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DUBIOUS DIVINITY

IT IS frequently charged that much of "fundamentalism" represents simply a needless wrangling about doctrine. We are told that fundamental or evangelical circles are made up of cantankerous people whose chief delight is to engage in hair-splitting quarrels that result only in ugly spirits, big splits and contentious saints. Implied in this criticism is the contention that actually we care very little about the souls of men.

As we have listened to such declarations and read these charges, we have naturally noted that those who have levelled these criticisms at evangelicals have usually done so in order to justify their own infidelity. Whatever be the motives of our critics, however, we have had to stop to ask ourselves if there were any truth in such charges. Is our concern only with meaningless doctrine? Is our oft-expressed concern for souls only a theoretical one? Are we really more interested in fighting with brethren than we are in reaching the lost?

First of all, let it be said that discussions about doctrine are very necessary. Those who would belittle doctrinal discussion and clarity of thought give evidence of illogical minds. Doctrine is basic and if we have no sure, clear message from the Lord, there is no point in our approaching others. It is utter folly to cry, "Forget about our differences and get on with the work!" It is only as we grasp the truth of God and as it lays hold upon us that we can be used in gospel work.

It is very possible, however, to acquire a contentious frame of mind so that from a valiant fight for the truth we carry over a spirit which would prompt us to rise up to fight about anything and everything. This has contributed to giving a bad name to "fundamentalism", evangelicalism or the Baptist cause. The enemies of the gospel quickly lay hold upon this and use it to discredit the gospel.

Closely allied to this consideration is the criticism that we are actually more interested in abstract doctrinal discussions than we are in the souls of men. Not for one moment would we join this chorus that disparages doctrinal clarification but again let us concede that there is an ever-present danger that we might become theorists. How easy it is to become involved in minute speculation about fine points of theology while, at the same time, the very things under discussion have no influence upon

the life. Payson well declared that "if there is one fact, one doctrine or promise of the Bible, which has produced no effect upon your temper or conduct, rest assured that you do not truly believe it."

For instance, we loudly profess to believe that men and women, without Christ, are bound for a lost eternity. We strongly resent hearing and reading that modernists deny the existence of hell and of any future punishment and we rightly contend that such a denial is also a denial of the Word of God. *But what effect does the existence of hell have upon our conduct and our attitude toward those who are thither bound?* Are we as zealous in seeking to pull others from the fire as we are vehement in our denunciation of those who deny the existence of eternal fire? Is our protest against error equalled and surpassed by our positive and practical devotion to the truth?

If we ever lose this consuming compassion for the lost, then truly we are as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." We may indeed be *very* correct doctrinally and have an unassailable system of thought but it has no heart. Like a well-executed piece of marble it has a cold shape but no warmth or life. It may excite intellectual admiration but it will also merit divine displeasure.

In Canada we have an opportunity to demonstrate whether we possess a cold, lifeless dogma or a vital, dynamic faith. Just in recent days we drove through some of the growing new suburbs of our own city. Only those who have visited such areas can realize how many persons are resident in them. Tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of souls populate these districts and others like them across this country. Each person in them is bound for eternity and most have never heard the gospel. While we satisfy ourselves with discussions *about* the gospel, have we forgotten that we are commanded to *take* the gospel to men? If you are content each week with sitting in comfort to read and to enjoy the contents of this gospel paper and, at the same time, have no practical concern for the lost, you may be assured that our critics are right when they say that we have no genuine compassion for men.

Fine points of divinity may cater to intellectual pride and may minister to spiritual snobbery but if that divinity does not thrust us out to reach lost souls, it is indeed dubious divinity.

CONSECRATED CENTS

LITTLE is much when God is in it." In a time of mass movements and collective thinking, we are apt to discount the far-reaching influence of that which is meagre. We are inclined to despair of any contribution which an individual can make to the work of the Lord; the needs are so extensive and pressing that one is tempted to throw up the hands in despair and ask — "What can one person do?"

As one views the need for gospel-preaching, Bible-believing churches in Canada, this feeling of futility can easily become dominant. There is such a desperate need and so many centres that should be occupied in the name of the Lord that the question arises—"Where can we obtain the financial resources alone for a positive, aggressive program?"

In order to help in meeting this need, the Dollar-A-Month Club was organized last October. It operates on the principle that the consecrated, small, regular gifts of God's people can accomplish great things. Those who join simply agree to send one dollar per month; this money is put into a church edifice loan fund and will be loaned at a nominal interest rate to pioneer works which need permanent buildings. One dollar is not much today and by itself will buy very little; but one dollar per month from only one thousand people would in five years create a working fund of *sixty thousand dollars*.

These dollars will be busy and will work again and again for as a church repays its loan, the money will be loaned to other needy causes. One single dollar will thereby be the means of blessing many areas and will be used to send the gospel out to perishing souls. Put your change to work — less than four cents per day will be used mightily of God.

MY COVENANT DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB

Desiring to have a vital part in the work of the furtherance of the Gospel, I hereby pledge One Dollar per month, to be applied to the Church Extension Loan Fund of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. This money will be loaned out to deserving causes to assist in the erection of suitable places of worship. (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Name

Address

PRESUMPTION FROM TWO ASPECTS

A venerable Christian woman was accustomed to use some such language as this, when describing her own spiritual condition: "I trust I have looked alone to the Lord Jesus, and I have a humble hope that through his precious blood I shall be saved at the last; but it's not for the likes of me to be confident and sure. I could not have the presumption to say that I know I am saved." In process of time the good woman sickened, and her last hour drew on apace, and with it light and peace; then she was heard to say, "I never felt myself more a sinner than I do now, and my unworthiness and my inward corruptions rise up clear before me; but I have believed in the Lord Jesus, and it's not for the likes of me to question his power to save. I dare not have the presumption to doubt the word of the Lord my God, and hath he not said, 'He that believeth hath everlasting

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life?" See, trembling Christian the true presumption, and be afraid of it; the other so-called presumption is but simple faith, of which none can have too much.

—From *The Sword and the Trowel*

United Churchmen Moscow Bound

Three officials of the United Church of Canada will shortly be leaving for the Soviet Union for a 10 day visit as guests of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is our prediction that they will return with much sweet talk about the lovely state of religion in red Russia and will thus contribute to fooling people who refuse to examine the facts about religion in the Soviet and its satellites. Just how these ten-day travellers manage to become authorities upon the places they visit has always baffled us but it seems as though it is always the case. We trust that our fears about the Moscow visit are wrong and that the three United churchmen will return to Canada to present documented facts rather than sentimental wishful thinking.

UNITED CHURCH SENDS THREE ON MOSCOW VISIT

Three members of the United Church of Canada will arrive in Moscow, August 6, for a 10-day visit as guests of the holy synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, it was announced today.

The Canadian delegation, appointed by the executive of the church's general council, are: Rt. Rev. George Dorey, moderator of the United Church; Dr. E. E. Long, secretary of the general council, and Dr. W. Norman McLeod, prominent layman and chairman of the church's board of finance.

The trip is a return visit at the invitation of the three Russian churchmen who visited Canada last November.

—TORONTO STAR, May 29, 1956

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

NEIGHBOURLY RELIGION

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, September 5th, 1937

"Who is my neighbour?" Luke 10:29

We bow in Thy presence, O Lord, in the Name of Him Who is our Saviour. Once again we thank Thee for the cleansing of the Blood. We bless Thee for the truth of His entering into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. We thank Thee for the assurance of Thy presence with us, for Thou art always in the midst of those who are assembled in Thy name. Look upon this congregation, we pray Thee, this morning. Make us all to feel something of the operation of Thy Spirit. May He take of the things which are Christ's and reveal them unto us.

We desire to be made aware that Thou art near. May we not believe it merely as a theory, or as an assurance of Thy Word, but may we have an experience of Thy presence in our own hearts, so that we know that Thy Word is available to us; that Thou art here speaking to us by Thy Spirit.

Thy people have come together urgently in need of Thee. We all have our burdens to bear. We are often perplexed; many are troubled. We pray that Thou wilt draw near to us, and minister to our hearts this morning. May we go from this place strengthened by contact with the Divine.

And we especially pray this morning for those who are absent from us, for the hundreds of homes represented in our School, for the children who have not been with us, and for the anxious parents who care for them. We pray that Thy hand may be upon them all for good, and upon the children everywhere, upon all nurses and doctors, and those who minister in any way to the sick. We pray, O Lord, that if it please Thee, speedily to stay this scourge which threatens. Be pleased, O Lord, to count the lives of the little ones precious in Thy sight, and grant that through it all we all may be led to look to Thee more than we have ever done. Help us that our trust may be in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Look, we pray Thee, upon this world of confusion, just at this hour. We think of the warring nations, of those who seem bent upon conflict, with all the national hatreds. We pray that Thou wilt in Thine own way bring peace. Give wisdom, we pray Thee, to the rulers of all nations, and especially we pray that Thou wilt be gracious to those who rule over us, the king and his counsellors, at home, and in all the dominions. We pray that the will of the Lord may be done in all our national affairs.

We commend to Thee especially this morning Thy servants who have gone to the far places of the earth, to carry the gospel of Thy grace, the much afflicted saints in Spain, and in Italy, in Germany and Russia. And now especially, too, in China. We pray that Thou wilt cover them with Thy wings. May they find in Thee a safe shelter! We think this morning especially of some who are known to us in Shanghai, and in other parts of troubled China. Bless them, and make them abundantly useful in these times of stress.

Be pleased, O Lord, to exercise Thy sovereign might in restraining these forces of evil the world around. Make us grateful for our special privileges, for our present immunity, at least, from armed conflict. Bring Thy people of all names into closer fellowship with Thyself.

Bless us here this morning. Help us as we turn to Thy Word, that we may receive direction therefrom, so that we may be better men and women, better fitted to do our work in the world.

Now be pleased to glorify Thyself in Thy servants, we pray Thee in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THIS portion contains the story of a lawyer who came to Jesus tempting Him. The suggestion is that he was not sincerely interested in the question he asked, when he said: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Religion to a good many people is not of very much greater importance than a crossword puzzle, something to talk about, something to discuss, something which affords them an opportunity of displaying their mental agility: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

I remember a friend's telling me of someone who came to him saying, "I understand you are a Baptist?" He said, "Yes, I am." "Well I should like you to explain to me this matter of baptism." He said: "If I do explain it, and you should be convinced that the Scripture plainly teaches that you ought to be baptized, will you be baptized?" She said, "Certainly not." "Then," he said, "I have no time to waste in discussing it with you."

How many people there are who assume that attitude toward religion, as though it were a mere academic question upon which to engage our wits.

Further, our Lord set before this lawyer the heart of the whole matter. He threw him upon his own religious knowledge, saying, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And He summed it up in the two-fold application of a man who loved the Lord with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. And then He said: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." To which the lawyer replied: "And who is my neighbour?"

Have you not met people like that? You answered one question only to invite another. A friend of mine told me of a negro who had a very shrewd way of avoiding discussion. He was his manservant down in Texas, and whenever he asked him an awkward question that the negro did not want to answer, he would smile and say, "Well now, Massa' that fetches on a lot more talk." There are a good many people who want to fetch on a lot more talk, as though religion were a thing of the intellect, and of the tongue only.

How marvellously our Lord in this case, and in all cases, swept, and still sweeps, away all subterfuges, and brings us to the heart of the whole matter! He answered this man in the memorable parable that we generally speak of as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It was uttered long ago, but it is not worn out. There are pictures which do not last very long. If some of you ladies are old enough to have had your picture taken twenty-five years ago, with a hat on, you would not show it to anyone to-day. One would suppose that you had brought your whole flower garden with you. The styles were "out", but in this photographic album you will find that

the pictures are taken by the light of the divine camera. They say that cameras cannot lie, and they are about the biggest liars on earth. That is why people have their pictures taken. But here you have a picture true to life.

I.

Our Lord, first of all, in answer to this question, presented to this man a PICTURE OF A DESPOILED HUMANITY IN NEED OF NEIGHBOURLY SERVICE. He described a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. How could He possibly have packed more of truth into a simple sentence! Jerusalem, the place of blessing which God had chosen to set His name there, a place of special and peculiar divine revelation, the divine dwelling place where the Mercy Seat was, and the blood was sprinkled. There a divinely-appointed priesthood exercised its ministry, where people might find access to God. And the man is described as with his back turned toward Jerusalem, and headed toward Jericho, the city of the curse. It had been brought low, razed to the ground, and a curse pronounced upon whoever rebuilt it. But on this road the man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, and the road from Jerusalem is still much travelled, crowded with traffic. It is the road the vast majority of our fellows are travelling to-day. It is the broad road that leads to destruction. The most popular of all highways is the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was infested with robbers, for the man fell among thieves. You have not to go far to find robbers. I looked at a magazine yesterday published in England, all about dogs, and I noticed one advertisement in large letters: "Robbers—Robbers — Robbers — Trained Airdales, to protect you from robbers." Well, that may be very well, but there are robbers abroad in this world to-day from whose deprivations we cannot be protected by mere Airdales. Robbers everywhere, notwithstanding our evolutionary progress, according to the Modernists, notwithstanding our approximation to the divine ideal of things. Look at Ethiopia, red with blood! Look at the ruler of Italy, just a plain unvarnished, unmitigated robber and murderer, who does not deserve to be considered by any civilized nation on earth. And Germany is no better. Russia is no better. Spain is no better, nor Japan. These nations of gangsters, throwing off all restraint, and showing human nature as it really is. But you have not to go so far afield as that. You can find plenty of robbers at home. If you doubt it, go and do a little business tomorrow. The road that goes from Jerusalem to Jericho is still infested with thieves. I do not care very much where you go, whether in business, in politics, or in religion, you can find robbers to accommodate you. I asked a man a direction one time. He told me of two places. I said, "Which is better?" He said, "It does not make any difference, for either of them will take your money from you." Whether they would give any service in return was another matter. That is not an exaggeration, not a pessimistic view of life. Robbers everywhere! Nobody would say, surely, that we have reached millennial conditions yet. That road that goeth from Jerusalem to Jericho is crowded with travellers, and even on that crowded thoroughfare the man falls among thieves.

And here is a description of it: He "fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." I do not know how many men have come to me and said, "I have been stripped, involved in business where another man was sharper and shrewder", and perhaps still a little more dishonest.

There are people everywhere who seem to have no conscience whatever, and the man who is at their mercy, is stripped of everything, and wounded.

I was passing along a country road just a week or so ago, and I saw a garden, and I went in to talk with the man, and there was an interesting little dog there which I tried to make friends with. I confess I like dogs, and usually, somehow or another, they like me. I usually have no difficulty with them. But this little fellow came just within a certain distance, and as I made an advance toward him, off he went. He would not be friendly. I said to the man, "Why is that?" "Oh," he said, "I have not had him very long. But when I got him he had been with a man who ought never to have had a dog. He was brutal, cruel, and the poor little chap has been kicked about and beaten ever since he has known anything. Now he is afraid of everybody. He is not afraid of us now, we treat him well, but of strangers he is very shy."

He had been beaten. The world is full of wounded people, people who have been wounded in their spirits, stripped and beaten so often that they trust no one. I saw a political slogan on a big sign — I shall not tell you to whom it referred, but here it was — "You can trust So-and-So." Can you? Can you trust anybody? "Oh," you say, "that is pretty pessimistic." No, it is not. You profess to be very trustful, with certain reservations, which you keep to yourself. I am not reflecting upon anyone, but just stating the plain facts. This is a cruel world in which we live. I can find you thousands of people in Toronto who, at the hands of their fellows have been stripped and wounded in every walk of life, until it is difficult for them to have confidence in humankind anywhere.

"Leaving him half dead." Defenceless against his opponents! Now that is about the condition of people. What are you going to do? Is not that a picture of the world generally, whether you close your Bible and refuse to believe it or not, there are not only the human robbers, but there are the principalities and powers, the rulers of this world's darkness, of whom these visible creatures are but the instruments. But that is how men have suffered in this world since sin entered into the world, and death by sin, a graphically accurate picture of the world when sin has done its work — someone going from Jerusalem to Jericho, stripped, wounded, half dead. What will you do with a world like that?

II.

This man was not a lawyer in the sense in which we understand the term — he was one who professed to be learned in this law; he was a religious lawyer. That is why the Lord threw him back upon his own Book, saying, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" He was a religious man who cynically came to the world's Saviour to ask, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" THE LORD GAVE HIM A PICTURE OF AN UNNEIGHBOURLY RELIGION, of which he, himself, was the representative. And in the picture of this stripped and wounded man, there passed by a religious official, a priest. What did he do? Nothing. What did he do for the wounded man? Nothing. What does formal religion do for the mitigation of the world's ills? If you take the Church as a whole, the professing Church, what does it do for the wounded men and women of the earth?

They had this Oxford Group here a little while ago, and one man, a minister, the Pastor of one of the largest

churches in the city, said that in twenty-eight years of ministry he had never known a single conversion under his ministry, or, using their phraseology, "a single life changed". Well, he needed something, did he not? I was working in my garden one day when a minister of the United Church came to see me. I had never met him before, but he had been touched by the Oxford Group, and he thought I needed it. So he came to minister the Groupism to me. I sat down with him, and I said, "Now tell me, what has it done for you? I am glad to see you. Delighted to shake hands with you. I frankly confess that I want all the blessing I can get, and if there is anyone who can bring me some, I am looking for him. What has this done for you?" Well, he told me of a sad case of a young girl, a member of one of his families, who something over a year before had committed suicide, and he said, "I was such a coward, I did not dare go to see her family. I had not a word to say to them." "Well," I said, "That is very sad when a minister of the gospel has to say that. But what about this Group business?" "Well, we had a meeting. I went to a house party, and when I came back I was able to go and visit these stricken parents." I said, "That is all it has done for you?" He said, "Yes, so far." "Well, you needed it, or something else."

"There came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. I do not believe there is any enterprise on earth in which people invest more of their time and energy, and money, with absolutely no result than in the business of religion: talk — talk, and do nothing. And the stricken world lies in its blood. The wounded hearts of men have no direct message from God. Nor is that true of religious officials only. A Levite passed that way also. There are lay brothers, religious people. They profess to have something. Had I time I could discover tens of thousands of church members in the city of Toronto, and if I were to sit down with them and say, "How long have you belonged to the church", they would say "Twenty years" or perhaps, "thirty years". "How many people in that time have you been enabled definitely to lead a little nearer to God? What have you done." The vast majority of church members of this city, if they were to tell the truth would say, "I passed by on the other side — I have done nothing". That is not an exaggeration. Even the religion that is called Christian does little for the wounded spirits of men. Some of them do a little for their bodies, but not much.

And then there was another. Our Lord set forth a religion of divine neighborliness, and he laid it down as a principle, accepting what the young man had said. A man's first duty is to God, but the only evidence of a right relationship to God is a right relationship to man. That is the significance of what some people think is a little confusing and contradictory. Paul everywhere in his epistles, speaking of faith, insists that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. James insists that a man is justified by works as well as by his faith. Is there a contradiction? No; you and I have to come into some sort of relationship. I profess to be a Christian. I profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Well, if I really believe in Him, God knows it, I do not need works to justify me before Him. He can read my heart, and if I profess to trust Him, He knows whether it be sincere, or merely lip service. But you do not. If it be true faith in God, my faith justifies me before God, but it does not justify me before you.

You say, "All right; I shall see how he lives. I shall see what he does, if he behaves as a Christian. And if he does, then I shall believe him." And you are perfectly right in doing so. You cannot read each other's hearts, and the only justification of our faith we can give to our neighbours, is that we act as neighbours, that we behave ourselves. I doubt whether anything does more injury to the gospel than a mere doctrinaire religion. And there is an evangelicalism that is strictly orthodox in form. A man may profess to believe the whole gospel, and be as orthodox as Paul theoretically, and be as heterodox as Ananias and Sapphira, practically. I say, there is not anything that does more harm to the Christian religion than a devitalized orthodoxy, a theoretical religion that contends for words only, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." That is the kind of religion this young man had. The Lord Jesus said there was another, and He makes the chief character of His story a Samaritan, one of the lowest type in the estimation of this young religious leader. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. The very name was anathema to them. It was as though the Lord would say, "True religion is not a religion of name only, and form: it is a religion of life and love."

Oh, I know there are many people concerned about vestments, and positions and all the rest of it. I have told you of a certain woman who was a very circumspect Episcopalian. And she was suspicious of the Anglo-Catholic Movement, and anything that savoured of Rome. On a certain social occasion she met a very learned professor, and she said to him. "Professor, have you heard the sad news, that our Rector has adopted the Eastward Position?" "No, Madam, I had not." "Well," she said, "I am afraid it is true." The professor replied, "There are some very learned astronomers who tell us that if every ship in the world could be emptied of all other cargoes, and filled with peas, and if there were a water track from this world to the nearest fixed star, and these ships were to sail in procession, and they were to drop one pea at every mile passed, there are not enough ships in the world to carry the peas that would be necessary to mark the miles from this planet to the nearest fixed star." This woman said, "Extraordinary! What a tremendous distance!" "Yes," he said, "it is Madam. Now let me ask you this question. Do you really think that the Maker of that fixed star is very seriously concerned about this Eastward position of your Rector?" What nonsense, as though God cared for that sort of thing. There are some people who are more concerned about their own vestments than they are of the poor man who has been stripped of all vestments.

II.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN. Of course, there is only One. This parable finds its supreme exemplification in the One Who "took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham," and was made in the likeness of sinful men. He must have been — I had almost said — as a Samaritan in the view of the angels, with His human form. They must have stood amazed that He should have taken upon Him our nature. But He did, and when He came by on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, He went to him. He was filled with compassion. I know not what the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is, if it be not that:

"O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?"

If it does not do that for us, if it does not woo us with compassion in this sinful world, it does not do anything for us. We have little of the compassion of which this parable speaks. I speak to you teachers this morning. The Lord Jesus did not wait until we could climb up to heaven; He did not wait until the half-dead man could help himself, and reclothe himself: He came to us in our sin, even as we were, and stooped to the lowest depths of human need. He visited us. Prophetically, the Psalmist said: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Ah, yes: He visited us: "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" — passed by on the other side; did not care. That is official religion.

But this man stopped. The priest and the Levite made no effort to save the man, or to arrest the robbers. I think we ought to do both, make the road a little safer, if it were possible.

Now I have time only to offer this suggestion. You can turn it over in your own mind. This is the religion of Christ, the Samaritan. The Samaritan went to him, bound up his wounds: "He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised". He poured in oil and wine, and then he set the man on his own beast. Why, that poor man was not even a hitchhiker. He had not strength enough to use his thumb. But the Samaritan set him on his own beast, and brought him to the inn, saying: "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. He is my guest. He is here at my charge. He pays nothing, I pay everything. It is all of grace, not of works." That is the religion of Christ.

Now you and I are the bearers of that message to the stripped and wounded and half-dead sons of men. Tell them of One Who is able to do all that.

Now said Jesus to the young lawyer: "I have told you of three men, the priest, the Levite, and the good Samaritan, and you ask me who is your neighbour. Which of the three was neighbour to the man who had fallen among thieves?" The man replied, "He that shewed mercy on him." And the Lord said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

It is not a question of geography, my dear friends, not a question of terrestrial location at all. This stripped, and wounded, and half-dead man, spiritually, may be found in a mansion. He may really have suffered so terribly in material things that he can hardly hear you when you speak of anything else. Were you uncomfortable last week when it was so hot? Well, what about the people who are living up somewhere in a little attic, a mother with two or three children, as hot as the black hole of Calcutta. There are people in our day who have suffered so terribly in temporal affairs, they can hardly hear you when you preach. You remember that story of Israel in bondage. Their backs are raw from the taskmasters' whips, so terribly bruised. And a great preacher came to them whose name was Moses, and told them that the Lord was going to deliver them. In effect they said: "O, Moses, Moses, we are so oppressed, we are so

crushed, so ground into the earth, we cannot hear you when you preach." They could not listen because of their bitterness of spirit. Whatever we are able to do, let us do it: "Go, and do thou likewise"; carry the message of the sovereign grace of God, Who undertakes for man who cannot undertake for himself, Who pays all our bills: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels", and it is only in one of His chariots that we have any hope of getting to heaven at all. It is only because grace abounded that we poor sinners have any chance to stand at last clothed in white robes, and with palms in our hands. And it is the good Samaritan Who does it.

What a gospel we have dear friends! Ought we not to run with alacrity? Ought not our feet to be beautiful upon the mounts, bringing glad tidings, and publishing peace, and saying to Zion, "Thy God reigneth"? I wonder is there anyone here this morning who is, himself, conscious of having been stripped and wounded, and left half-dead? Is there anyone who would say to me, "Sir, I have been to church again and again, and I have heard the preacher say, 'Do' — 'Do' — 'Do' and I cannot 'Do'. I have no strength to do anything. But if anyone can help me just where I am I want that help." You see that picture of the good Samaritan, just coming right to the place and stooping over him tenderly binding up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and putting his strong arms about him, and lifting him up and taking him to the inn, and saying to the innkeeper, "Take care of him. I will pay for everything." That is the religion of Christ. That is what salvation is: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Are you thus held safe in His arms this morning? If not, you say, "I do not know how to pray." I have often wondered whether this poor, wounded man, in his state that is called "half-dead" could even make a sound. Perhaps he could not call the attention of anyone on the other side of the road. It is not said that the Samaritan came because he cried: He came because he saw him, and he sent to him.

A man brought another man to me from Muskoka. He had testified to this man, and later he brought him to me to talk with him. He was eighty-five years old, and he was not a Christian. I shall never forget that interview. After we had talked I said, "Now let us kneel down and pray". And we knelt there in my vestry and I prayed. Then I said to this old man, "You pray". I waited, but he said nothing. I said, "Come now, you want to be saved. Ask the Lord to save you." Again there was a pause, then he said, "I can't pray, Mister. I am eighty-five years old. I never prayed in my life. I was never taught to pray. I never asked God for anything in my life." I said, "Well, tell Him you cannot pray. Just ask Him to save you." At last he stammered out a sentence, asking the Lord to save him. Stripped, wounded, half-dead, fifteen years beyond the allotted span of life. But he did pray. And do you know, in that vestry there the Samaritan came, and He bound up his wounds, and poured in oil and wine, and lifted him with His strong arm, and saving him.

I quoted him the passage often: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Are you saved?" I asked him. "Yes," he said, "I think He has saved me." He went back to Muskoka, and then some time later, I do not remember just how long, he came down again and I baptized him. He was a long way

on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and a great deal nearer Jericho than Jerusalem, pretty close to the gates of the city of destruction; and there the Samaritan found him, and saved him. And He can save us. I love to see little children saved. But this sovereign Saviour, Whom I proclaim, can save a man of eighty-five years. Whitefield used to say it was His glory to save the devil's castaways, men who were so outwardly sinful that even the devil was ashamed of them because they advertised his business too well. But Jesus will save them.

Oh, if you need Him, and who does not, come to Him this morning. Shall we not all go away from this place this morning in company with the good Samaritan, the great Saviour:

"None but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good".

Let us ask Him to do us all good this morning.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou dost stoop to our helplessness, nay more, to our utter impotence. Thou must do everything for us, because we can do nothing. Thou dost pay everything, because we can pay nothing. Bless our simple meditation this morning. Help us who have been rescued by the Saviour, to devote our lives to His service more thoroughly, that so others may share like precious faith. We ask it for His name's sake, Amen.

THE PLAGUE OF CORRUPT LITERATURE

The plague of corrupt literature has taken, at different times, possession of this country. It is one of the most loathsome, one of the most frightful, one of the most ghastly of the plagues of modern cities. There is a vast number of books and newspapers printed which ought never to see the light. They are filled with a pestilence that makes the land swelter with a moral epidemic. The literature of a nation decides the fate of a nation. Good books, good morals. Bad books, bad morals.

Drive back this plague of corrupt literature by filling the minds of our boys and girls with healthful literature.

I do not mean that all the books and newspapers in our families ought to be religious books and newspapers, or that every song ought to be sung to the tune of "Old Hundred". I have no sympathy with the attempt to make the young old. I would rather join in a crusade to keep the young, young. Boyhood and girlhood must not be abbreviated. But there are good books, good histories, good biographies, good works of fiction, good books of all styles with which we are to fill the minds of the young, so that there will be no more room for the useless and the vicious than there is room for chaff in a bushel measure which is already filled with Michigan wheat.

"Oh," says some one, "I am a business man, and I have no time to examine what my children read. I have no time to inspect the books that come into my household." If your children were threatened with typhoid fever, would you have time to go for the doctor? Would you have time to watch the progress of the disease? Would you have time for the funeral? In the presence of God I warn you of the fact that your children are threatened with moral and spiritual typhoid, and that unless the thing be stopped, it will be to them a funeral of body, funeral of mind, funeral of soul. Three funerals in one day.

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

Religious Broadcasting in Canada

THE topic of broadcasting in Canada has aroused considerable discussion and controversy in recent months. A government-appointed commission is presently investigating the whole field of radio and television and will submit a report to the government.

There are several pertinent subjects that should be considered with reference to religious broadcasting. We would mention two subjects that are intimately related and are surely basic in any consideration of a policy on religious programs.

- (1) The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is a publicly-operated body, should give NO free time for religious broadcasting.

Let us stand solidly by this position for it is the logical outgrowth of an insistence upon the separation of the churches and the state. If evangelicals would be willing to forfeit some dubious advantages for the sake of principle, they would insist that the CBC give free time to no church or religious body.

By no means do we advocate that the CBC discontinue religious broadcasts but let this government corporation sell the time with no favouritism of any one group. The present system is unfair for it requires all the people to pay the bill to operate a broadcasting network that gives free time to selected organizations.

Furthermore, the fact that the CBC has a deficit should cause some of the officials to realize that it is not good business to give away *nearly two million dollars' worth of free time per year!* Let the churches cease being beggars and let the C.B.C. start to exercise some business sense.

- (2) On the French radio and television stations, non-Roman Catholics should be permitted to purchase at least a small percentage of the religious broadcasting time.

The Church of Rome has succeeded in its endeavour to identify the French language with the Roman religion. Hence the French-language stations have largely been the Church's preserve. The Brethren and Baptists, however, have commenced French language works in Quebec, northern Ontario and the Peace River district. After considerable difficulty they managed to purchase some radio time.

At the present time, however, a reaction seems to have set in and the priestly masters have succeeded in closing the airwaves to gospel broadcasters. The Timmins French station CFCL has quietly eased two French programmes off the air—that of Pastor J. R. Boyd of Sudbury and a Brethren group in Timmins. This same station carries *seven hours* of Roman Catholic broadcasts per week!

* * * *

The above are questions that need to be examined by the commission. If Protestants are to be consistent, they will insist on justice in both matters and will not allow an anti-Roman bias to colour their thinking to such an extent that they overlook the other injustice.

No monarch's throne and no presidential chair is so exalted as a pulpit in which a living preacher presents a living Christ to dying souls.

—THEODORE CUYLER

A CALL TO EVANGELISTIC SANITY

A PROMINENT feature of evangelical work during past years has been the city-wide evangelistic campaign. Prominent Bible-believing, gospel-preaching evangelists are engaged to visit the major cities and Christians are asked to support these orthodox preachers by giving of their time, talents and substance. Those who proceed no further in their thought do not bother to realize that the sponsoring committee is composed of a mixed multitude of modernists and evangelicals and that the majority of the converts are steered back to churches where the gospel is not heard.

We have noted that many evangelicals expect every Christian to accept this set-up unquestionably; indeed some good souls are prepared to launch a tirade against anyone who quietly refuses to have anything to do with the whole business. Some Christians have a strange idea of "charity" for we have received some abusive letters from people who have reprimanded us for not mentioning any news about the various city wide campaigns across the country. Using the most vitriolic language they would pummel any who are so "uncharitable" and "intolerant" as to be quiet about their favourite hobby-horse. Indeed we would not be surprised to hear that some are prepared to make blind, unquestioning acceptance of city-wide campaigns a test of fellowship!

Refreshing News

In the light of the present laxity, it is encouraging to hear a powerful voice raised to call Christians back to spiritual sanity on this matter. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., the honoured founder of Bob Jones University and an evangelist of long-standing, has sent out a call to evangelical pastors and evangelists to sign a pledge that they will not participate in, or assist any evangelistic campaign that allows even one modernist as a sponsor. In a letter addressed to "approximately forty thousand pastors in the United States and Canada," he calls for a clear-cut stand upon the issue.

Accompanying his letter is a small booklet containing an address which he delivered at the University on December 6, 1955. By no means do we concur with all that he says but we hail his summons to arms and commend his courage in daring to speak boldly on a subject about which many evangelicals are afraid to speak. From letters that we have received we are inclined to think that many pastors are becoming conscious of the fact that mixed multitude-sponsored evangelism is doing great harm to the cause of Christ. May this rising protest soon be a positive trend that will mark a return to scriptural evangelism.

BLAMES RED RISE ON CATHOLICISM

Edinburgh, May 22. (Reuters)—The moderator of the Free Church of Scotland said today the totalitarianism of the Roman Catholic Church was more responsible for the growth of communism in Europe than any other influence.

Rev. Murdoch Campbell, moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland which opened here today, said that "in the sphere of propaganda it (the Roman Catholic Church) poses as the champion of Christian existence and freedom against the menace of communism.

"But its own sacerdotal totalitarianism has been more responsible for the growth of communism in Europe, and especially in Italy, than any other influence."

RELATIVE TRIALS

TO A sensitive mind no chastisement is so severe as that which falls obliquely upon it through the pain and sorrow of some beloved one. This cross galls the shoulders more than personal affliction. To your own sickness you may oppose growing patience, but who can bear to see the fading cheek, and the tortured countenance of another dearer than one's own life? Yet this is the appointed lot of some of us, and we must not question the wisdom which ordains it so. It is hard to be unable to render assistance, to be helpless where your heart would fain yield half its lifeblood, to be useless where one would be nurse and physician too; but it must be right, for our Father never makes a mistake. But what is the lesson which he means to teach us? Is it intended to make us prize our domestic joys, and cultivate the natural affections while we may? Is it meant to educate our tenderer feelings by exercising our pity and our care? Are we some of us so hard in nature as to need to have the softer qualities developed? It may be so, and yet surely there are higher ends, since these are soon answered. We are thus trained to look above even the dearest earthly loves to the love eternal which is above all, and in whose light believers ought most to walk. We are thus made to turn to the Comforter for consolation both for ourselves and the dear subjects of tribulation, through whose sides we are wounded. Ministers especially need and must have affliction. They must suffer that they may know how to speak seasonable words to others. They above others must have fellowship with Jesus in the endurance of griefs. They must tread the Via Dolorosa again and again, that they may know HIM. This is the true college of Corpus Christi for them. This keeps them looking up and looking out; upward for the glory, onward for the coming of the Lord.

We are not required to conceal our grief, for Jesus wept, and we are not Stoics but Christians; yet we must take heed that neither the sick child nor the afflicted wife become a stumbling-stone to our faith. We must still glorify God, by whose ordination these trials come and go. Blessed he is, and blessed he shall be, do what he may. In a house darkened with a daily sorrow, around a bed where suffering holds its cruel throne, believers must give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, and own him gracious even in the fires. He who pens these lines, in much depression of spirit, fearful lest at any time unbelief should prevail against him, desires at this moment to testify that truly God is good to Israel. Our heavenly Father is as surely wise and kind when he chastens as when he caresses, let flesh and blood say what they will. Neither earth nor hell can bring evidence to the contrary. He is good, and doeth good; let his name be glorified for ever and ever. Yet would he withdraw the rod, his gentleness would melt us; perhaps he will relent at our crying, "Who knoweth but he may turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" Be it so, good Lord, and we will magnify thy glorious name.

—C. H. SPURGEON

The monument I want after I am dead and gone is a monument with two legs going about the world—a saved sinner telling about the salvation of Jesus Christ.

—D. L. MOODY, from *Christian Beacon*.

A BIBLE CHURCH – ITS NATURE AND WORK

HAVING noted that the Scriptural use of the term denotes a congregation, let us now proceed to formulate a Bible-based definition of the word. At this point we might consider several possible definitions. Dr. J. M. Pendleton suggests the following:

"A church is a congregation of Christ's baptized disciples, acknowledging Him as their Head, relying on His atoning sacrifice for justification before God, and depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, united in the belief of the gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and co-operating for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world."

As an abridgement of this larger definition, he suggests the following:

"A church is a congregation of Christ's baptized disciples, united in the belief of what He has said, and covenanting to do what He has commanded."

One hesitates to suggest any improvement upon a definition by such a Baptist stalwart as Pendleton yet we dare to believe that, in these days when honoured words are being emptied of their meanings, there is need for even more clarification. With allowance for minor variations, we would define the New Testament church as being a local, autonomous, democratic and organized body of baptized believers which has one Head (Jesus Christ), two sets of officers (pastors and deacons), two ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper), and one rule of faith (the Bible), fostering spiritual fellowship, maintaining regular services of worship and co-operating with like bodies in kingdom work.

We shall proceed to examine the component parts of this definition and note some of the implications of each.

1. LOCAL. The current abuse of the word "church" as applying to some vague, undefined and invisible collection of persons make it doubly necessary that we emphasize that a true New Testament church is a local body. Thus the Scripture speaks of "the church of God which is at Corinth", "the church in Pergamos" or "the churches of Galatia". This is indispensable to the New Testament concept of the term. Those Christians who boast that they belong to no particular local church but rather belong to "the true invisible church" have no Scriptural warrant whatever for what they regard as this special evidence of higher spirituality. The church with which every Christian is to be concerned this side of heaven is a local church.

2. AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT. The local church must be subject to no external human control. The New Testament knows nothing of dictation to the local church by some "synod", "presbytery" or "bishop". These independent bodies acknowledge no control outside of themselves save that of the Lord Jesus Christ which control they cherish. Indeed it could hardly be termed as control from outside the church for the living Christ makes a true church to be "an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22).

Any external attempt to control or influence the local church can only be regarded as interference. Each assembly is responsible before God for its own government, program and discipline.

In the light of the foregoing, it is inconsistent and un-

scriptural for a church to include in its property trust deed any notorious "reversion clauses" whereby, in the event of a property dispute, the property would automatically revert to some convention, association or other body without regard for the expressed will of the majority. Such a clause is in reality a form of external control for the church at any given moment in time must be free to exercise its own will. Why should the church of today be forced to maintain what might be an unscriptural association simply because that church of a past day inserted such an oppressive and arbitrary provision?

3. DEMOCRATIC. "One is your Master, all ye are brethren." So spoke the great Head of the churches. Thus long before the rise of political liberalism and the democratic form of government, the Lord Jesus Christ prescribed a purely democratic form of government for His churches. When we say this, we are not merely reading twentieth century concepts into the Biblical record. The early churches were obviously pure democracies.

As one reads the inspired accounts of the decisions of the early churches, it is obvious that these churches can properly be denominated as "democracies". In the very first chapter of Acts, the successor to the fallen Judas was chosen by the assembled believers (Acts 1:15-22); the seven (probably deacons) were chosen by "the multitude of the disciples" (Acts 6:2). Still other references could be cited to demonstrate conclusively that decisions were reached by reference to the united verdict of the whole body of believers (Acts 11:22; Acts 15:3; Acts 15:22). There was no room for popes in these churches!

Some rely very much upon an argument based upon expediency and cite the fact that there are some obvious disadvantages with the democratic form of church government. It is almost unbelievable that any Christian would presume to acknowledge the Scriptural order and then refuse to obey it on this ground. Yet we have known some who do so. The obedient believer will simply hearken to the voice of the Lord and obey Him in this matter without regard to the consequences. It could be argued that there are seeming weaknesses in democracy, whether political or religious, but, despite these minor hazards, we would infinitely prefer democracy, both political and ecclesiastical, to totalitarianism with its few attractions! In other words, God's way is the best way.

It is thrilling to recall that these small, despised local church democracies in the days of the apostles were the instruments in the hands of God to turn millions to Christ and to shake a great empire to its very foundation. Who would presume to suggest that this divine plan can be improved upon today?

4. ORGANIZED. Are we correct in speaking of the early churches as organized bodies or can we be accused of reading twentieth century concepts into the divine record? In order to answer this question we should note the definition of the word "organized". The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as follows:

2. *gen.* Formed into a whole with interdependent parts; co-ordinated so as to form a system or orderly structure; systematically arranged.

(Note the similarity between this definition and Eph. 4:16!)

In this sense, the New Testament churches were, as we shall now seek to prove, organized bodies.

After Pentecost, the Scriptures tell us, "the Lord added to the church" those who were converted. If the church was not some definitely constituted body, what can this Scripture mean? We have already established that the word "church" is always used with reference to a local body and never in the loose sense which is current today. In this instance, we are forced to conclude that the Lord added the new converts to a definite body — namely the Jerusalem church. The concept that they were added to some spiritual abstraction known only to God may sound pious but it is unscriptural for the church of which the early chapters in Acts speak is no such abstraction; it has all the characteristics of an organized body.

Then, too, the fact that the apostle Paul called for the churches to exercise discipline and expulsion, if necessary, against offending professors is a clear indication that such churches had some form of organization or else the discipline would be meaningless. In his letter to "the church of God which is at Corinth, he says—"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (1 Cor. 5:3). If there was no organization, how could this fornicator be taken from the midst of the believers? Only an organized body with certain declared characteristics could exercise or give meaning to such discipline.

In John's third epistle there is an even more conclusive passage. In III John 9, 10, the beloved apostle writes:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

"Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

If this church was no organized local body, a problem immediately arises. What does the apostle mean by the reference to casting brethren out of the church? Need we say that it obviously does not refer to the building for nowhere in the Bible is any material building designated a church. Would anyone be so venturesome as to suggest that Diotrephes or anyone else has power to cast a believer out of the imagined invisible church of Christ? There can be only one meaning. In this *organized* body one carnal brother had asserted himself and was acting in an arbitrary manner. If any opposed his behaviour or incurred his displeasure, he proceeded to have them expelled from the local assembly. This misuse of power is a clear indication that a definite organization did exist.

We have heard it argued that the church cannot be conceived as an organized body with a membership because the New Testament does not explicitly use these terms. Let us suppose that neither the terms "organized" or "membership" appear in Scripture. Does this mean that the fact of which they speak is non-existent? That which is indicated by both words is clearly evident in the Acts and the epistles. The word "trinity" is not found in the Word of God nor does the word "substitutionary" occur. Are we to conclude that the Bible does not teach that the trinity is a fact and that the Lord Jesus Christ's death was not a substitutionary death?

We are forced to conclude that the exercise of discipline, the practice of voting and the existence of church

officers are clear indications that church *organization* was a fact.

5. BELIEVERS. In all our consideration we must not lose sight of the truth that the churches were composed of believers. Regenerate church membership is a necessity if one would be true to the New Testament pattern. At the very outset the inspired precedent was set — "the Lord was adding those being saved every day to the assembly." (Acts 2:47, Young's Literal Translation). Nowhere in the New Testament is there any Scripture to indicate that the Lord sanctions the church's conscious reception of unregenerate persons into its ranks.

"Let it never be forgotten that the only suitable materials of which to construct a church of Christ, so far as spiritual qualifications are concerned, are regenerate, penitent, believing persons. To make use of other materials is to subvert the foundational principles of church organization."—Dr. J. M. Pendleton.

Indeed this is so basic that all else fails if it is overlooked. The Lord makes no provision in His Word for a church that is composed of the unregenerate. The very existence, in fact, of a true Scriptural church organization depends upon the conversion and spirituality of its members. If this matter is ignored, the divine plan for the church is distorted and its work is frustrated.

6. BAPTIZED BELIEVERS. The Word of God proceeds even further and lays down the requirement that believers are to be baptized (immersed). It is indeed unfortunate that the translators of the King James version failed to translate the Greek word *baptizo* for their transliteration has caused it to lose its force to modern readers. After the sermon at the time of Pentecost, the convicted hearers cried out — "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's reply was both prompt and clear — "Repent and be baptized (literally—immersed) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). The inspired account proceeds—"Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41).

In the light of this definite command to believers to be baptized and because of the numerous instances cited of believer's baptism, the onus clearly rests upon the critic of Scripture to prove that there is, after Pentecost, a known instance of an unbaptized believer. This we would challenge anyone to do! It is quite apparent that the Christians of the apostolic days were baptized as a matter of obedience to a clear command of the Lord.

Any candid reader of the New Testament must concede that only believers were baptized.

"The New Testament tells of the baptism of believers, and of churches composed of believers. We read of no other baptism, no other churches."

—Dr. J. M. Cramp

Those passages that are pleaded in support of "infant baptism" provide proof not of "infant baptism" but of the desperation of the advocates of this practice.

Can we declare, however, that membership in the churches was limited to *baptized* believers? Yes we can, for as already observed, the New Testament knows nothing of an unbaptized believer, although we hasten to add for the sake of clarity that baptism is not declared to be essential to salvation.

7. **THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.** The Head of the churches of the New Testament was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures nowhere furnish evidence of some earthly vice-regent or vicar. The church was founded by Christ as is described by Him as "my church". To the end of time, He shall remain as the Head of the church for He has delegated this position to no other. The Book of Revelation clearly pictures Him as exercising His right as He moves in the midst of the seven candlesticks which are identified as the seven churches of Asia Minor.

8. **CHURCH OFFICERS.** There is no true church if the Lord Jesus Christ is not its Head. There may, however, be a true church that does not have officers. Even as we state this, we are aware that the interests and work of any church are best served if that church is blessed with godly men who will care for the welfare of the assembly.

The New Testament is clear upon this matter of church officers and has not left it to the ingenuity of men to devise an elaborate hierarchy. The officers of a Scriptural church are pastors and deacons.

PASTORS. Three words are used in the New Testament to describe this officer — pastor, elder and bishop. It is wrong to assume that, because three different terms are used, three distinct officers are described. A careful examination will reveal that the words are used interchangeably and that each emphasizes one different aspect of the same office. For instance in 1 Peter 5:1, 2, we note that the elders are exhorted "to feed the flock of God" (a pastoral duty), "taking the oversight thereof" (doing the work of a bishop or an overseer). In Acts 20, Paul addresses the Ephesian elders and again the three different aspects of the one office are set forth.

The work of the pastor is then a spiritual work. Because their work is a spiritual work and because the office is ordained of God, pastors are to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake. The pastor's influence then is acquired not by the exercise of dictatorial powers but by the faithful and loving application of the commands of the Lord. By godly example, the pastor is enabled to lead the flock into the pleasant pastures of the Word of God and to warn of menacing invaders who would devour the sheep and scatter the flock. Is it any wonder then that the apostle states that "if any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"?

DEACONS. The only other permanent officer mentioned in the New Testament is the deacon. It is generally agreed that "the seven" mentioned in the sixth chapter of Acts were deacons. If this be the case, then it is evident that the deacons were entrusted with a work which, while spiritual, was, at the same time, distinct from that of the pastor. It is unjust to describe the work of the deacon as "secular" for the Christian can hardly regard any task to which he lays his hand as being secular.

The background of Acts 6 will set this matter in its proper perspective and will serve to show what is involved in the labour of a deacon. As the Jerusalem church grew, the duties of the apostles increased until they found themselves neglecting *indispensable* work in order to do *necessary* work. Finally they were forced to bring their message to the brethren:—

"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables, wherefore, brethren look ye out

among you seven men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

The apostles did not belittle the necessary labour which was to fall to the deacons but they recognized that their own primary responsibility was concerned with the ministry of prayer and the Word. The deacons were responsible for the attendant tasks.

It is not our purpose to analyze all the passages which deal with the office of the deacon for the sixth chapter of Acts is basic and amazingly comprehensive. The deacon was to have definite spiritual qualifications ("honest report", "full of the Holy Spirit") and an accompanying business ability ("wisdom") Other Scriptures indicate that the deacon was to be a spiritual stalwart who was endowed with natural and supernatural gifts to prosecute the work of the Lord that fell to his lot. His work and that of the pastor complement each other although the work of the ministry has the pre-eminence.

9. **CHURCH ORDINANCES.** The church has neither the power to institute new ordinances nor to amend those divinely established; rather it must accept and observe those that have the divine sanction. The great commission contains no exhortation urging believers to invent new observances but it does explicitly command the observance of "all things whatsoever I have commanded you". No one could reasonably deny that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are included in the category of those things commanded by the Lord.

It is imperative that we note that the Lord has left two *ordinances* and not two *sacraments*. This is not some trivial distinction in terminology for actually these two words delineate two widely divergent views of the gospel. The term ordinance simply denotes that which has been ordered or commanded. The blessing is derived from obedience to that which was commanded. The term sacrament carries with it the sinister and unscriptural connotation of some rite that *in itself* confers grace upon the recipient or participant. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are no such magical rites.

These two ordinances have been committed by the Lord to His churches. Baptism represents the visible public affirmation of the believer's identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection but as well it marks his initiation into the local assembly of God's people. The Lord's Supper is to be observed by baptized believers; in this ordinance also there is a remembrance of Calvary for the saint is reminded of "the Lord's death till he come".

But are we justified in declaring that only baptized (immersed) believers are called to the Lord's table? Instead of an appeal to emotions, let us direct our appeal to the tribunal of Holy Writ. We have before asserted that, after Pentecost, the New Testament knows nothing of an unbaptized believer. It was recognized in these early churches that, in obedience to Christ, the Christian was to be baptized. When we say, therefore, that *only Christians* are to partake of the Lord's Supper, let us set this statement against its apostolic background; if this is done, we may confidently affirm that only baptized believers are to sit at the Lord's table.

The New Testament makes no concessions to disobedient believers in this matter; any such concessions that have been made since have been accompanied with peril. Those who would lower the Scriptural standard

may gain the plaudits of men for their "charity" and broad spirit but they err in being extravagant and broad with that over which they have no authority whatsoever. Only those who have forsaken the Book should presume to change that which God has ordered.

10. **THE CHURCH'S RULE OF FAITH.** Each church in the New Testament was an autonomous body that recognized no external human control. It is therefore surprising to note that there existed among these spiritual republics a common belief and practice. This unanimity may be explained when we recall that each church had the same Head and each had the same Scriptures. In the case of the apostolic churches, the Scriptures were those of the Old Testament. The Book of Acts and the epistles reveal that the apostles and preachers, such as Stephen, leaned very heavily upon the Old Covenant and so drew their teaching from a common source. The Author, the Holy Spirit, gave them a common understanding and interpretation of the Word.

It is true that the churches had one common rule of faith in the Old Testament but can we affirm that the New Testament also was early regarded as authoritative? The apostle Peter whose messages were permeated with the Old Testament (for example, the sermon at the time of Pentecost) wrote to believers as follows:—

"... even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: as also in all *his epistles*, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also *the other scriptures*, unto their own destruction." (II Peter 3:15, 16).

In other words, it was earlier than many would like to concede that at least a major portion of the New Testament was regarded as possessing equal authority with the Old Testament.

The Bible and the Bible alone is the one rule of faith and practice for a true New Testament church. Any confession that is adopted by such an assembly is so adopted not on the basis of its antiquity or any other consideration but on the basis of its fidelity to the whole counsel of God.

Since the Bible is the church's one rule of faith, it will be the subject of diligent study by all believers and will be the source of the church's teaching and preaching. The divine institution is thus equipped with a divine weapon to accomplish its divine task.

11. **THE CHURCH'S FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP.** In a real sense, the church is a social organization. Its members are intimately related to the great Head but, at the same time, they sustain a spiritual relationship one to the other. Ephesians 2:19 sets forth this new standing in describing saints as:—

"no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God."

In addition then to the new vertical relationship that exists between the believer and the Lord, there exists also a new horizontal relationship between believer and believer. This relationship finds its expression and realization in the local church which is "an habitation of God through the Spirit."

This aspect of local church fellowship could form a treatise in itself for it has many practical manifestations. The believers are to love one another, do good to one an-

other, forbear one another and care for one another. The local church then becomes the earthly demonstration of the power of the gospel.

Another concrete expression of this fellowship is seen in the regular services of the church. The saints thus have the opportunity of congregating to give corporate expression to their common faith. In addition, these meetings serve as the means of extending the faith and bringing into the local body those who were before strangers but who by grace become fellow-citizens of the saints.

12. **THE LOCAL CHURCH AND OTHER CHURCHES.** The final descriptive phrase which we employed in our suggested definition of the church states that the church will co-operate with like bodies in kingdom work. Each single church may be described as a spiritual republic but, at the same time, there exists among Scriptural churches a feeling of kinship and a desire to see the furtherance of the work of the Lord in the establishment of similar assemblies.

This co-operation with churches of like order must in no way jeopardize the real independence of the local body nor need it do so. The work of the kingdom is so constituted that it is best prosecuted by the consecrated labours of local assemblies of spiritual believers.

The foregoing is a brief description of the church of the New Testament. On this institution the Head of the churches declared, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Having noted its nature, let us now turn to an examination of its work.

(Continued next week)

BEWARE OF THE CAVERN OF MODERN THOUGHT

A SHEPHERD boy, of small-experience, was one day leading his little flock near the entrance of a mountain cavern. He had been told that precious stones had often been discovered in such places. He was, therefore, tempted to leave his charge, and turn aside to explore the dark recesses of the cavern. He began to crawl in, but as he proceeded his face took on a veil of cobwebs, and his hands mittens of mud. He had not gone far when he saw two gems of ruby glow lying near each other. He put forth his eager fingers to seize them, when a serpent bit him. In pain and fear he crawled quickly back to the light of day, and ran home to the chief shepherd to obtain some remedy for the bite. The good man, who was also his elder brother, sucked the poison from the wound, and applied to it a healing balm. Never afterwards did that shepherd covet the treasures which may lie concealed behind mountain rocks."

We quote this from Hervey's "Manuals of Revivals," published in New York, by Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls. How earnestly would we warn our younger preachers of this cavern, and the cobwebs, and the gems! Better continue to feed Christ's sheep with wholesome gospel doctrine than begin to creep into dark caves, where nothing is to be gained which can be of use to the flock. If any are already bitten of the serpent, we pray that they may have grace to hasten to the Chief Shepherd. Alas, the poison often works a madness, which hurries the wounded one further and further from his Lord!

—C. H. SPURGEON

POPULAR SLICK MAGAZINE FOR ROMAN CHURCH IN CANADA

THE Roman Catholic Church will have a streamlined weekly publication for newsstand distribution commencing in September. In an obvious move to influence Canadian opinion, the publishers of *The Ensign* have announced that the present 16 page tabloid will be published on glossy paper as a newsmagazine. Its format will then resemble that of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

Describing itself as "Canada's National News Weekly" *The Ensign* is actually a Roman Catholic publication. Nearly every article has some reference to the Roman Church and seeks to view the news through coloured glasses. Naturally there is never any reference to Roman persecution in Colombia, Spain or Quebec but rather the Church of Rome is portrayed as the guardian of liberty.

In order to demonstrate the fact that "Canada's National News Weekly" is a thinly-veiled piece of Roman propaganda, we refer to articles in the last issue (that of June 2).

FRONT PAGE—In the article (one or two on the front page) on South Viet Nam, the correspondent mentions the work of "the Redemptorist Fathers of Canada" and magnifies their work as having international significance.

PAGE 2—full page advertisement.

PAGE 3—Long communique from Vatican, telling of the bachelor pope's opinion on marriage and sterility.

PAGE 4—Editorial page with the main editorial criticizing *Time* magazine for daring to report news that wasn't favourable to the Roman Church. The concluding sentence of this editorial is interesting and is sheer propaganda for the new *Ensign* — "There is room in Canada for mature journalism and in that field *Time* could also make a contribution."

PAGE 6—Book reviews. Five of the nine books reviewed are *Roman Catholic*.

PAGE 7—Picture of funeral of Grey Nuns; article on Austria with Romish emphasis. The rest of the page is taken-up with ads — 80 per cent of the space devoted to religious pilgrimages.

PAGES 8 and 9—advertising *The Ensign* itself.

PAGE 10—Ads for pilgrimages to shrines and a scotch whiskey ad!

PAGE 11—Question Box conducted by a priest and dealing with religious questions from the Church's viewpoint. Another liquor ad appears and a directory of Roman Catholic colleges.

PAGE 12—conclusion of the papal article and a cigarette and ale ad.

Yet this propaganda sheet carries the deceptive description — "Canada's National News Weekly"! When it dons the same format as *Time* and *Newsweek*, it will have a wider appeal for it poses as a national magazine as opposed to American magazines.

While we are persuaded that the Roman Church is deceptive in using this description, we realize full well that we could learn from her. The Church of Rome well knows the power of the printed page and so is determined to send her message far and wide by this means. Let evangelicals pay more heed to the printed page.

ANTI-ROME; BUT PRO-CHRIST?

MUCH anti-Roman Catholic sentiment is not positively Christian. The informed Christian will realize that the teachings and political aspirations of the Church of Rome pose a threat to the gospel and its progress; therefore the believer is opposed to Roman Catholicism just as he is opposed to any anti-Christian system. There is a great deal of opposition to Rome, however, that is not motivated by a positive devotion to Christ and the gospel. With such feeling, we have no sympathy and, although we are pleased that men should be acquainted with all threats to civil liberty, we know that an anti-Romanist feeling, divorced from spiritual grounds, can be a boomerang that will inevitably strike back at the Christian who would capitalize upon it.

If we succeed in rousing men's anger against the Church of Rome without touching their souls, we have done them little favour. Those societies and lodges which seek only to cultivate and foster this sentiment would be well-advised to look first to the spiritual conditions and well-being of their devotees for a vigorous but unsaved anti-Romanist on the way to hell is on the same road as is an unsaved Roman Catholic. Our desire is first that men should be pro-Christ and then a proper understanding of the Word will make them to be anti-Romanism.

Is it not true that an unspiritual anti-Romanism becomes bitter and destructive? It does no good to the soul of the one who espouses it and it will never lead one to look with compassion upon lost Roman Catholics. If we lack a compassion for those who are deluded and caught in the papal snare, we are of no service to the Master.

We have noted, too, that some *Christians* ride an anti-Roman bandwagon but are blissfully ignorant of the menace of modernism. Indeed they would unite with modernists if there were an opportunity to strike a blow at Rome. They loudly shout if the Roman Church rouses their ire but are strangely silent as "Protestants" deny precious truths. This blindness which would see one type of error but wink at another is of little real value to the cause of Christ.

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SMASH CHRISTIANITY! WIN AMERICA — FOR MOHAMMED

San Francisco, April 5—Moslem missionaries have arrived on the West Coast of the United States to propagate their religion and build a mosque in this area, it was reported today. Some of them have been interviewed by Allan Finley, regional director of International Students, Inc., an organization which seeks to lead foreign students to Christ. The missionaries plan not only to win converts to Islam but to keep Moslem students in the U.S. from accepting Christ.

Finley says the leader of the Moslem group came to America from Pakistan largely because his son, who is a college student in California, was leaning toward Christianity from contact with American evangelicals.

The Moslem team told Finley that widespread appeals are being made in the Islamic world for lay missionaries to go to America. Moslem leaders feel a spiritual vacuum exists in the United States and declare that Christianity here has produced a corrupt society in which moral standards have collapsed. The churches, they say, are without significant influence and are little more than social institutions.

On the basis of these claims the leaders of Islam are enlisting their finest minds in a campaign to win America for Mohammed. Their missionaries on the West Coast include a professor, a businessman and a retired legislator.

The group has formed The Moslem Society which meets at 870 Castro Street in San Francisco and offers free lectures on Islam on Sunday afternoons. They are traveling through California in a search for converts and funds with which to build a mosque in the San Francisco Bay area.

Focal point for Moslem activity in the U.S. is the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C., where a full-scale cultural and educational program is underway to increase the Prophet's following in America. Under the leadership of Dr. Mohammed Bisar, formerly of Cairo, Egypt, a \$5 million mosque has been constructed along "Embassy Row" on Massachusetts Ave. in Washington. Many Americans are included among those who worship there regularly.

—From *The Western Voice*

GOD NEVER UNDERTOOK A FAILURE

God never undertook a failure. The Old Book which is worth all other books put together, makes it plain that God has undertaken to regulate this world by Gospel influences and if he has the power he will do what he says he will, and no one who amounts to anything will deny his power. God has said a hundred times "I will," but never once has said "I cannot." We may with our tack hammers pound away, trying to mend and improve and straighten the condition of the world and be disappointed in the result, because our arms are too weak and the hammers we wield too small; but the most defiant difficulty will flatten and disappear when God with a hammer made of summer thunderbolts strikes it, saying, "The crooked shall be made straight."

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

FRIENDLINESS OR BROTHERHOOD?

Evangelical Christians recognize the right of Jews and Roman Catholics, Moslems and Buddhists to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience and to enjoy full liberty of expression and propaganda. We would fight for their rights under the Constitution of the United States.

But evangelical Christians believe that men can only be saved by acceptance of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and obedience to Him according to the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle Paul set us a noble example of the way Christians should conduct themselves among men of other faiths.

We do not believe the Apostle Paul would be happy under the working conditions existing between a much-publicized Presbyterian minister and a Jewish rabbi in New York City. The two congregations occupy a single house of worship and carry on a united religious, social, civic and neighbourhood program of activity. The popular TV show, "Big Surprise", featured these two religionists in an effort to equate Christianity and Judaism and promote the false doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God apart from the acceptance of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

The time has come for a rebirth of the Pauline attitude toward the Jews and all other religionists, on the part of Christians everywhere.

—*United Evangelical Action*, Editorial.

For Younger Readers

THE CHILDHOOD OF GOD'S SERVANTS

Mary Slessor of Calabar

IT WAS a cold raw evening in the slums of Dundee. Under the arches which led from the Cowgate the shadows lay black and mysterious, perhaps the refuge of a family of beggars or the lair of a gang of town roughs. Beyond the arches there reared up many-storeyed slum dwellings with pale lights of candle or lamp flickering in their uncurtained windows. A muted chorus of quarrelling and wailing and singing came from the houses within. Now and then a poor bent figure scuttled through the dark passages into the pale glow under the tenements and disappeared up one of the narrow outside staircases; or a couple of drunken sailors, arm in arm and shouting and quarrelling, straggled crookedly across the open space to hammer on any door they came to, until they found one which admitted them. On the lower floor of the nearer tenement was a large, long, lighted window, bright in comparison with the others above, because the glass was clean and a pair of cheap white curtains hung inside. The door beside it was shut, but every now and then youthful figures, in twos and threes knocked to be admitted, and the door closed quickly behind them. From within came laughter and snatches of song and then someone started a cheerful hymn which was taken up by a dozen young voices.

As if in reply, there came a burst of coarse laughter from one of the murky archways, and half a dozen young louts lounged out into the light thrown by the window. They were ripe for mischief. They had spent the evening roaming in the narrow streets of the town, shouting

abuse, pursuing the few womenfolk who were abroad, gambling for half-pennies under the dim street lamps, bickering with each other, and only united when they saw some miserable cat or dog or human to torment.

"Yon's Mary's meeting house," said one of them, and a loud guffaw greeted his remark. Another gave a shrill falsetto imitation of the hymn which was being sung.

"Jamie!" shouted one of the roughs, "try your weight."

One of them laughed and drew out of his pocket a large lead weight attached to a long piece of string. "Aye," he shouted "and this'll do for Mary!" And he swung it round his head in a deadly circle till it whistled and sang in the darkness.

"I'll go watch for her," said one and he lumbered off down the black passage by the Cowgate, while the others gathered together under a shadowy wall.

The hymn was over now. Someone opened the door beside the bright window and looked out, obviously waiting for a late comer. The louts could not resist a shower of stones and mud, and the door closed hastily. Jamie sniggered and swung his lead so near one of his companions that he cursed loudly and stuck his hand up. But, before they fell to fighting, there came running feet from the direction of the Cowgate, and the self-appointed sentry called out, "She's coming! Mary Slessor's coming!"

In the silence that followed they heard light footsteps hurrying down the narrow archway, and there came into view the slight figure of a girl of about fifteen, simply dressed, with the usual shawl over her head.

The boys drew together, all six of them, backing until they stood within the light from the large window, blocking her way to the door. Jamie begun circling his head round and round, drawing nearer and nearer to the girl as she approached. At length she stopped and then softly and menacingly they closed in around her, waiting for her nerve to break under the widening circles of the murderous lead.

Mary Slessor had faced awkward situations in her short life and was no stranger to cruelty and bullying, but it would have to be a force indeed which would keep her from the prayer meeting she held for the young folks in the slums. She prayed as she stood there, threatened and defenceless, and she simply told the Lord she was on His business and needed His protection. In years to come, she found this habit as effective as it was now. How many hundreds of times in the African bush was she to stand alone in defence of the slave, the mother of twins, the runaway? Personal fear or weakness became her opportunity for calling on God and His strength, and in His strength alone she was to learn how to triumph.

In the clear blue eyes which now gazed on the bullies of the Cowgate, was the same compelling power which was to be used on the degraded African chief or the blood-thirsty witch doctor, expecting of them an obedience which was contrary to all their traditions.

Meanwhile the lead sang at the end of the string and Jamie guided it nearer and nearer to the small head so lightly protected by the thin shawl. In the last circle it grazed her hair, but she never flinched.

"She's game, boys!" he cried in spite of himself, and the lead fell to the ground as he slackened the cord.

"Now will ye be coming to my meeting?" she said invitingly; and made for the bright window and the door which was opening for her.

Something remained of the spell of her steadfastness

and, as if led by an invisible power, the boys followed her into the club room. They found hymn books pushed into their hands, places made for them on the benches, and within the brightly lighted room, a welcome and fellowship which was not to be had outside in the cold alleys.

When it was Mary's turn to speak, they listened spell-bound while she spoke of God as a Person to be reckoned with in her life. In the Bible, she told them, were messages from God for her and for them, messages which would change their whole lives, telling them how to live, how to behave, and what to say. Then she spoke of Jesus Christ as if He were someone she knew who lived nearby and to Whom she could go for help and advice, someone who was the finest Leader who ever lived and yet loved you enough to be a Friend.

When it was all over, Jamie and his friends slouched home in silence. Jamie's fingers closed on the hideous bit of lead in his pocket and he knew he could never use it again to bully and torment. But what he did not know was that his awed and uncomfortable feelings were to be experienced by many a savage African in Calabar who in another twenty or thirty years was to come under the spell of Mary Slessor and be forced to give up his evil ways.

—The Evangelical Christian

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 20 Second Quarter Lesson 11 June 10, 1956

JESUS TRIED BY GODLESS GENTILE RULERS

Lesson Text: Luke 23:1-12.

Golden Text: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

—1 Timothy 6:13

I. The First Trial Before Pilate: verses 1-5.

Parallel Passages: Matt. 27:2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:28-38.

The Roman civil trial of Christ, like the Jewish religious trial, was in three stages; (1) the first appearance before Pilate, the Roman Governor of the Kingdom of Judaea; (2) the appearance before Herod Antipas, the tetrach or native ruler of the province of Galilee; (3) the final trial before Pilate.

The Jewish religious courts did not have the authority to condemn a man to death (John 18:31); that power rested solely with the civil courts. The Jews were compelled, therefore, to bring their case before the Roman Governor. They desired that Pilate should confirm their judgment at once and declare the Holy One guilty of death without further investigation, but Pilate knew that "for envy they had delivered him" and he determined to enquire into the matter (Matt. 27:18). It is ever the custom of Satan to hurry wicked men who commit crimes, while the Spirit of God would restrain them and cause them to think upon their ways (Prov. 4:26; 5:3-6).

The charge made against Christ in the religious trial had been that of blasphemy, laid against Him because He had claimed to be God (Matt. 26:63-66). Had He not been God, that charge would have been just (Lev. 24:16).

In the Gentile civil court Christ was charged on three counts, all of them false; (1) perverting the nation (verses 2, 14). But far from injuring the state, our Lord was making the highest possible contribution to the good of the country by turning the hearts of men from their evil ways. It was said that He was stirring up the people. The word which Christ preached does arouse the consciences of men and

bring about divisions, but the effect is salutary, for the good must ever separate themselves from the evil, if they would remain pure (Matt. 10:34-38, Luke 14:25-27). (2) Forbidding the giving of tribute. On the other hand, there was evidence to the contrary (Matt. 17:24-27; Luke 20:25). (3) Setting up a rival Kingdom (Matt. 2:2, 3; John 6:15). Pilate himself evidently understood that Christ did not claim to be a King in the political sense (John 18:33-37).

This trial was a farce, since Christ was without sin (Heb. 4:15; 7:26). Only on the evidence of false witnesses could any charge against Him be sustained (Psa. 27:12). In reality, the judges themselves were on trial, since their own words would condemn them (Matt. 12:37).

II. The Brief Trial before Herod: verses 6-12.

Herod, the native ruler of Galilee, happened to be in Jerusalem at that time, probably to attend the Feast of the Passover. The chance reference to Galilee on the part of a spokesman for the people suggested to Pilate a way of escape from the necessity of passing judgment upon Christ. The Roman Governor sought to evade the issue. It takes courage to face the truth; the majority hold down the truth by their unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

Herod Antipas, who had rejected the testimony of John the Baptist and had killed that prophet, displayed curiosity on a former occasion when he heard of the miracles performed by the Saviour (Luke 9:7-9). He considered the present circumstances as affording a good opportunity for gratifying his desire to see a manifestation of supernatural power, not knowing that signs are granted solely in answer to faith and for the glory of God. Christ was silent before him (Isa. 53:7). The malicious cruelty which Herod displayed was in keeping with his character: he might still be described as "that fox" (Luke 13:32).

Pilate and Herod were at one in their refusal to release the Christ, and these two enemies became friends (Acts 4:27). Devotion to a common cause frequently heals minor breaches, but Pilate and Herod should have united to see that justice, rather than injustice, was performed.

The final trial before Pilate is described in verses 13-26 (Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; John 18:39, 40). Pilate himself was willing to release Christ and repeated his judicial finding that the Saviour was innocent of the charges brought against Him, but Pilate made the mistake of attempting to reason with the people. He was weak, vacillating and untrue to his convictions.

The incident of the release of Barabbas, a rebel and a murderer, rather than Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, will afford an illustration of the vicarious atonement wrought out for us by Christ. Our Saviour took the place of Barabbas as a condemned criminal, whereas the guilty man went free (2 Cor. 5:21).

The voices of the people and the chief priests prevailed with Pilate over his own judgment (verses 4, 14, 22; Matt. 27:24), the movement of conscience, the advice of his wife (Matt. 27:19) and the testimony of Christ Himself. Pilate followed the multitude to do evil (Exod. 23:2).

The words and actions of Pilate show that it is not easy, in fact that it is impossible, to shift responsibility, so far as our relationship with Christ is concerned (Rom. 14:12). The question must be answered, "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. 27:22).

Daily Bible Readings

June 4—Good Confession before Pilate	1 Tim. 6
June 5—The Sins of Herod	Matt. 14:1-12
June 6—The Curiosity of Herod	Luke 9:1-9
June 7—Herod "that fox"	Luke 13:31-35
June 8—Pilate's Wife	Matt. 27:19-24
June 9—The Final Trial of Christ	Luke 23:13-26
June 10—Christ the King	John 18:35-40

Suggested Hymns

Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall.
Oh, what will you do with Jesus?
What shall I do with Jesus?
Firmly stand for God.
Have you any room for Jesus?
Pass me not, O gentle Saviour.

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... to Roman Catholic expansion in Canada?

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... to the advance of modernism in Canada?

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