

REV. HAROLD CURTIS SLADE D,D., L,L.D. 1902-1974

Rev. Harold C. Slade, pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Ont., passed away in May of this year. He was stricken by a heart attack after arriving home from the Bahamas.

Dr. Slade, a tall and distinguished looking man, was one of the leading fundamentalists in Canada and was also internationally known. He was born in Oxford, Nova Scotia in 1902. As a young man, while in the dry goods business, he heard the gospel through a visiting evangelist. A year after his conversion he sold his business to attend Toronto Baptist Seminary; the school founded by Dr. T. T. Shields, the famous Canadian fundamentalist. After graduation in 1930 he served a few churches and also taught Greek in London Bible Institute. In 1946, the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, called Dr. Slade to become the associate of Dr. Shields. In 1955, Dr. T.T. Shields, who had served Jarvis Street Church for forty-five years, designated Dr. Slade as his successor. Some weeks before he passed away, Dr. Shields addressed the Rev. Slade in these words, "I have no instructions to give. It is as they would say in the army, 'Carry on Colonel!' " Since Dr. Shields was called by man the Elijah of Canada it is no wonder that Rev. Slade was considered the Elisha who had taken the prophet's mantle. While in the Jarvis Street Church, Dr. Slade became a key figure in the fundamentalist movement. Two leading fundamentalist institutions recognized him as such. Faith Theological Seminary, associated with Dr. Carl McIntire and the Twentieth Century Reformation Hour, bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity and Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, gave him the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was serving as a member of the Board of Bob Jones University at the time of his death.

Dr. Slade was co-chairman of the Fundamentalist Baptist Congress of North America and chairman of the Fundamentalist Baptist Congress of Canada. He helped form the Canadian Council of Evangelical Protestant Christian Churches which is affiliated with the International Council of Christian Churches (I.C.C.C.) of which he was vice-president. As a close associate of Dr. McIntire who received his D.D. degree from the Toronto Baptist Seminary, Dr. Slade traveled all over the world to further the fundamentalist cause. He was for example a member of the I.C.C.C. delegates that went to New Delhi and challenged the World Council of Churches' assembly as they received the Russian Orthodox Church under Metropolitan Nikodim's leadership.

Dr. Slade believed that the church had basically three enemies. He often mentioned them by name. In an address delivered at the 8th world congress of the I.C.C.C. held in Cape May, New Jersey, June 22, 1973, he said: "The late Dr. Harvey Springer often referred to Stan's big three. He frankly named them Communism, Romanism and Modernism. In the light of the terrible apostasy depicted in the Book of Revelation, especially in chapters 12 and 17, he could without reservation, in principle make just such an application. Surely these names are among the most effective instruments in use for his destructive work today." Dr. Slade felt that the Western world underestimates the power and influence of communism. In 1968 he said "I feel that the Communist influence is much stronger here in Canada than is generally recognized."

This remark, with the illustration he gave, was picked up by the news media and made the headlines. His anti-Romanism was as strong as his anti-communism. He was very much like his predecessor, Dr. Shields who was known for his denunciations of Catholicism in Quebec. This anti-Catholicism should not only be seen from the fundamentalist perspective but also from the Canadian historical setting. Dr. William Kilbourn, Professor and Chairman of the Humanities Division of York University, said: "T.T. Shields still thundered (i.e. in the 1950's) against French Canadian popery from his Jarvis Street pulpit, as if the fires of the Inquisition had but recently been lit; and for the Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholic liberals in Duplessis's Quebec, Dr. Shields was not entirely off the mark." We should not forget that in the nineteen fifties Evangelical Baptist pastors were jailed in Amos and Abestos, Quebec, for preaching in the open air and distributing gospel literature.

In a way, Dr. Slade has always been in the shadow of the dynamic, authoritarian leader Dr. Shields. Yet he earned his own reputation as a "quiet and gentlemanly man" with unyielding convictions. He has left his own mark on the history of the Canadian Church and with him a leading fundamentalist of the old school. has gone.

Johan D. Tangelder
September, 1974