

The Liberal

An Independent Weekly: Established 1878

Subscription Rate \$3.50 per year; to United States \$4.50; 10c single copy
Member Audit Bureau of Circulations
Member Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association

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"Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa"



Saturday Is Voting Day



Facts and Faith

(By Rev. Calvin Chambers)

"The Poor in Spirit"
Poverty is something we all fear. Our whole emphasis in Western culture, as well as throughout the world, is to escape from the miseries which accompany want and privation.

What then does Jesus mean when He says, "Happy are the poor in spirit." Does He want us to give up all worldly wealth and become poor monks, as Christians did in the dark middle ages. If this is what is meant, we certainly are a way from fulfilling His duty.

Actually, Jesus talked about the "poor in spirit," within the framework of the Jewish thought. In the Lord's day the "poor" referred almost exclusively to faithful Jews. It referred to the men in the revolt. At one time we visited, a youth had ridden up to a restaurant patronized by French settlers, had propped his bicycle against the entrance and fled. The cycle carried a time bomb which exploded a few moments later to kill 42 of the people in the restaurant. But demonstrating the fact that the hatred of the natives was reserved for the French alone, on this occasion an American who happened to be in the restaurant at the time was advised by another Arab to "get out quickly and don't stop to ask questions." The American followed this advice with the result he lived to tell the tale. This further convinced us that the extensive precautions the French were taking on our own behalf were not necessary — but there was no persuading them and so we could but surrender to their control.

This is a theme which runs throughout the Bible. Our Lord teaches us that "a man's life consists not in the abundance of things he possesses." John Rockefeller once said, "The best man I know is the man who has nothing but money." The Christian apostle, Paul had little materially speaking, but he is constantly rejoicing in the fact that he "has all things."

Who know that of themselves have nothing. They recognize their spiritual poverty. In need they have turned to Christ, who is the fountain head of all spiritual treasures. In turning to Christ, they have entered into an inheritance as sons of the Living God. This is to be indeed.

To be rich in the things of the world should be the chief aim of every man. God's treasures are material, but spiritual. Jesus said, "where your heart is, there your treasure be also." True wealth has to do with the matter of the heart. The Christian is wealthy because he possesses the treasure of God's word. The realist exclaims, as he meditates upon the Word of God, "more to be desired are they than gold, yea much fine gold." In the Bible we have the great precious promises of God which will endure forever. The things of this life will decay and perish, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. The rich man who constantly claims the promises of God as his own. In doing he knows true wealth which is not subject to the changing circumstances of any stock market.

The great tragedy is that there are many people who think they are rich, and yet are poverty stricken. John speaks of members of the Church at Laodicea, as those "who are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and do not know that they are wretched, miserable, and blind and naked." There are many people in the world today who need to discover the truth expressed by the hymn writer:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,
In doing this, the door of God's wisdom would be flung wide open to them. They would be received not as beggars, but as children returning to a Father's house. They would have the joy of wearing a new robe, and ring of sonship. The fatted calf would be killed and there would be joy and merriment. Poverty of spirit turned into unearned wealth, when life is lived under the rules of the King of The Earth.

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PAUL DELMER

With The Legionnaires



FOLLOWING OUR ADVENTUROUS ARRIVAL AS RELATED IN OUR LAST COLUMN, at the Fort of Bj-Ben-Areendi, we had to remain there for three days while the car was serviced and it was the 20th when we continued our journey, through Setif to Constantine.

In Constantine the police insisted that we camp directly opposite the central police station. They laid out water and toilets for us and set an armed guard over our camp, and when we left we had an armed escort.

There had been firing every night of our brief stay but during the daylight hours everything was under control, with soldiers and police continuously patrolling the town in armoured trucks. At that time and still today a total of half-a-million French soldiers are tied down in Algeria to contain the nationalist revolt. We saw the French frequently stopping Arab citizens and searching them for arms, home-made bombs, etc. French policemen would stop Arab women in the streets and would search carefully through their voluminous clothing for hidden weapons. Women and children are equal participants with the men in the revolt. At one town we visited, a youth had ridden up to a restaurant patronized by French settlers, had propped his bicycle against the entrance and fled. The cycle carried a time bomb which exploded a few moments later to kill 42 of the people in the restaurant. But demonstrating the fact that the hatred of the natives was reserved for the French alone, on this occasion an American who happened to be in the restaurant at the time was advised by another Arab to "get out quickly and don't stop to ask questions." The American followed this advice with the result he lived to tell the tale. This further convinced us that the extensive precautions the French were taking on our own behalf were not necessary — but there was no persuading them and so we could but surrender to their control.

Our police escort took us to Aid Baida, a distance of about 200 miles. Police motorcycle patrols went ahead and came along in our rear. A visiting monarch or ambassador could not have been taken more care of.

At Ain Baida we were handed over to the care of a military convoy which was travelling towards Tunisia. Unfortunately for me, this convoy was about to leave within half-an-hour of our arrival and I was therefore robbed of any opportunity to relax and rest between journeys. The family fared better because they could sleep in the house trailer while we were on the move. How tiring it was can be imagined when it is remembered that few of the roads were paved. That the heat was intense and clouds of sand enveloped us as we travelled. While all the time we feared an attack. We felt much less secure with our escort than we would have done in the confidence of the British flag and papers we carried. We felt that if the convoy was attacked, our mere presence with the French would condemn us to a similar fate.

It was a long and dusty journey through desert and mountain across a very bare countryside but eventually we arrived at Tebessa, a border fortress where we expected to rest for a time. But on arrival it was discovered that a unit of the French Foreign Legion were leaving within two hours, travelling east.

So it was going our way and we further learned that it might (Continued on page 11)

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