." Even evangelical churches which do remain open are not allowed to invite to their gatherings. Tons of Bibles have been taken, for instance, from the depot of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Madrid. Protestants, "especially in the country districts, can neither obtain work nor partake of the government relief, unless they give up their Protestant principles. Many of them are starving."

Christ the Conqueror

By Dr. William Hazer Wrighton

Victory is the major note of God's song of redemption. On the same day that sin enters, salvation by the suffering Redeemer is heralded. No sooner had Satan lifted his head in defiance of God than the bruising of his head is foretold. Messiah shall crush this proud adversary of the human race. The Seed of the woman shall destroy the arch conspirator. Satan conquered man, but he shall be conquered himself by the Son of man. The first Adam was overthrown by him, but the last Adam shall break him and bring him to nought. The first man lost his strength through Satan, but the adversary shall be deprived of power by the second man.

The triumph over Satan and sin was dearly bought; Christ was bruised for our iniquities. Redemption was not a compromise, for it was founded upon the full expiation of human guilt, and it was removed by the curse being exhausted in the atoning death of the suffering Saviour. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Lord Jesus thou wast bruised for *my* iniquity.

Jehovah lifted up his rod:
O Christ it fell on Thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;
There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;
Thy bruising healeth me.

Because Christ was bruised for our iniquities, the God of peace can now righteously allow us to share his victory, and so he promises to bruise Satan under our feet. The adversary loses his strength and is confounded and debilitated of his power to destroy when the God of peace comes on the field to battle. Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.—*Watchman-Examiner*.

Dr. W. H. Wrighton's Summer Engagements

Dr. W. H. Wrighton, head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Georgia, is making an extended speaking tour this summer.

On May 30th he will be speaking in Arlington Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland. From there he will go to Nyack, New York, to give the baccalaureate address at Nyack Missionary Training Institute. From then until June 4th he will be filling an engagement each night at Calvary Baptist Church, West 57th Street, New York City.

Returning from New York, he will give several addresses at the Ben Lippen Student Conference, Asheville, N.C., afterwards leaving for a series of addresses at the Second Presbyterian Church, Altoona, Pennsylvania, and going from there to the Western Pennsylvania Conference at Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania.

From June 28th to July 24th, Dr. Wrighton will be teaching at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, and during that time, on July 14th, he will give a special lecture to the faculty and student body of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

Following this he will speak at Erieside General Conference near Cleveland, Ohio, and then from July 27th to August 5th, will fulfill a lecture engagement for the Canadian Keswick Conference in the Muskoka Lake district, Ontario.

From August 6th to 13th he will be speaking at Memorial Church, Stratford, Ontario, and will finish up his tour with an engagement at the Northwestern Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, from August 17th to 24th.

Sir Samuel Hoare Attends Mass

Sir Samuel Hoare, British ambassador, attended mass in the new chapel of Madrid's ruined cathedral of San Isidor. The chapel was paid for by British Roman Catholics and by the British Council which is subsidized by the British government.—*From The Ottawa Citizen, May 28, 1941.*

From Hell to Vatican

The Zurich correspondent of the Overseas News Agency reported on April 28, that a telegram has been received at the Vatican bearing the cryptic message: "A.B.A.B.", which no one could decipher "until it was handed to a famous Jesuit scholar who reported that it was a message from hell. The letters, he said, signified 'Abbiamo Balbo, Aspettiamo Benito'—'We have Balbo, we expect Benito'."—*From The Converted Catholic.*

UNION NEWS

Hespeler Church

A representative audience met at the Baptist Church recently to welcome officially the new pastor, Rev. W. Lorne Hisey and his wife, Mrs. Hisey. The mortgage on the church parsonage was burned by John Reeve, Sr., who stated that his identification with the congregation dated back to its earliest days. He gave a brief history of the local work since it was organized. The burning of the mortgage signifies the clearing of the debt on the parsonage property.

The Hespeler Baptist Church wishes to express its deepest appreciation to those who by their generous gifts in this regard have made the burning of the mortgage possible at this time. This church is having a period of rich blessing under the ministry of Mr. Hisey and it is becoming the usual thing to see souls seeking salvation at the Sunday evening service when the invitation is given.

Val D'Or

"We started building operations yesterday, i.e., digging (by hand)," writes Rev. W. J. Wellington. "The foundation will be of solid cement for three and one-half feet deep. The remainder of the building will be of cement blocks. Downstairs will contain a parsonage and furnace room, and upstairs the auditorium and two small rooms at the back. A carpenter has drawn the plans for us without charge. He had offered to do so voluntarily. Another man with building experience and who attends our church will continue to aid. Last week during visiting I encountered a man for the first time who immediately volunteered to do the plumbing work for us. He is a steam-fitter. This offer will save us more than one hundred dollars."

"As you will recall, the lot is in Val d'Or just where it joins Bourlamaque, well situated. It is a joy to witness God's gracious providence in these matters. The cost of building will be around \$1,900.00, and we are trusting the amount will be met and paid before too long a period."

Edmonton, Alberta

Owing to ill health, Pastor C. S. McGrath resigned the middle of April, and has returned with his family to Ontario. Under his pastorate the Church made steady progress both spiritually and materially. They had the joy of witnessing twenty believers follow their Lord in the waters of baptism during the past two years, and heavy financial obligations were met. During his ministry, the indebtedness was reduced about one thousand dollars on the church building. During the past month Rev. E. V. Phillips and Rev. J. H. Pickford have been supplying.

Western Baptist Bible College

In the Westbourne Baptist Church of Calgary, Thursday, May 1st was the sixth graduation exercises of the Western Baptist Bible College. The three graduates spoke in turn: Miss Velma Hartley, Mr. George Hart, and Miss Helen Brown. The graduation banquet on Tuesday evening, April 29th, was another high spot in the life of our College. Nearly one hundred friends of the graduates gathered around a well prepared supper served in a colorfully decorated room. As usual, on this occasion each of the graduates gave his personal testimony as to the Lord's dealing in his life, especially during the past three years.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 5 Second Quarter Lesson 24 June 15, 1941

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

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN OF GOD

Lesson Text: 1 John 3.

Golden Text: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"—1 John 3:2.

I. Their Unity of Hope—verses 1 to 3.

The Father's love to His children is boundless, eternal and sovereign (Isa. 54:8; Jer. 31:3; I John 4:10). He has given us the right to be called the children of God (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). Many ancient manuscripts add the words "and we are". We have been born into the family of God with all its privileges. Our high position is not recognized, however, by the outside world (John 16:3; 17:25).

The Father's purpose includes not merely the present enjoyment of His children, but also their future blessing (John 17:24; Tit. 3:7; 2 Pet. 1:3). It is His intention to take away their sin and to produce in them the holy likeness of His Son (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Since we have before us the hope of being made perfect in Christ, we shall endeavour to do our part, that we may grow in grace and holiness (2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-12). Believers have been potentially sanctified once and for all by the death of Christ (1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14); they are being sanctified experimentally from day to day by His Spirit through the Word (John 15:3; 17:17; 1 Thess. 5:23); and we shall be completely sanctified when He comes to free us from the presence of sin (Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 3:4).

II. Their Unity of Holiness—verses 4 to 10.

Scripture, like all truth, is never at variance with itself, and there is no real contradiction between verse 9 and 1 John 1:8. The key to the understanding of this passage lies in the definition of sin given in verse 4, which reads thus in the Revised Version: "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness". In this paragraph the word "sin" does not seem to be used in its widest sense, but in this restricted sense of lawlessness, or rebellion against the authority of God (Lk. 19:14).

In Christ was found no sin at all, and of course no lawlessness. He gladly accepted the will of God and perfectly obeyed it (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Heb. 10:7). He died to atone for the rebellion of man (Rom. 5:12-19).

One who commits spiritual lawlessness manifests to all that he has not seen Christ by the eye of faith, nor known Him, Whom to know is life eternal (John 17:2, 3; 1 John 5:11,12). A Christian may disregard or disobey the will of God, but in his heart he acknowledges God's right to command him; he does not dispute God's authority.

There are only two classes of people; the saved and the lost, the children of God and the children of Satan (John 8:37-44). Satan fell because he set his will in opposition to that of God (Isa. 14:12-15). Since that time he has been tempting men also to disobey God and to refuse to acknowledge His Lordship. Christ was manifested to destroy Satan and all his works (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14).

The Christian, on the other hand, has been born again by the Holy Spirit of incorruptible seed, and has become a partaker of the Divine nature (John 1:13; 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; 2 Pet. 1:4; I John 5:18). He can commit other sins, and does so, unfortunately, but he will not be guilty of lawlessness. Thus the line between believers and unbelievers is sharply drawn.

III. Their Unity of Heart—verses 11 to 24.

The children of God, born of one Father, redeemed by one Saviour and inspired by one hope (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:3-6), should be kindly affectioned one toward another with

brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:32; Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 3:12-14). When we remember that we are our brother's keeper we shall not be moved by jealousy or envy to sin against him as Cain did (Gen. 4:4, 8; Tit. 3:3; Heb. 11:4; 1 Pet. 2:1).

The outside world cannot understand the Christian and hates him as it hated the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:18-25; 17:14), but there is an inner bond of understanding which unites the hearts of all believers, no matter how they may differ from one another in nationality or circumstances. This sympathy which we feel toward our brothers in the Lord is a sign that we are His.

John speaks strongly, and makes sharp contrasts between life and death, light and darkness, love and hate. Love, in the Scriptural sense, is not a sentimental fancy or a weak emotion, but it is the high Spirit-born desire for the good of others (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22). It is a willingness to sacrifice for others, and may be quite independent of natural affinities.

One who does not love his brother is a potential murderer. The Holy Spirit defines sin in terms of thoughts, purposes and motives, as well as in terms of deeds. Harboring ill-feeling against another is the seed from which murder springs (Matt. 5:21, 22; John 8:44). A murderer may repent and turn to the Lord, but the one who does not have the distinguishing mark of fellowship with other Christians is not himself a Christian. His deeds before men will indicate his standing before God (Matt. 7:16; Jas. 2:24).

It is a great thing to be saved, and to know it. This Epistle was written to give believers assurance (1 John 5:13), and by applying the tests mentioned in the book we shall gain confidence, if we are His. It is possible to be saved, and yet lack this assurance of heart (verse 20), but the Lord would have us rejoice in the sure knowledge that we belong to Him (John 15:10, 11; 1 John 5:20). Without restraint we may bring our petitions to Him as our loving heavenly Father, knowing that we have freedom of access into His very Presence through the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:32; Eph. 2:13-19; 1 John 5:14, 15).

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