

was not only from the aged that the bitterness emanated. The last speaker on the delegation was a minister from Central Alberta, a man I knew very well and respected highly. He was an able fellow, pastor of a missionary church, known for his wise leadership in social problems and a fine brotherly spirit of co-operation with all the other churches in his town. I had heard he was opposed to Union but found it hard to believe. Surely, I thought, he cannot be blind to the advantages of Union, especially here in this new part of Canada, where the little towns have three and four churches and many wide areas have no preaching service at all.

I will never forget that man's appeal to us. It lacked all sense of balance, but its sincerity was shattering. I knew it came from his heart. He pleaded with us not to do this iniquitous thing. His eyes flashed like lightning in a dark night, and his face was white with rage. He ended with a declaration of undying defiance: "Give my roof to the flame, and my flesh to the eagles." Then he walked out with the proud bearing of a man of God on his way to the stake.

No, it was not melodramatic. It was something far worse. It was an exhibition of spiritual strabismus, the like of which I had never seen before. There was something terrible in it.

I had been born and bred in the tradition of the Covenanters and had thrilled to their brave words of defiance and the courage of the people who gathered in caves to sing their psalms and worship God as freemen in their own way, unhampered by a proscribed form of worship. But that day I saw another side of this whole matter of religious tradition, and what a deadly thing it can be when divorced from the saving grace of common sense. No wonder Christ warned his followers to "try the spirits and see whether they be of God."