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GEORGE MUNRO - - - - - Editor. DONALD MUNRO, } Publishers. C. C. CHAWFORD, }

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"The Good Confession."

1 TIM. XII. 13, 14.

"Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."—(Revised Version.)

The question to be briefly considered here is: What is "the good confession?" We find the expression in both the twelfth and thirteenth verses quoted, and it is entirely reasonable to suppose that it means the same in both places. It is probable that an off-hand answer would be given by many readers by saying, Why "the good confession" made by Peter at Caesarea Philippi, when asked by the Saviour, "But who say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God."

Did Christ Jesus witness to that before Pontius Pilate? A reference to the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John will determine. We find, Luke xliii. 2, that the accusation made against Jesus before Pilate was: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." The way in which Pilate understood that charge is seen from the question he asked Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 11, Mark xv. 2, Luke xliii. 3, John xviii. 33): "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Pilate did not understand that Jesus was charged with being king of any other people than the Jews. The answer made by Jesus is to be interpreted, we think, by what John alone records (John xviii. 34-37): "Jesus answered him, sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews: but now

is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then?" It was therefore after some conversation with Pilate, and when Pilate had asked Him a second time "Art Thou a king then?" that Jesus said, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, "Thou sayest," that is, "Thou sayest the truth, I am a king." And it will be noted that Pilate the second time did not say "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" but simply, "Art Thou a king then?" The explanation given by Jesus, "My kingdom is not of this world," etc., evidently led to the changed form of Pilate's question. It will be further observed that the reply of Jesus was not the simple "Thou sayest," but as given by John (John xviii. 37): "Thou sayest that I am king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." Jesus then acknowledged that He was a king, and declared that He came to bear witness to the truth, and the particular truth that He bore witness to before Pilate was that "He is a king." And so we reach the answer to the question, what is "the good confession" of 1 Tim. vi. 12, 13. In another article we shall consider how Paul could say of Timothy that he had confessed "the good confession in the sight of many witnesses."

What Is Bible Study?

We give here the close of a fine article in the Sunday School Times on the above subject. We trust all our readers, especially the younger Christians, will read and ponder it well.

"Bible study may include any or all of these methods of Bible examination; but it must include something beyond them all in order to be true Bible study. There is a sense in which the Bible is like any other book, in being made up of words that must be noted in their connection and uses, and that therefore it is to be studied like any other book in order to arrive at its meanings. But there is another sense in which the Bible is unlike all other books, in that it contains God's peculiar message to mankind through men whom He trained and inspired for that special purpose, and that therefore its study must be mainly for the ascertaining and understanding of the divine truths that, unlike any other book, it has for ourselves as we are in our present needs and our ultimate destiny. Except for this difference in methods and objects of study, the Bible study of the baldest rationalist and of the most frigid agnostic is as much of a help toward truth as the Bible study of the warmest-hearted and most truthful Christian believer.

"He who would study the Bible must bear in mind that it is not the books of the Bible that were themselves inspired, but that it was the writers of these books whom God inspired for their writing. 'Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.' One man wrote at one time and in one style, and another man wrote at another time and in another style. One wrote in poetic imagery, and another in didactic prose. A perception of these differences is essential to an understanding of the truths thus declared from God. But the main purpose of this sacred record of inspired teachings—whoever was the writer, and whenever and howsoever he wrote—is the instruction and guidance and inspiration of their believing student. 'Every scripture inspired of God is . . . profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.' Hence no Bible student looks to the proper end of Bible study that does not seek to ascertain just what lesson it is that God would have this student gain from the passage immediately under study; and no student of the Bible has yet profited by his Bible study unless he is thereby helped toward truer completeness of manhood as a disciple of Christ.

"It is well enough to become closely familiar with the structure and contents of the different books of the Bible, and to memorize as many portions of it as there is time and mental strength for; but all this is but an incident to true Bible study, and not the thing itself. Bible study is for the purpose of gaining impulses and helps to the Christian life. He who stops short of this in his study, or in his teaching, stops short of the gateway of the city of divine truth. He may have observed and pointed out the lofty walls and their commanding towers, and have seen from beyond and described to others the streets that traverse the enclosed area, but he has as yet found no home for himself or for others within those sacred boundaries, nor has he known or shown the blessedness of having a home there, with its ceaselessly fresh and fitting supplies. Bible study is, indeed, a duty and a privilege to the Christian believer; but there is a great deal of time wasted in what is called Bible study, but which is nothing of the sort."

By the time you get through reading this number of THE EVANGELIST you will conclude there is a great deal of good reading in it. Do not skip the long pieces.

If our friends will kindly heed the standing notice on page four, that "all matter intended for publication is to be addressed to the editor at Erin, Ontario," they will save us some trouble and not add to their own.

We hope all our readers, but especially the preachers and those who lead the singing in the congregations, will read carefully the selected article, "Singing without understanding." By far too little attention has been paid to perfecting congregational singing.

Read the article on "Stay-at-home Christians" on page two, and then let your "stay-at-home" brethren have a reading of it. It may do them good. Those professing Christians who think they can get on without going to meeting think they are wiser than the Lord Jesus.

The census returns are disappointing to Canadians, but after all not so surprising. If one considers what has happened in his own district during the last decade, he will find it easy to understand why the population has not increased more than it has. How many young men have gone to the States in that time! And there is no difficulty in discovering their reason for going; they thought they could make more money in the States than in Canada.

The Baptist (London) makes a point which all preachers should seriously consider, in these words: "No preacher can attempt, as he should, first to bring out and then to explain and bring home the meaning of the Holy Scriptures without finding himself talking seriously on the consciences and will of his hearers. And no man can do this either without gradually bringing around him those who are anxious to hear."

There, brother preacher, is encouragement for you. Work along those lines and you will be ere long, if you are not now, a preacher in the truest and highest sense of the term.

It is possible that our fine school system in Ontario is responsible for the falling off, or rather the slight increase, in our population. So many young men and young women with us receive sufficient education to dispose them for agricultural and other manual labor that they cannot all find employment as teachers, clerks, etc., in this country. They therefore cross the line where they have a larger field, and where, too, we understand, Canadians are not at a discount, but rather at a premium in such lines;

their superior educational qualifications coupled with the determination to succeed in a strange country making them very desirable servants.

From 1890 to 1890 the population of the United States increased twenty-four per cent. During the same decade the membership of the Presbyterian church, North, increased over thirty-four per cent. And yet there are people who say this age is too much advanced to believe Calvinistic doctrine. If the Americans are not an advancing people, we should like to know who are.—Canada Presbyterian.

But how many of the rank and file of the Presbyterian church in the United States are Calvinistic? How many of them believe that God predestined some men and angels to everlasting life and the others he fore-ordained to everlasting death? Will the Canada Presbyterian kindly tell us. So far as we can learn, in Canada the Presbyterians are generally not Calvinists, and do not even know what Calvinism is.

Lieutenant-Governor Royal is reported to have made the following candid statement to a French-Canadian paper:—

"Canada is a mixed country, inhabited by populations of different races and creeds. Catholics are in a minority, but where, I pray, will you find in the whole world—note well, that I say in the whole world—where will you find a country where the Catholic religion is more respected, enjoys more true liberty, and is more free from obstacles of any kind than in Canada?"

There is no country in "the whole world" in which Roman Catholics and every other class enjoy more freedom than in Canada. Catholics have much better government here than they enjoy in any Catholic country in the world, and that is one reason why they should not seek to enjoy advantages not enjoyed by other Canadian citizens. Protestants also give Catholics better government than they could get from their own people and should not be threatened with the "Catholic vote."—Canada Presbyterian.

Well said, every word of it, both by Lieutenant-Governor Royal and by the Canada Presbyterian. Let us have some more such candid admissions from prominent Roman Catholics.

Our readers will be expecting Bro. Sheppard to reply to Mr. Bevan's "Last Word" in our last number. Bro. Sheppard desires us to say that he foregoes his right to respond. He is satisfied with his presentation of his side of the matters in discussion; and in particular he thinks that his article in August 15th EVANGELIST contains a sufficient answer to Mr. Bevan's "Last Word." It will be noted that Mr. Bevan does not say whether or not he would, if called upon to baptize a Jew, "baptize him in the name of Jesus only," as he was asked to do by Bro. Sheppard. Silence in such a case is significant. We are glad to know that Mr. Bevan appreciates our efforts to make THE EVANGELIST a medium for the candid and courteous discussion of scriptural subjects.

Our readers will remember that the discussion originated in a criticism of a sentence in an article in which we challenged the correctness of a statement made in a formal document drawn up by a committee of Disciples, and published in the Toronto dailies, to the effect that it is a part of the Baptist creed that faith precedes regeneration. The writings of many Baptist theologians were referred to by "C.G." to prove that the Disciple Committee were right. We maintain, on the other hand, that the conscientious opinions of all the Baptist Theological writers in Christendom could not make a metaphysical dogma of that kind a part of the Baptist creed, or binding on Baptist consciences. Are we right, or wrong?—Canadian Baptist.

The Baptist, inadvertently no doubt, errs in saying that the committee of

Disciples asserted in effect "that it is a part of the Baptist creed that faith precedes regeneration"; it was just the other way, viz., that according to Baptist teaching regeneration precedes faith. Referring to the statement of the Baptist that "the writings of many Baptist theologians were referred to by 'C.G.' to prove that the Disciple Committee were right," it occurs to us to say that it is exceedingly curious if the Principal of the Theological Department of McMaster University does not understand Baptist theology.

The Sunday School Times, as usual, is full of good things. The editorial department is particularly rich. We quote here a paragraph which will do us all good:—

It is an evil sign when a man pleads the use and custom of his business in justification of practices which are not capable of vindication at the bar of conscience. A true man will not think of such customs as defining his responsibility. He will regard them as part of his responsibility, in that he is to labor to make them better than he found them. The boast of Augustus, that he "found Rome brick, and left it marble," should be true of every Christian as regards the business or profession to which God has called him. Most of these professions and businesses have been lifted out of the moral mire by brave and faithful men. Matthew Hale raised the legal profession to a higher level, from which it never slipped back again, through the purity, unselfishness, and public spirit which his career as a judge displayed. There have been such men in all honest lines of work; they have been the salt that kept the world from corruption. But always and everywhere, what has been thus won by moral effort must be held by a like effort also; and the Christian is in the world for this end. He is to apply to the maxims he finds current among those who share his work, the Apostolic rule: "Examine all things; hold fast that which is good."

This reminds us of a young lawyer who was rallied by an old friend with the saying that there are no honest lawyers. "Well," replied the young man, "I'll be the first of a new kind."

The Independent devotes an editorial to the laudable purpose of showing that the new birth, at which Nicodemus stumbled so, is a most reasonable condition of admission into the kingdom of God. We heard a famous revivalist ridicule the new birth, before a large audience here in Cincinnati, a few years ago. "Why," said he, "Christ never mentioned it but once, and when he saw that Nicodemus didn't understand him, he apologized and never opened his mouth on the subject again." The Independent handles the subject with more reverence, but with an innocence of logic amusing and amazing. Explaining the birth of water and the spirit, it remarks: "The water was only a type of the repentance, which John and Jesus both preached as they baptized." Read that over again and then try to recall any Scripture which hints at water as "the type of repentance," or to pick up some thread of analogy which could lead to such a conclusion. A strict old Baptist brother once informed us that in this passage water is "the type of natural birth," and backed it up with this piece of logic which no critical hammer can break, "unless a man is born naturally before being born of the spirit he can not enter the kingdom of God." Yet all these instances go to show that even wise men talk nonsense whenever they try to evade the plain meaning of any matter.—Christian Standard.

We once heard a Presbyterian minister break the Baptist brother's logic by affirming that a person might be born again at any age, even in infancy; indeed, he said, "A person might be born again before being born."

Attentive readers of The Standard Eclectic Commentary on the International Sunday School Lessons would notice the "Notes on the Lesson as a Whole" for the lesson of August 30th. For the benefit of those who do not