

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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Whole Number 870



View of the East Elevation of the New Jarvis Street Church Building facing Allen's Gardens, and fronting on Horticultural Avenue. The width of the building as seen in the illustration is one hundred feet.

BUILDING PROGRESS

Our friends everywhere will be glad to know that our building operations are proceeding with all speed. There was a lull between Christmas and New Year's day, both on account of the holiday, and because of the weather. Then for two weeks we had a number of days when the temperature was above fifty.

We publish in this issue two photographs taken January 17th. The one of the Church and Sunday School halls will give some idea of the size of the building. It stretches from Jarvis Street a whole block, and to the middle of the roadway on George Street. The smaller cut illustrates the Horticultural Avenue view of the new building. This is the east end of the building; and from north to south, the width of the building as shown is about one hundred feet. The architects inform us that the building covers half an acre of ground, so that on three floors we have about an acre and a half of floor space.

At this writing both buildings are closed in. A great deal of the copper is already in place on the roof of the main building, and the roof of the building to the east is all closed in and ready to receive the roof covering. The glaziers are putting in the leaded windows, and in a short time the whole building will be enclosed. The huge tank for the oil-heating system—which has a capacity of three thousand gallons—has been put in place below ground. The two boilers are already in place in the furnace-room; and within a week or ten days the building will be made comfortable within by the installation of temporary radiators which will be hooked up with the furnaces. The work is proceeding apace on the steeple—which is visible in both photographs, surrounded by scaffolding.

On the west end of the building, a large temporary shed is being erected, under the protection of which the stone-masons will erect the new double entrance.

Inside, the auditorium is a forest of scaffolding poles, and right up in the ceiling men are at work placing the huge central ceiling light, which is forty-three feet in diameter. Another company of men are at work installing a sprinkler system. The building will be protected in every part by a sprinkler system, supplemented by what is known as a dual guard alarm system. We shall give the particulars of these things later: we mention it now merely to inform our readers that the building is being made as nearly indestructible as human skill can make it.

Another firm is at work on the seating. The same firm is producing the organ screen and panelled oak work for choir, baptistery, and pulpit; together with the furniture for the Communion platform. The elaborate system of ducts, some of which are four and five feet square, for the heating and air-conditioning of the building, makes a perfect maze beneath the auditorium. The architects inform us that the galvanized sheet iron entering into the ducts weighs approximately eight tons.

At this stage it would be confusing to attempt to explain the building. In due course we shall show our readers every detail of it, and every room of it. We have written this little report to tell them that within a week or ten days the whole building will be weather-proof; and that even at this writing we have passed the stage where the workmen would be delayed because of weather, except those working on the roof; and, while

as we have said, neither roof is completed, it is sufficiently advanced to make the building dry throughout.

ANOTHER CZECHOSLOVAKIA THROWN TO THE WOLVES

In *The Life of Faith*, London, England, of December 28th, there occurs this short but significant announcement:

"At its recent meeting SPURGEON'S COLLEGE Council resolved to apply for affiliation with the Baptist Union."

The Pastors' College was founded by the great and incomparable Charles H. Spurgeon. Almost from the beginning it far surpassed all other Baptist colleges in England, in the number of students it trained. The influence of the College upon Baptist life in England—and, indeed, throughout the world—cannot be estimated. It is known to our readers that Mr. Spurgeon, toward the close of his great ministry, fought valiantly against the encroachments of Modernism in the Baptist denomination, until at last the Baptist Union passed a resolution of censure upon the greatest gospel preacher of all the ages. Mr. Spurgeon withdrew from the Union, and there are some who believe that the anguish of soul he suffered on account of the controversy and its accompaniments had something to do with shortening his life, and closing his great ministry when he was but fifty-eight years of age.

But the Baptist Union of Spurgeon's day was almost ultra-orthodox in comparison with its present-day standards. Long since the Union has gone to the end of the road, as Mr. Spurgeon foresaw it would. While within the Union doubtless there are many churches and ministers who still stand true to the gospel, the Union officially has forfeited all right to be regarded as an evangelical body. An organization that could elect Dr. T. Reavley Glover to its Presidency, and that could establish one like Professor L. H. Marshall in one of its college—to name only two of the many ultra-Modernist leaders—is no longer entitled to be regarded as evangelical, by those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God.

During the years of the Secretaryship of Rev. J. H. Shakespear, a sum of money was raised to serve as a Sustentation Fund. It was raised from all the churches, and committed to the servants of the churches for administration. The Book of Proverbs says, "A man's gift maketh room for him." Weak churches, dependent upon the augmentation of their funds by the treasury of the Sustentation Fund, are required to be loyal to the Modernistic Union of which the Fund is a part.

Spurgeon's College has fallen prey, we assume, to that Fund. Its students want positions—and so Spurgeon's College seeks affiliation with the Baptist Union that censured, and virtually if not actually, withdrew its fellowship from the world's greatest preacher, who was the Founder of the College! The name of Spurgeon, from the day that it electrified the religious world until now has been regarded as a synonym for biblical, evangelical orthodoxy. We respectfully suggest that since it seeks affiliation with the Baptist Union, by which Mr. Spurgeon was crucified, the Council of Spurgeon's College ought, in common decency, to change its name; and thus save it from the offence of associating Mr. Spurgeon's name with an organization from which, in his lifetime, in protest against its apostasy he withdrew.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HAS THE CHURCH FAILED?

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Morning, January 15th, 1939

(Stenographically Reported)

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."—Matthew 5:13.

We are told in this passage, and in its parallels in Mark and Luke, that salt has one peculiar distinguishing quality—its saltiness. We speak sometimes of snow as a standard of whiteness: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow". Salt is sometimes white, but we never use it as a standard of whiteness. It is remarkable for one thing, for that which is of its very essence and nature—it is salt. But if it has lost its savour, if it should lack that one peculiar quality which distinguishes it from everything else, and which gives it its value—"If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

I want you to think for a little while with me this morning of the principle which is wrapped up in the saying that things are good insofar as they serve the purpose for which they are designed; and that if they fail in that, they fail altogether.

There has been a good deal of discussion of late years as to the place and function of the Christian Church. Sometimes the Church of Christ is blamed for not having accomplished more. And sometimes the failures of what we are accustomed to call civilization, are laid at the door of the Church. The world is said to be what it is, in large measure, because the Church has failed to fulfil its mission.

We meet this morning as a Church. We, who compose this organization, call ourselves a Church. And it is well that we should know whether we are exercising a useful ministry, or whether we are altogether failing in the execution of that for which we were put into the world. Therefore, before I begin to apply this principle, we must ask what we mean by a Church. What is a Church? The word is a biblical one, and for its proper definition we must refer, not to our dictionaries, but to our Bibles, for the reason that words acquire new meanings as they are employed to designate different conceptions. Sometimes a word, ultimately, acquires a meaning which is practically the opposite of its original significance.

What do we mean by a Church? When you contemplate the Roman Catholic Church you think of a world-wide organization, of a religio-political character, a religious institution which does its work very largely by political means; a vast organization which has a central and hierarchical form of government, which is essentially the world's greatest autocracy, representing more than three hundred millions of regimented souls who are expected to respond to, and yield obedience, ultimately, to one will.

Is that what the Bible means when it speaks of the Church?

There are also other organizations that are called churches that have a central form of government. They have large buildings and institutions, and are of a religious character. We speak, for example, of the Church of England as "by law established". In England the Church is really a department of the State, and the head of the Episcopal Church, who is the Archbishop of Canterbury, is an official of state and so are all the bishops. Most of them have a place, by virtue of their office, in the upper house of the English Parliament. They are members of the House of Lords. Is that the biblical conception? Does that fit in with the teaching of the Word of God as to what a Church ought to be?

Not to go so far afield, we have organizations in Canada that are called Churches, which also are subject to various forms of central governments. Their congregations, within certain limits, manage their own affairs. But they are subject to authority outside of themselves. And these Churches exercise a varied ministry. Of late years, one such Church has especially given itself to the consideration of social questions, and has put itself on record as opposed to our present economic system. We are told that sixty percent of its ministers are socialists; and from its formal officially expressed resolutions, it seems to teach that the particular mission of the Church is to improve the economic order, to give men better houses to live in, better wages in order that they may have such houses—to improve this world in general, so that everyone may be more comfortable.

Many of the ministries exercised by such churches may be good in themselves, but the question is, Is that what the church was put in the world to do?

What is the biblical idea of a Church? The very word means that those who compose it are called out, and separated from all others. They are the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. They profess to have become new creatures in Christ, to have been born again. The New Testament Church did not open its doors to everybody and invite everyone to join them. The New Testament Church was made up of people who, by their own confession, had been born again. They were new creatures; they had new natures. Their allegiance to Jesus Christ required them to be separated from the world.

The New Testament Church was not a political institution; it was not, in any sense, a worldly institution; it was different from all other organizations in that it was made up of regenerated people, who had received a commission from the Lord, to do a certain definite work.

What was that commission? What were they told

to do? Before His ascension, our Lord said to His disciples: "Go ye . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Then He told them to wait at Jerusalem until they should be endued with supernatural power, with power from on high. And they tarried until the Holy Ghost came, and thenceforward, in the power of the Spirit of God, they went forth, declaring the message of personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To that they devoted all their energies. Upon that great task they concentrated all their powers. The distinctive thing about the Apostolic Church was that it was composed of supernatural people who had had a supernatural experience, who were the representatives of a new race: they were new creatures, regenerated people. They were different from all others in that Christ had been "formed" in them. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. They were Christians because they were manifestly like Christ, and representative of Him.

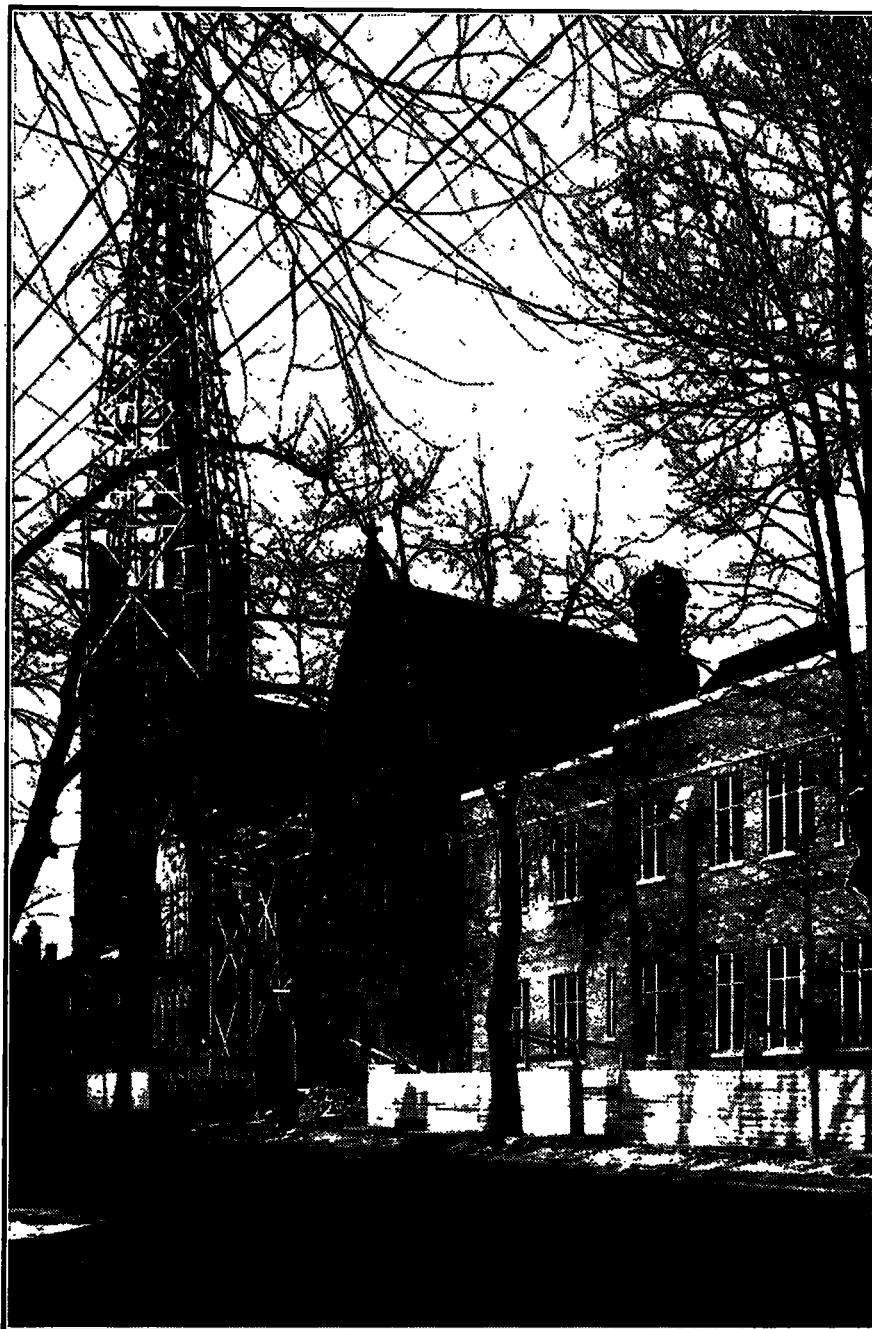
Now if we are the salt of the earth as Christians, there must be something about us that distinguishes us from all others. And it is that distinctive thing that gives us, as individuals, and as organizations of such individuals, our value to society: "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." And if you have that thing, that salt, you are good, but if your spirit, and character, and life be without salt, whatever else you have, you are "good for nothing" as a Christian. That is the teaching of Scripture.

We have but one vocation. Vocation means calling. Avocation means that which we do occasionally, which we do for a hobby, for a change. It may be good for a man to have an avocation. If he is a physician, that is his calling, and he must attend to his calling. He may have, and perhaps ought to have, an avocation, something that will give him rest from his ordinary vocation. And so of men in all other walks of life. We have our calling, our vocation, and we may have an avocation. The Church is given a calling, and it is called to exercise a distinctive ministry, to do some one thing. It should be characterized by a quality called saltiness. It may exercise an indirect ministry, and in that sense have both a vocation, and an avocation. But the avocation must never take the place of the vocation. A minister, for instance, has one task. His calling is to preach the gospel. He may, perhaps, have some little hobby for recreational purposes. It may be gardening; it may be something else. But whatever it is, it is something which should occupy only a small part of his time, and that merely that he may find some little recreation. But the moment he allows his avocation to monopolize him, and gives himself to his hobby to the neglect of his particular calling, he becomes good for nothing, whether he be a preacher, or a lawyer, or a doctor.

The Church's mission is to bring Christ into the hearts and lives of men, and any other ministry she may exercise must be her avocation. It must be only the by-product of her primary task: "Ye are the salt of the earth."

I wish I had both the competence and the time fully to elaborate the suggestion contained in this pregnant sentence. But I fear I do not know enough about salt to know all its uses, but I know some of them. And I am sure that when the Lord Jesus used this simile He did it advisedly; as the Creator of all things He gave to salt its own peculiar nature, and He singled out that essential quality of saltiness as illustrative of a quality of life which His grace imparts.

What is salt good for? It has a certain *preserving value*. It prevents the natural processes of deterioration, decay, and disintegration. Salt will preserve a thing which, without salt, would soon become a mass of putrefaction. Salt has a *curative, healing power*. When



JARVIS STREET CHURCH BUILDING—L.C.

At the left-hand bottom corner the beginning of George Street may be seen

applied, for instance, to a wound that is likely to become septic, poisonous, salt will cleanse it. If you have not anything else at hand when you cut yourself, and the wound is in danger of festering, you will do it no harm if you wash it with salt. It will help you to wash out the poison, and prevent a septic condition setting in. Salt will exercise that ministry even when applied in very small quantities.

And then it has a *salty savour*. It makes that which is so neutral as to be unpalatable, most appetising. You remember Job asked the question, "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" There is not—if it is a good one! There is no taste in the white of a good egg. But

you can get along with it very well if you use a little salt.

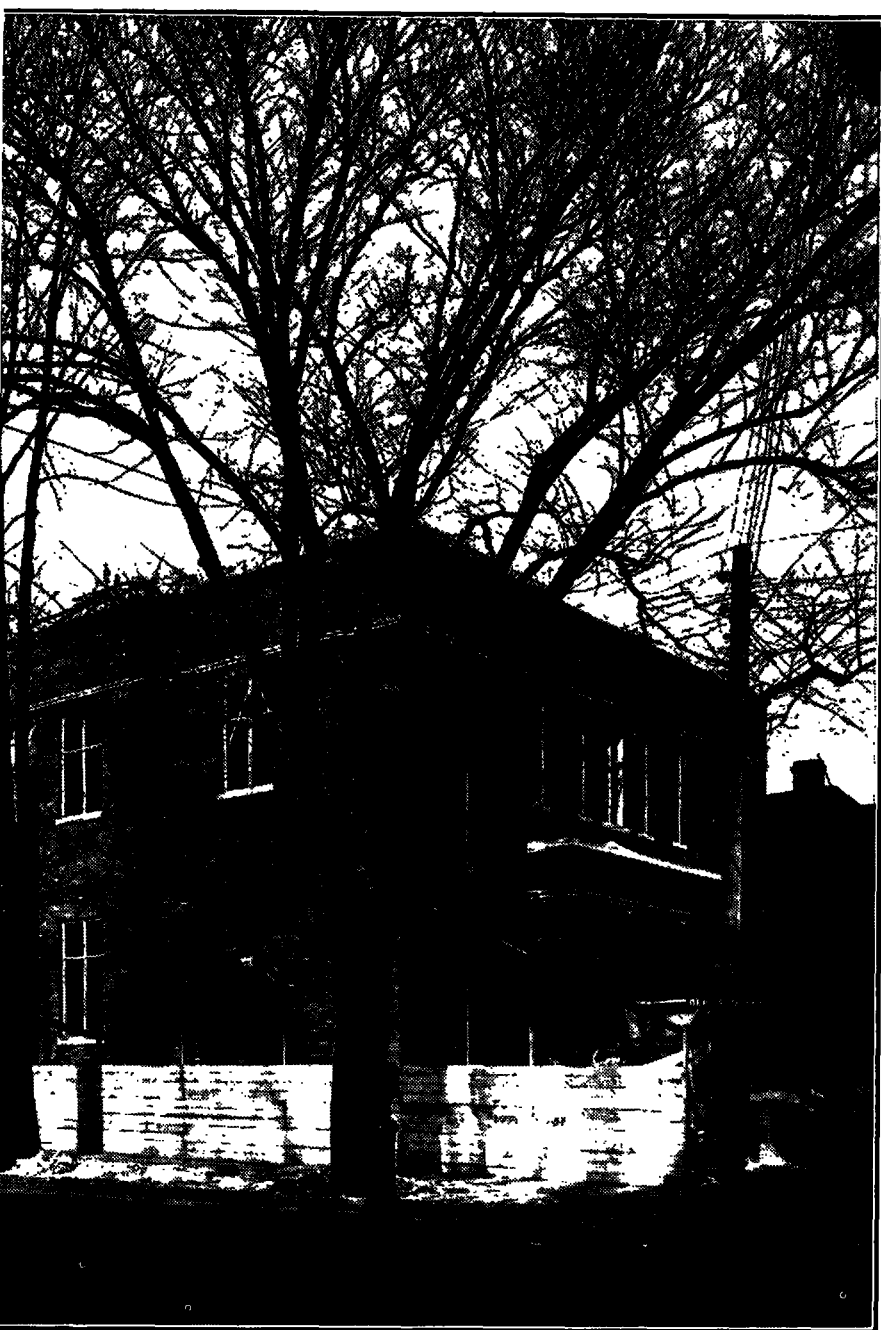
Salt flavours our food. I do not know how many of you were brought up in England, or in some other country which possesses the same characteristics. England is an island. You cannot get very far from the sea. Please do not be offended when I tell you you do not know what butter is like if you have not tasted good English butter. You really do not know what cream tastes like unless you have tasted good cream from Devonshire or Cornwall. Nor have you tasted good roast beef unless you have tasted the beef of England. What makes the difference? Not the people who make the butter; not a difference, necessarily, in the quality of the cows that give the milk, or the animals that supply the beef. England is an island, surrounded by salt water. Salt is distilled from the very atmosphere, it is in the very grasses upon which the cattle feed, and there is a flavour about everything that you can never find in the interior of a continent such as this. I dare say you will find it on the coast, either east or west, or in other island countries; but we have not here that saltiness in the air which gives flavour to everything.

Salt is sometimes used on the land. It is used for many, many purposes. Into that, I say, I cannot go, partly because I do not know all its uses, nor its many chemical values. But these suggestions will suffice for our purpose.

I do not believe the Church of Christ was ever intended to become a legislative governing authority, governing the lives and consciences of men by outward, official compulsion. I believe that the Roman Catholic conception of the Church is the antithesis of the scriptural principle. I do not intend to give offence when I say that, as I read the Scriptures, the whole conception of the Episcopal Church—with its bishops, and its hierarchical forms of government, or any other such body—is wrong, and is but a modified form of Roman paganism, and was never derived from the New Testament. If you would know what a church is, you must go back to the New Testament, and there find your definition as a company of regenerated people, put into the world to exercise a spiritual ministry, to be as the salt of the earth, purifying the springs of life, giving a savour to life, a flavour to it, making life worth while in a thousand ways.

There was a city near Jericho, and the people said to the prophet: "Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is naught, and the ground barren." The prophet said: "Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." From that time forward the very springs of life in that city were purified, and made wholesome. It became a place worth living in.

It is quite true that the Christian Church never was a majority: "Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The true Church of Christ has always been a "little flock". I wonder what you would think if when you go home



LOOKING WEST ALONG GERRARD STREET

and on the right hand bottom corner the beginning of Horticultural Avenue.

to-day and sit down to your noonday meal, your mother, or your wife, or whoever may prepare the meal, should set in the centre of the table a large bowl piled high with salt? You would say, "What is this?" "Oh, that is salt." "But you seem to have more salt than potatoes. Are we expected to eat salt? Is that to be the foundation of our diet to-day?" You know that no housewife would be so foolish. What will you have? Just a little salt-shaker, or salt-cellar, just enough salt to flavour things, to make your meal palatable. Christians, I say, have always been in the minority. They have never been much more than a little shaker full of salt at the best. And yet the Church has long exercised a most potent ministry. Like the salt, we are to be a purifying, healing, savouring influence in the world.

The primary mission of the Church is to make Christians. That is what the Lord said: "Go ye therefore, and teach, or make disciples of, all nations."

Her secondary function is so to instruct Christians in the Word of God that they may be as salt, and that they may not lose their saltiness, that they may exercise a distinctively Christian influence in the world.

And further, being such people, they are not to be taken out of the world—they are not *of* the world, but they are *in* the world—but here and there, wherever they are placed, they are to exercise that divine spiritual ministry, being as the salt of the earth.

Let me find an example: Here is a home that is not Christian. It may not be a particularly happy home. There may be a good deal of trouble there. There may, indeed, be a good deal of quarrelling. What can we do for that home as a Church? Can we supply that family with a new house? Can we see to it that their table is well provided, that the whole family are well clothed? Is that the function of the Church? I believe that if people are hungry we should try to feed them. If they are naked we should try to clothe them. But that is only one of the by-products of the Church's ministry. That is not the first, the essential thing; because in such a home you might do all that to-day, and in six months' time, you might find it far worse than it was when you began with it. You have not permanently helped them unless and until someone or something has changed their nature. It may be that father is a drinking man, or perhaps there are other defects in the character of the members of the family. What are you to do? Well, perhaps we can find a boy there, and teach him the ways of the Lord, until by and by his heart is opened to the gospel and he receives Christ, and is made a new creature. He goes home to tell his family and friends what great things the Lord has done for him. He lives a Christian life. Father and mother say, "Something has happened to John. He is different." They observe some offensive things that were common in the family and perhaps now, out of respect for that boy, father refrains from swearing in his presence. And mother notes the change, and she becomes a little less irritable. Perhaps the other members of the family find an interest in the things that the boy is interested in. By and by the whole family life is changed. Ultimately they are all converted. Their whole attitude toward life is changed, and everything begins to improve. Go to that house a year or so later, and you find it a little colony

of the kingdom of God. Father and mother and all the children are saved. The whole household has a different character. Why? Not because of any principle of compulsion; not because of any new law that has been enacted: but because, first, the nature of one member of that family was changed; because the salt of grace had sweetened the springs of life, until it transformed the whole household.

Let me suppose another case. There is a man who works with men who are not Christians—nice fellows perhaps, but careless in their speech, and sometimes rather coarse and vulgar in their language. One or two of them are even profane. What can be done? Are you to go into that little community, be it an office, or shop, and pass certain laws that a man shall not swear, nor do this, nor do the other thing? You cannot do that. But one of those men hears the gospel, and is saved. I do not mean that he merely joins the Church: I mean he is made a new creature in Christ; he is really saved. Thenceforth he exercises a godly influence. Perhaps some times he may gently rebuke his ungodly associates in office or shop. He may hear the name of Jesus spoken of blasphemously, and he may say, kindly, "I wish you would not do that. That is the name of my Saviour, and my Friend." The man who did it, perhaps with his face crimsoning, says, "Sorry, old fellow. I shall try to remember not to do that again. I did not intend to offend." A crowd of men who are used to talking of things that men ought not to talk of, see this man approaching, and then stop. By and by you find it has become the habit, where he is, to be more careful. There is no profanity now, no vulgarity. They are not all Christians, but that one bit of salt in that little community has saved it from further deterioration and decay.

What do you suppose would have happened had there been one man in the Ontario Legislature who, when the beverage-room amendment was under consideration, had stood up in his place as a member of the Legislature and had dared to say, "I am only one man, but I stand before you as a Christian man, who has the moral and spiritual welfare of the community I serve, at heart. And I know that the measures you now propose will be destructive of the material and moral welfare of the community, and I protest against these things"? If there had been only one man! And especially if the members of the Legislature who are members of Christian churches had been really saved men, and had carried their loyalty to Jesus Christ, and their duty to serve Him, into legislative halls, and simply said, "As individuals we protest; we will not be party to it!" who can tell what influence they might have exerted?

Many busy themselves discussing economic injustices and inequalities of the day, and some religious bodies inveigh against capitalism. But the fault is not exclusively with the systems they so unsparingly condemn. The root of the trouble is not so much in capitalism, as in capitalists. Let the grace of God be put into the heart of a man who has a million dollars, making him a steward of God, who recognizes that all that he has belongs to God, and must be administered as before God, and you won't find anyone complaining of his having a million dollars. Why? Because he will have just so much more power to do good.

Or consider the man who is a large employer of labour. He pays his men scant wages. You say, "Do you justify that?" Not at all. I have no sympathy whatever with people who pile up wealth at the expense of other people. It is wrong before God. But how are you going to remedy it? Let that man be really saved; let him take his religion into his office, and into his shop, and begin to practice the principles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what will happen? A revival will spring up even in the very factory over which he presides. I do not care which way you look, the whole trouble in our day, fundamentally, is with evil human nature. If you are going to correct the ills of family life, or of a limited community, or of a nation, or of the world, it will never be done by principles of compulsion. You will do it only by putting the salt into the putrefying mass, so that it may arrest its progress, and sweeten the whole lump.

What have we to-day? The Church in large measure, the professing Church, has turned aside from God's Book. It has ceased to be in any true sense a representative of Jesus Christ in the earth. You cannot prove to me that the Roman Catholic Church represents Christ, in Spain or anywhere else. It has ceased to be an institution having that distinctive supernatural power which gives it value to society, as to the individual. In other words, the professing Church, as a whole, in the mass, has lost its savour. It has lost its saltness. Mr. Bennett was right when he said, I think somewhere in the West, that the Church had better get back to preaching the gospel to the individual; for that is its function; and therein lies its only hope of success. Make Christians, and send them abroad throughout the earth, and it will have the effect that the Wesley Revival had in England. Historians recognize that England was in grave danger of falling under the same evils that afflicted France. There was grave danger of a revolution like that which soaked France with blood, coming to England. And what saved her? Simply the preaching of the gospel. The conversion of men, the forming of little societies of regenerated people, who spent their time in praying, and in doing godly deeds, and in living as men and women who have been made new creatures in Christ, until by and by it permeated all society, and saved England.

What we need in Canada to-day is just that. Why is the liquor traffic flourishing as it is doing to-day? Why such corruption in public life? Why is it that the whole province is sunk in the mire, and is utterly indifferent to things which twenty-five years ago would never have been tolerated? Why? Because the Church generally has ceased to preach the gospel of the grace of God; because the salt has lost its savour.

And having become what it is, what is it good for? It is "good for nothing". It has richly merited the contempt of men: "Thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

Call me censorious if you like, but so far as I am concerned, I simply would not waste time attending the average Church. I would not go the second time to hear a man deny the Word of God, and take the crown of Deity from the brow of Christ, and propose to substitute mere human endeavour for the regenerating ministry of the creative Spirit of God. The

Church that is doing that has ceased to deserve respect from anyone. It has lost its saltness. And it ought to be cast out and trodden under foot of men as a worthless thing. That is the explanation of the general contempt for religion: the professing church has lost its saltness and men cast it out and trample it under foot. That is the reason for the Spanish civil war. The Church had shown herself to be good for nothing, and was cast out and trodden under foot. Now the Church is trying through Franco to re-establish herself by force of arms. I think it would not be too much to say, that that is the philosophy of Russia's anti-religious attitude. Greek Orthodoxy was a religion without salt, and was found to be good for nothing but to be cast out.

Let us not aspire to be great and influential in the world. God help us to be really salt, so that wherever we go, in business, in social life, in public life, in professional life, whatever our vocation, it will be known that we stand as representatives of Jesus Christ. "Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another." Put the salt into the springs of life, and God will bless us, and glorify Himself through us.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we pray for Thy grace, that we may be enabled always to be true to our trust as Christians, that men everywhere may know that we belong to Thee.

Bless all these boys and girls who are here this morning. Many of them have professed faith in Thy name. Go home with every one of them who knows himself or herself to be a Christian. May they be as salt in the home, and in the school, among their playmates. Bless us every one who has named Thy name, and enable us wherever we are, to exercise a godly ministry.

And if there are any here who have not yet been changed at heart, if they have not been given that special quality that differentiates every saved soul from everyone else, may Christ be formed in them, this morning, the hope of glory, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 3 First Quarter Lesson 5 January 29th, 1939

ABRAHAM SEPARATES FROM LOT

Lesson Text: Genesis 13.

Golden Text: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—Romans 12:18.

For Reading: Genesis 14:

I. The Altar at Bethel—verses 1-4.

It was well that Abram did not remain long in Egypt. Because the Egyptian civilization was characterized by wealth, luxury and power, the place is associated in Scripture with the ideas of worldliness and bondage (Exod. 16:3; Deut. 5:6). Abram returned to the land of his inheritance, and once more visited Bethel, "the house of God", where he had previously encamped (Gen. 12:8). The leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt are poor foods for one who has tasted the bread from heaven (Numb. 11: 5, 6; Luke 15: 16, 17; John 6: 49-55). Those who have wandered away from the Lord should return from the far country, that they may be blessed of the Lord, as when they first trusted Him (Jer. 2:19; 3:12, 13, 22; Hosea 14:1). They should separate themselves from every known evil (Jer. 15:19-21).

Abram came back to the altar which he had erected at Bethel. He could now truly worship and praise God, and enjoy the fellowship with God which was restored when he forsook his sin and came back to the life of obedience (I John 1:9). Prayer once more became a sweet privilege (Psa.

66:18); he could call upon the name of the Lord with confidence and delight.

II. The Tent Toward Sodom—verses 5-13.

Riches, as well as poverty, may cause trouble. Those who have not much of this world's goods sometimes imagine that they need only money, and then they will be free from all difficulty. But they that be rich fall easily into temptation (1 Tim. 6:9, 10); they are apt to trust in their uncertain riches, rather than in the living God (1 Tim. 6:17), seeking after the possession of worldly wealth instead of the virtues of the heavenly kingdom (Matt. 6:31-33). Our Lord Himself said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24)!

In this case the wealth of Abram and Lot led to strife which was unseemly. It destroyed the feeling of brotherhood between the two households (Phil. 2:3, 4; 4:2; 1 John 3:23; 4:7). Moreover, the strife hindered the testimony of Abram and Lot before the Canaanite and the Perizzite who were in the land. The enemies of the Lord gain an advantage when Christians are not at peace with one another.

It is probable that the lack of harmony between Abram and Lot resulted from another cause as well. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Abram desired closer fellowship with the Lord, while Lot's heart was wavering in allegiance to God, as we see from his choice. Abram suggested separation as the only way to avoid further difficulty and unpleasantness. Abram gave thanks to God, acknowledging Him as the Giver of prosperity, while Lot seemed to forget God in the time of plenty (Jas. 1:17; Deut. 8:11-18).

Abram generously gave Lot the first choice of location. It was sufficient for Abram merely to know that he was dwelling in the place where God wanted him to be.

Lot made an unwise choice. The Lord knows where we dwell (Psa. 1:6; 139:3; Job 23:10), and, when contemplating any move, we should ask direction from Him. Lot did not look up, he merely looked around! He was deceived by appearances; he preferred the broad level plain to the narrow upward path (Matt. 7:13, 14). He was so dazzled by the gaudy brilliance of Sodom that he could not see the hideous sin and corruption behind the fair exterior.

Lot was led astray by worldly considerations and ambitions. Had he been in touch with the Lord he never would have chosen the land near Sodom, nor would he later have pitched his tent toward Sodom. He was not considering the

interests of the Lord, his own best interests, nor the best interests of his family. We must let the Lord rule in the affairs of life, and then we shall avoid the mistakes of Lot.

III. The Land of Promise—verses 14-18.

Lot had his eyes upon the land, but lost sight of God; Abram had his eyes on God, and God commanded him to look upon the land (Matt. 6:19-24). As a result of his choice, Lot lost his land, the sense of God's presence and, very soon, his liberty (Gen. 14: 11, 12). Abram retained fellowship with God, and gained the land for an inheritance. Lot had been selfish, but Abram had been mindful of the spiritual good of his family (Gen. 18:19).

The Lord will not remain in debt to any man; he is ever mindful of those who walk in the way of obedience. Abram was rewarded by the promise of the land and a numerous seed (Gen. 17:6-8).

Abram dwelt in the plain of Mamre, a name which denotes "fatness", "richness", and implies rich blessing. The fat of animals for sacrifice represented their richness, and was regarded as precious. It was usually entirely consumed as a burnt offering, in token of the fact that the best belongs by right to God (Lev. 3: 10, 11). The paths of the Lord drop fatness (Psa. 36:8; 45:7; 65:4, 11); rich blessing comes to those who follow Him (Prov. 10:22).

Hebron, the place of "communion", was his next abiding-place (John 15:4). Dwelling in fellowship with the Lord, the recipient of His blessing, Abram was able to be victorious over his enemies (Gen. 14:14-16). God revealed Himself to Abram as "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19).

REV. F. R. WELLINGTON

Rev. John Boyd, of Sudbury, writes with enthusiastic appreciation of the work of Rev. F. R. Wellington, who has assisted him in evangelistic work in Sudbury and district for ten weeks. He speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Wellington's ability as an evangelist, both as preacher and singer; and of his great daring in leading in the important work of visitation. Mr. Boyd heartily recommends Mr. Wellington as a loyal, faithful, and effective, evangelist, to our Union churches.

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