

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 34, No. 17

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, AUGUST 11, 1955

Whole Number 1733

BIBLICAL EVANGELISM

EVERY way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." (Phil. 1:18). This was the inspired comment of the apostle Paul who was languishing in a Roman prison. To him had come word that his imprisonment had the effect of stirring up good brethren to preach Christ more faithfully; it had the further effect of causing others to become more zealous out of motives of envy and strife. Nevertheless, declares the intrepid messenger, I insist that I shall rejoice in the news that Christ is preached.

We have heard some use this text as a justification for unscriptural methods and unscriptural preaching. Such a use of the text only indicates their poverty in argumentative material. Paul had absolutely no intention of leaving the impression that the Christian is to be smugly satisfied with any and all methods of evangelism. On the contrary, the believer is to seek the mind of the Lord as clearly revealed in His Word and then he is to obey that word.

Nor does the writer to the Philippians declare or even intimate that believers are to co-operate with those who preach Christ in an unscriptural and unworthy manner. To read that into his statement is to wrest Scripture in a shameful manner.

Does the Word of God speak concerning the *method* of evangelism? No one will doubt that the *message* of evangelism is clearly revealed therein but some seem to feel that the Bible is not so explicit upon the method or instrument of New Testament evangelism as it is upon the content of the evangel. It is our profound conviction that the Lord has given clear directions upon both of these matters so that the sincere believer may read and understand.

The New Testament Church

We can never understand the scriptural prescription for evangelism unless we clearly apprehend what the Word tells us concerning the New Testament church. We fear that much of modern evangelism is attempted without any bother to learn the mind of God upon this matter. Such attempts can result only in confusion or failure for the key to the question is found in an understanding of the New Testament teaching on the church.

Some people will think, at this point, that there is no need to inquire what the Bible declares concerning the church. "The church," they will emphatically state, "is composed of all the various branches of Christendom. Thus it is the Baptist church, the United church, the Presbyterian church, the Anglican church, etc., considered as a whole. That is the church." Such a concept has not one iota of Scriptural support. Nowhere in the Bible is the word "church" used to describe a great, visible, world-wide body or group. Do not merely accept our word about this; look up the word in your Bible concordance and you will readily see that what we have stated is a fact.

Bible Use of Term

As we understand the Word of God, the word "church" is used in two and *perhaps* three senses. In the vast majority of cases it is used with reference to a local body of baptized believers who form an autonomous organization under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever these are spoken of as a group, the Bible speaks of "churches". For instance Paul declares in I Corinthians 16:19 — "The churches of Asia salute you." — He does not say — "The Asian church salutes you."

The word has another use in Ephesians where it refers not to an earthly body but to a heavenly and glorified body of the blood-bought of all ages and places. That "glorious church" (Eph. 5:27) is not seen now by the eye of man but is known to the Lord. At the last day it shall be revealed for all to see.

Some believe that the word "church" has a third use in the Word of God and they would point to passages such as Matthew 16:18 where the Lord Jesus declared — "Upon this rock I will build my church." We are not persuaded that this does not refer to the institution known as the local church. Other brethren feel, however, that in this instance the term is used in a general sense just as we would use the term, "the Canadian home." By this phrase we do not refer to a particular Canadian home or to all Canadian homes but merely designate an ideal of something that is concrete.

Be that as it may, we do know that *the church* which is to be concerned with evangelism is the local body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Any evangelism

which overlooks this is decidedly an unscriptural evangelism.

Why do we speak in this vein? Obviously, we desire to learn the mind of God. There is another very practical reason for this discussion. The Lord does not dictate a certain path for His people in order to display an arbitrary nature. His way is the best way! His way is the one that guarantees success if those who follow it are in His will. Sometimes we hear people speak to this effect — "Oh, we know that this modern mass evangelism that has the co-operation of modernists, evangelicals and neo-orthodox is not right but it has good results." Good results issuing out of disobedience to God! We doubt it! Permanent, real and eternal results are known only in the path of obedience to the Word of the living God.

Modern Evangelism and the Churches

Let us keep clearly in mind the fact that a true New Testament church is one that is a local body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. To these churches is committed the work of evangelism. For ourselves, we can see little objection to such true churches together sponsoring a city-wide campaign with the believers being directed back to the gospel churches.

Is this a description of the typical city-wide evangelistic campaign of our day? No! The typical campaign today is sponsored by nearly *all* the Protestant churches in a city. No endeavour is made to determine if these churches are sound upon the great fundamentals of the faith. Modernists occupy prominent places, converts are directed back to modernist churches where they will be fed upon the husks of modern infidelity rather than upon the milk and meat of the Word. Modern evangelism is merely providing a weak shot in the arm of organized unbelief.

Simplicity and Spiritual Reasonableness of Biblical Evangelism

The more we see and hear of modern evangelism, the more clearly we realize that there is a glorious simplicity and a spiritual reasonableness to the Bible plan of evangelism through the local, New Testament churches. Let us briefly look at some of the more apparent benefits of this divinely-ordained method.

1. New-born babes are directed to living gospel churches where they can be nourished upon spiritual food. Modern evangelism often sends them to churches which are so cold and dead that someone has described them as "iceboxes with lights in them".

2. The new believers are taught in the things of God and made to see their responsibilities to be witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ. There they become workers in the vineyard. We fear that those who are directed to modernist churches receive so little food that they are themselves undernourished and in no condition to carry the Bread of Life to others. What food they do obtain must come from some evangelical radio program, magazines or Bible Conferences.

3. For the sake of the continuation of the gospel in our midst, it is necessary that believers be banded together in true churches. Our thought must not only be of today and tomorrow; rather it is our intense desire that the gospel should be preached in its simplicity and power to our children and their children after them. Why should evangelicals continue to provide a feeder line to temples of unbelief? Much of modern evangelism is doing only that.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
(Editor 1922-1955)

Published every Thursday for the propagation of the Evangelical principles of the Protestant Reformation and in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

\$3.00 Per Year. Postpaid to any address. 10c. Per Single Copy.

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Sincerely we declare that we rejoice in every way that Christ is preached *but knowing what the Word of God declares we feel that we will choose the better part and do His work as He has commanded.* Fellow evangelicals, why play at evangelism with those who deny the Lord and His Word? "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (II Cor. 6:15).

If we are really engaged in God's work we shall find that we have no time for such compromising efforts. Rather, being persuaded in our own souls of what God has said, we shall seek in His power, to do His work in His way. Under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, we shall stand back and marvel. The seeming success and noise of modern counterfeits will be insignificant compared to what He has in store for those who will "trust and obey".

ASK SOVIET CHURCH TO WORLD COUNCIL

Davos, Switzerland, Aug. 6—(AP)—The central committee of the World Council of Churches yesterday invited the Russian Orthodox Church to enter into a "full and free relationship" with the 165 Christian churches in the council.

The committee sent a 2,000-word message to the holy synod of the Russian Orthodox Church suggesting, as a first step, personal meetings between representatives of the council and the Russian Church.

The message was the council's reply to a letter last February from the Moscow patriarchate urging the world council to promote "peaceful coexistence" and support the Communist-inspired World Peace Council.

The World Council has several times refused to be associated with the Peace Council.

—Toronto Star, August 6.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"How Shall We Escape...?"

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 19th, 1922

(Stenographically Reported)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."—Hebrews 2:3.

THIS divine Word is a Word of truth. It never exaggerates. When it uses the superlative degree, it is to describe or to define that which is itself superlative. And when the Word of the Lord speaks of the salvation which is in Christ as a great salvation, it is great indeed. And I want this evening to speak of the greatness of the salvation provided for us of God's abounding grace, through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I.

This salvation is great for many reasons. IT IS GREAT BECAUSE IT SAVES US FROM GREAT PERIL. It is not common, I am afraid, for us to-day to dwell upon the danger in which men who are out of Christ are found; notwithstanding the Word of the Lord is most explicit and it declares that the salvation which is in Christ has been provided for us because we were in very great danger. I believe that we err much in our day in the proclamation of the gospel by not giving the proper emphasis to that great call of the Word to repentance. The doctrine of sin, its nature, its consequences, what it does to man, what it is to God, is seldom heard. And men are content to exhort their fellows, if they preach Christ at all, to follow after Him, to walk in His steps: ignoring the tremendous necessity of dealing with the great fact of human experience — the fact of sin.

Now Jesus came to save His people from their sins; because He knew that sin was something from which we need to be saved. The work of sin may be set forth in many figures: it is sometimes represented in the Scripture under the figure of disease; it is a leprosy; it is a fever; it is a something which brings men down into the dust of death. But one thing is unmistakably clear, it is a disease which is beyond all human remedies. We ourselves have no power with which to treat it. We have no power whatever to cure it. It is a cancer. Wherever it begins, it affects ultimately the whole man. Whether it be a sin of the hand, or the foot, or the eye, or the lip; whether it be a more respectable sin of the mind; whether it be something that masquerades under a religious disguise; sin is a malignant disease: it has the power of death in it; and "when it is finished, bringeth forth death." There is no escape from it: it is absolutely inevitable: it inheres in the very nature of the thing itself: it brings men down into the dust of death.

Sin is represented in the Scripture sometimes in the figure of a fire. We are exhorted to save men "with fear, pulling them out of the fire". "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

If you go to an Insurance Company to have your busi-

ness premises insured, and you desire to take advantage of special rates provided for establishments protected by certain automatic systems of fire protection, I think you will find that the Company with which you insure insists that the whole building shall be protected. It is not enough for you to insure the basement by such a system there. It is not enough to protect the first or the second floor, nor the top floor only; for fire may break out anywhere and it can burn down and up. And wherever it begins, it may never stop until it has reduced the whole structure to a heap of ashes.

Sin may manifest itself in its grosser and more sensual forms; it may show itself by mastery of the appetites; it may lead men to flagrant sins which are apparent to anyone; or it may show itself in the form of intellectual pride; or of spiritual antipathy to the truth of the gospel. But wherever it shows itself, whether in the upper realm of the spirit, or in the realm of the mind, or in the lower carnal nature, it can burn up and down and it will reduce the temple of God to ruin.

Sin is really a terrible malady, a terrible menace, to the peace of the soul. And there is no promise in the record of human history that sin will extinguish itself; that a man may be saved from sin by his own effort, or by any human act. There are some you know who speak of sin as though it were an incident merely in a course of evolutionary progress, something to be sloughed off, something for which we bear no moral responsibility at all. It is an accident of the human mind, it is inevitable, it belongs to the race. We are all sinners, there are none of us perfect, but we are all on the upward way, climbing to the greater height and in due course we shall cast off this thing that is now so inconvenient, and causes such pain and bondage to the soul. It requires a tremendous stretch of imagination to subscribe to the doctrine of evolution. A man must bid good-bye to his reason; he must be infinitely more credulous to be an evolutionist, than to believe what God has said. I am not going to discuss it but all I am going to say this evening is that, if it were true, we still need salvation, because the paradise of the evolutionist is a long way off yet, is it not? If by that means we are to come to a state of bliss, when shall we arrive? Look upon the world today and consider what moral and spiritual progress the race has made. I grant you that here and there progress has been made but the late war surely was a revelation of what human nature really is; and since the war, perhaps, we have had an even clearer indication of the ravages wrought in human life by this deadly plague of sin. Look at Russia! Look at Germany! Look at Turkey! Look at the million

and a half massacred Armenians! Look at the industrial conditions at home and abroad! We are a long, long way from heaven, from any kind of paradise! The man says he believes in universal brotherhood. He does not believe it when he goes to pay his garage bill. He turns around and calls the man a thief. He is always complaining that men are out after the interest of number one. Human nature is an ungrateful thing.

Sin, my dear friends, whatever you may call it (and I am not going to quarrel with you over the name: you can discard theological terms if you like for the purpose) is a moral evil that brings men down and not up, and that promises to create not heaven, but hell, if it is left to itself. I think that I can tell you about how far up the *paradise* of the evolutionist is. A famous astronomer—I think a Toronto man by the way—recently announced to the world the discovery of two new planets not far away. If I recall correctly, they are about fifty-two quadrillion light miles distant from the earth. I do not quite know how far that is: but I think, approximately, it is the distance removed from this present stage of evolutionary progress of peace and joy, if human nature is to save itself. We need, I say, a great salvation.

There is, of course, a word of revelation, there is a hand that withdraws the veil and shows us that this life goes on into the future and it tells us that that process of degeneration, of that departure from God, which is so manifest here, is only accentuated and accelerated in the life beyond: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust yet more: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy yet more." And the revelation of this Book is that men go down and not up, and go farther and farther away from God, if they are left to themselves. I have said to you frequently that I have never spent much time in discussing the question of the literalness of those passages which describe the place of the impenitent as a place of fire, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." I am not going to quarrel with anybody about that for I am sure of this, that if all the fires of hell were extinguished at this moment, there is enough of hell in every man here to rekindle there that deadly thing that has lifted its hand against God, that thing that has taken the crown of the universe from the brow of the Son of God, and put thereon the crown of thorns. There *must* be a bottomless pit in which that thing shall be buried out of the sight of God. There is a day of retribution! there is a day when the books shall be opened, and when men shall be judged out of the things written in that Book: "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

And I come to you this evening, my dear friends, to tell you that this thing called Sin is not to be trifled with. I remember during the war being for a day conducted, by some officers of the Port of London Authority, through the various warehouses of London at the wharfs up and down the river, showing us the war stores which the Government had in reserve. There was one place where there were gums and oils of all kinds, one great warehouse, I remember, filled with metal containers in which there was oil of eucalyptol—just millions of pounds worth of inflammable material. And as we were passing through, I said to the officer accompanying us and showing us these things on every hand, "This would be a terrible place for an incendiary bomb to fall." And he jumped as though he had been struck, and very seriously

and solemnly said, "Please do not mention that: that is our terror by day and by night. Some of us who are charged with the responsibility of watching these stores cannot sleep for if fire were to begin here, there is nothing could extinguish it."

And that is just a picture of human nature! "The tongue is a little member." Have you heard that little boy talk, that little girl talk?—only a spark—but that Book says, "It is set on fire of hell." The bomb has dropped: the temple is blazing already. That must be a great salvation which can extinguish the flame, and save the soul. Behind the smallest sin there is the power of hell itself and no man, who knows the plague of his own heart, can afford lightly to regard that law of sin, which is in his members,—that something that seems to be calling—calling—calling him to an everlasting descent.

II.

However, it is a great salvation for another reason. IT CENTRES IN THE PERSON OF A GREAT SAVIOUR. O when we know what sin is, we shall be jealous of the honour of our God for only a great Saviour can suffice to save us from so great a ruin as sin has wrought! And if you read the context you will see that this salvation is the result of long and elaborate preparation. I rejoice to observe the salvation in Christ is not an after-thought; it is not the result of a sudden—if I may reverently say so—divine impulse. It is the result of a carefully devised plan in which the mind of God—may I again reverently say?—in which the mind of God is at His best.

"God in the gospel of His Son,
Hath all His mightiest works undone."

I remember meeting a young man some years ago who was taking a post-graduate course in Chicago University and I asked him what he was preparing for. He expressed the view that the gospel needed to be restated in order to meet the demands of the times.

"An infant of days," a man whose span of life at the best is seventy years, takes the *utmost*, the *last*, the *ultimate* product of the divine mind, the result of the counsels of the Eternal revealed by a supernatural revelation and he goes to work to learn how to restate it. God pity him! Listen! Hear Him marching: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Then the great argument proceeds: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" And he argues for the superiority of Jesus Christ: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy

footstool? Are they not, all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of rewards; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

Somebody is going to restate the gospel? Out of the unknown He came, within the range of our comprehension, condescending to the limits of our own understanding, taking upon Him our flesh, our nature, made in the likeness of man; He came down—down to our level because—Blessed be His name!—we never could climb up to His. It is a great salvation upon which God has engaged His thought from before the foundation of the world: "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is an old, old story, much older than we think, much older than Calvary, much older than Sinai, much older than the establishment of the foundations of the earth. We listen to the voice of divine Wisdom saying this evening: "When he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the foundations of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him. I was set up from the beginning, from everlasting, or ever the earth was." He is the eternal Son of the Father and He has planned it all, my brother, how you and I may be saved from our sins. And I do think that, as the Spirit of God shows us the terrible nature of sin, we shall come to see that it never could be atoned for, that it never could be removed by anything short of the blood of the Incarnate God. O these little thinkers, these superficial men, who make light of the blood! What is the blood? He, the eternal Son, "who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless (indissoluble) life." We are not saved by the physical blood of Jesus: that is but the physical manifestation of the tremendous moral value that was resident in it. What was the blood of the Incarnate God? It represented the travail of soul of the Infinite One, bearing our sins "in his own body on the tree." Oh, it is a great salvation!

My dear friends, as you read this story—and I wish you would just go home tonight, and in the quiet of your own room turn on the light, as I turn it on here, upon that Holy Book—and then reverently bow and ask God to turn on the light, that the light of the Eternal Spirit may lead you into the unfathomable depths, into the infinite riches of this great truth: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." It is a great salvation when God could trust no one else to bring its message to the world or to work out in our behalf the counsel of His grace. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;" and the salvation of one soul demanded and engaged more fully the powers of Deity than the creation of the material universe. If a man could save himself he would thereby become a god. It was the handiwork of God, God's best, His greatest triumph, that sin destroyed; and if the thing that was destroyed could restore itself to its own glory, it could challenge the supremacy of God; but it never can. He hath made all

things for Himself: "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another."

Hence salvation is of grace, and of grace alone for it is God's sovereign act to recreate the soul. I have been trying to show you in this simple fashion that there is a foundation for faith to stand upon, that there is some One Whom we may trust without reserve.

I was reading last week about Mr. Lloyd George receiving an honorary degree from a certain university in England, that had notified him four years ago that they desired thus to inscribe his name upon their roll. But the press of public duties had prevented his attendance and during his election campaign he tarried to receive this degree. On being introduced by the chancellor of the institution, his distinguished services were described and it was stated that they had been waiting for four years to confer this honour upon him. And Mr. Lloyd George replied by saying that he was delighted to be in a city which could remember the services of a public man as long as four years.

O yes, human nature is such an unstable thing: it is such an untrustworthy thing, both yours and mine—unstable as water, lacking in steadfastness of purpose. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." I love to preach a salvation that was conceived in the mind of God before He flung the stars into space, before He set in the heavens the two great lights to rule the day and the night, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever He had formed the earth and the world, before He carpeted it with flowers, having prepared it for human habitation: I love to preach a salvation which long before that had been approved in the mind of God and has never been changed from then until now. I am grateful for one place where I can find a rock on which I can stand. Amid the perishing things about me —

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Oh, it is a great salvation! The same old story all down through the centuries and as our Brother Morrison says, "At this tick of the clock", it is the same great salvation, unrevised, unaltered. It is offered to every one. We may put our trust in this great Saviour.

III.

WELL, IT IS A GREAT SALVATION FOR MANY OTHER REASONS: but you see I have not time to tell you. I was going to tell you that it is great because it saves us to great enjoyments. It delivers us from the bondage of sin — not only forgives our sins; it delivers us from its bondage.

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me."

It saves us to great fellowships. Life is full of disappointments but there is no fellowship after all, in all the world, like that to be found among the saints—those who have given themselves to Jesus. Where the unity of the Spirit is, it is just a little bit of heaven upon earth. It saves us specially, however, to the fellowship of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. I am so rejoiced that when the Lord calls us to His banqueting house, He

does not treat us like you treat a poor man who is out of work and comes to your back door, and asks for something to eat. You bring him into the kitchen, if you give him anything. You set him at a table by himself: you do not know him; he is a stranger. You give him bread to eat—you give him a meal but you do not sit down with him, and make him feel that he has found somebody who loves him in his distress, who sympathises with him in his sorrow, and in his urgent need. And perhaps he needs that more than the bread you give him. I am glad that God does not put the restored sinner on probation, that He does not just test us for a period of time. But the rule of His reception is so beautifully expressed in that matchless parable: the best robe, the shoes, and the ring for the hand, and the fatted calf, and all the fulness, and the music, and the joy of the Father's house; it is instantly put at the disposal of the man or the woman who returns to receive this great salvation — and such a welcome!

There are people here this evening — I know I could call upon them — who would get up and tell you that in one day, since they found the Saviour, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ has packed more real joy than they had experienced in all their life long before. Jesus has a way of condensing heaven in a few moments; He has a way of giving us the distilled essence of all the Father's house in one draught of the cup of salvation. It is wonderful what our Lord Jesus can do when He communicates His grace, His loving kindness, His tender affection, to the heart of the redeemed soul. And there are men and women here this evening who have tasted that God is gracious, who have tasted that the Lord is good; but who cannot describe the taste.

I heard Dr. Jowett once ask the question, speaking of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection, "Do you know the taste of canteloupe?" Yonder in England they are not as common as they are here and I felt that in that congregation there were a good many mouths watering. Some of you say you know it. How do you know it? You know it in the fruit-dealer's window; or you know it in the seedsman's catalogue. You are able to differentiate between the different kinds. Anyone knows the canteloupe. It is a homely illustration; but nobody knows it until he tastes it.

There is a way of tasting the joys of God's salvation, there is a way of rejoicing in Jesus Christ "with joy

unspeakable and full of glory". I have known so many people in my ministry who had nobody but Jesus to trust in—widows from whose side the Lord had taken the protector and companion, orphans from whom father and mother had been taken away; sometimes a man with a family of small children; and no mother to look after them. Oh the sorrows of life, how bitter, how terrible they all are! But when Jesus comes in, somehow or another he gilds them all; He knows how to gild, as one of our hymns says, "with His smile". It is a great salvation!

And then if I had time just to draw the veil and just get you to use your imagination a little. There is plenty of scope you know. But oh, the joy of it! — the friends that are gone before, the happy reunions, father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife and children; and best of all the noble army of the great saints who have gone before. And then above everything else, Jesus Himself! I say, It is a great salvation!

IV.

WHAT I WANT TO ASK IS THE QUESTION OF THE TEXT: "HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE NEGLECT?" I need not tell you what it is to neglect. The word itself conveys its own meaning. You see the advertisement of a cough medicine, for instance, "Do not neglect that cough;" "Do not neglect that disease." I add — "Do not neglect that fire;" you do not need to feed it, you do not need to put oil upon it to add fuel to the flames for the whole building is inflammable. Just leave it alone and by and by there will be a heap of ashes, that is all. You do not need to cultivate that habit, it will cultivate itself. You do not need to cultivate thistles and briars and obnoxious weeds. They are indigenous to the soil. Just neglect your garden, and see what will happen. Just neglect your house, and see what will take place. Just simply neglect, that is all. Do nothing, let sin have its way, let it go on burning, growing in power and might, neglect this salvation, just do not trust Jesus. Some there are who are wilful, rebellious and who say, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" but not many will say that here tonight. Most of you will subscribe to what I have been saying, and will say, "Sometime — sometime — sometime!" Do you hear it? Sometime I will bow the knee, I will confess. But, my brother, that sometime may never come. You are simply neglecting the most imperative call that ever fell upon a human soul; and if we neglect it; if we miss it — that is the great question, How shall we escape?

I am just waiting for the Spirit of God to speak better than I can in this silence. "How shall we escape, if we neglect" the only means of escape — this great salvation? How can anybody ever escape who neglects God's way of salvation? When Noah and his family went into the ark, and God shut the door, what happened to those who had neglected his appeal? "All in whose nostrils was the breath of life . . . died." There was no other way. And the angels came to Sodom and Gomorrah, and said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed." How did they escape who neglected that call? They only escaped the vengeance from heaven who walked with the angel, who went out over the plain.

So, my friends, I want to ask you again if you will read this great Scripture for yourselves and remember that the voice that speaks to you in the gospel is the voice

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of the Eternal Son and that the argument of the whole matter is his: *that God has exhausted Himself at the cross.* I say that with reverence — God has exhausted Himself at the cross. He had only one Son, and "he gave his only begotten Son." He planned your redemption from all eternity; He manifested Himself to you in the Person of Christ; He appeals to you. He has given you His record, He has given you the Holy Spirit, He calls to you and He bids you to find salvation where He has ordained you shall find it. And He asks you, in the name of heaven, "How shall we escape, if we neglect?" If we say No to God, "How shall we escape?" He has no other Son! He can do no more than pour out His life's blood for you. And if we do not find salvation there; we will never find it: we will never find it in this life, or in the life that is to come.

I point you to the cross:

"There lies beneath its shadow,
But on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave,
That gapes both deep and wide:
And there between us stands the cross;
Two arms stretched forth to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that eternal grave."

And to go past the cross, to despise the precious blood, is inevitably to be lost.

My brother, if that Bible is the Word of God, the inspired and infallible Word of God, then it is possible for a soul to be lost, it is possible for a soul to be damned, it is possible for a soul to be shut outside the door, it is possible for a soul to be excluded for ever from the presence of God. If it is not the Word of God, then it is folly for me to talk to you and equal folly for you to listen to me; for none of us know anything at all about it. But it is the Word of God and it means that we are saved through Jesus. Apart from Him we are lost — and we are lost forever. What are you going to do?

BALANCE IN PRESENTING TRUTH

RIGHTLY to divide the Word of God is as important as fully to understand it, for some who have evidently understood a part of the gospel have given undue prominence to that one portion of it, and have therefore exhibited a distorted Christianity, to the injury of those who have received it, since they in their turn have exhibited a distorted character in consequence thereof. A man's nose is a prominent feature in his face, but it is possible to make it so large that eyes and mouth, and everything else are thrown into insignificance, and the drawing is a caricature and not a portrait: so certain important doctrines of the gospel can be so proclaimed in excess as to throw the rest of truth into the shade, and the preaching is no longer the gospel in its natural beauty, but a caricature of the truth, of which caricature, however, let me say, some people seem to be mightily fond. The Spirit of God will teach you the use of the sacrificial knife to divide the offerings; and He will show you how to use the balances of the sanctuary so as to weigh out and mix the precious spices in their proper quantities. Every experienced preacher feels this to be of the utmost moment, and it is well if he is able to resist all temptation to neglect it. Alas, some of our hearers do not desire to hear the whole counsel of God. They have their favourite doctrines, and would have us silent on all besides. Many are like the Scotchwoman, who, after hearing a

sermon, said, "It was very well if it hadna been for the trash of duties at the hinner end." There are brethren of that kind; they enjoy the comforting part — the promises and the doctrines, but practical holiness must scarcely be touched upon. Faithfulness requires us to give them a four-square gospel, from which nothing is omitted, and in which nothing is exaggerated, and for this much wisdom is requisite. I gravely question whether any of us have so much of this wisdom as we need. We are probably afflicted by some inexcusable partialities and unjustifiable leanings; let us search them out and have done with them. We may be conscious of having passed by certain texts, not because we do not understand them (which might be justifiable), but because we do understand them, and hardly like to say what they have taught us, or because there may be some imperfection in ourselves, or some prejudice among our hearers which those texts would reveal too clearly for our comfort. Such sinful silence must be ended forthwith. To be wise stewards and bring forth the right portions of meat for our Master's household we need thy teaching, O Spirit of the Lord!

Nor is this all, for even if we know how rightly to divide the Word of God, we want wisdom in the selection of the particular part of truth which is most applicable to the season and to the people assembled; and equal discretion in the tone and manner in which the doctrine shall be presented. I believe that many brethren who preach human responsibility deliver themselves in so legal a manner as to disgust all those who love the doctrines of grace. On the other hand, I fear that many have preached the sovereignty of God in such a way as to drive all persons who believe in man's free agency entirely away from the Calvinistic side. We should not hide truth for a moment, but we should have wisdom so to preach it that there shall be no needless jarring or offending, but a gradual enlightenment of those who cannot see it at all, and a leading of weaker brethren into the full circle of gospel doctrine.

Brethren, we also need wisdom in the way of putting things to different people. You can cast a man down with the very truth which was intended to build him up. You can sicken a man with the honey with which you meant to sweeten his mouth. The great mercy of God has been preached unguardedly, and has led hundreds into licentiousness; and, on the other hand, the terrors of the Lord have been occasionally fulminated with such violence that they have driven men into despair, and so into a settled defiance of the Most High. Wisdom is profitable to direct, and he who hath it brings forth each truth in its season, dressed in its most appropriate garments. Who can give us this wisdom but the blessed Spirit? O, my brethren, see to it, that in lowliest reverence you wait for his direction. —C. H. SPURGEON

SOUL MURDERERS

Our "modern thought" gentry are doing incalculable mischief to the souls of men, and resemble Nero fiddling upon the top of a tower with Rome burning at his feet. Souls are being damned, and yet these men are spinning theories. Hell gapes wide, and with her open mouth swallows up myriads, and those who should spread the tidings of salvation are "pursing fresh lines of thought". Highly cultured soul-murderers will find their boasted "culture" to be no excuse in the day of judgment.

—C. H. SPURGEON

The Papacy in the Light of Scripture

By the late Dr. T. T. Shields

(Continued from last week)

The Epistle to the Romans

Sketch the picture for yourself. Peter—we say nothing for the moment about his being the Pope—is the Bishop of Rome. Paul writes to the Romans, and tells them that he has long wanted to visit them, and that his reason for desiring to go to Rome, was that he might have some fruit among them also: "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." You will recall that it was invariably the way of the Apostle Paul not to build upon another's man's foundation. According to the Romanist theory, there must have been a well-established church, with Peter at its head, for at least sixteen years at the time Paul addressed this Epistle to the Romans.

Read the Epistle carefully. It contains a number of salutations to people of whom Paul had heard, but he does not say anywhere, "Be sure to remember me to Bishop Peter." He does not send his greetings to the Bishop of Rome! For a man occupying such an influential position in the apostolic church as the Apostle Paul did, to write to Rome where Peter had already been "reigning" for sixteen years, and completely to ignore Peter's position and presence would have been the essence of discourtesy. There are people who go all the way from this continent to Rome to visit the Pope. Certainly in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul is absolutely silent on the subject of Peter's presence in Rome. I have a shrewd suspicion that the reason for it was that Peter was not there, and Paul knew that he was not there.

Paul's Prison Epistles

But again, *several of Paul's Epistles were written from Rome.* Paul was a prisoner in Rome for some time. You remember how the Acts of the Apostles concludes? Paul was part of the time in prison, but the last two verses of the Acts of the Apostles tell us that "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

It is worth remarking too that the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, recording Paul's arrival at Rome, and his subsequent course there, fails to mention the presence of so important a person as Peter.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

But some of Paul's Epistles were written from Rome. We speak of them as the prison Epistles. They are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and II Timothy. Look at Ephesians a moment: "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."¹ In this Epistle Paul makes no mention whatever of Peter. He does refer to "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord", who apparently carried the Epistle from Rome to Ephesus. Paul evidently designed to give the Ephesians news of his own personal affairs by word of mouth: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he

might comfort your hearts." If, as the Church of Rome contends, Peter had been Bishop of Rome from about forty-one it must be recognized as a strange omission for Paul to neglect to make the slightest allusion to Peter, either as apostle or bishop.

(¹Eph. 3:1. ²Eph. 6:21-22.)

The Epistle to the Philippians

In Philippians, also written from Rome, Paul says, "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen."¹ Can you conceive a man of Peter's prominence being in Rome, and Paul's making no mention of the fact in either of these Epistles?

(¹Phil. 4:21-23.)

The Epistle to the Colossians

Colossians is another of the prison Epistles, and a number of names are mentioned therein. Again Paul sends Tychicus, and with him "Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother . . . Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him); and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God which have been a comfort unto me." Where is Peter? He omits any reference to him as included among "these only" who were his "fellow-helpers unto the kingdom of God." "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."² But never a word about Peter.

(²Colos. 4:7-16.)

The Second Epistle to Timothy

The Second Epistle to Timothy is another of the prison Epistles, and Timothy was Paul's own son in the faith, a fellow-preacher. Paul gives a brief account of certain people: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." Where was Peter? If he had left, why was he not mentioned with the others who had "departed"?

But again: "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." Was Peter, whom Romanists allege to have been so conspicuous unnamed, and merely included perhaps, in "all the brethren?" Can you imagine that possible?

(³II Tim. 4:10-11, 20, 21.)

An Especially Important Passage.

But there is another especially important passage in this epistle: "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."¹ How deeply the great apostle appreciated the affectionate ministry of this rather inconspicuous Onesiphorus! Can it be supposed that Peter, the Bishop of Rome, would have allowed his "beloved brother Paul" to languish in prison without visiting him? Or, if Peter were there, and did visit him, that he would have given such honourable mention to Onesiphorus, while failing to record a visit from Peter? To ask such questions is to answer them: Peter was not there.

(¹II. Tim. 1:16, 17.)

John's Epistle

John's Epistles are supposed to have been written years after the termination of the ministry of Paul and Cephas. Perhaps nearly thirty years had elapsed between the writing of Paul's second Epistle to Timothy and the writing of John's first Epistle. John must have been an elderly man when he wrote. His second and third epistles were probably written some time after 95 A.D. If there had been any head of the church, one might have supposed John would know something about it. But there is not the remotest allusion to that conception of things in either of John's three Epistles.

The Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation also was probably written after ninety-five A.D. Paul's last Epistle was written perhaps about sixty-six: and Revelation about thirty years afterwards. The latter book contains in its first chapter a representation of the church, and the Head of the church walking amid the seven golden candlesticks, and the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches, and the stars in the right hand of Him Who trimmed the lamps are the angels of the seven churches. The book is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." God sent a message to the seven churches—not to the church, not to a universal visible Church of which the Bishop of Rome was the visible head. Why was the Papacy, then more than half a century old, not mentioned? Because there was none.

It is quite obvious that John had never heard of such an office.

That is enough. I affirm that it is utterly impossible to find a vestige of scriptural support for the doctrine of Peter's primacy, anywhere at anytime; and equally impossible to find scriptural proof that Peter was Bishop of Rome; or that Peter ever was in Rome.

The Papal Conception Alien to Christianity

Two simple observations, and I have finished. First, *that the whole spirit of the Papacy is alien to New Testament teaching.* Neither Paul nor Peter, nor any of the apostles were "princes" of the church. There is not a word in the New Testament of any one of the apostles who companied with our Lord, presuming to "reign" over individual or church. On the contrary, they were forbidden to lord it over God's heritage. The conception of a hierarchial government of a single church is pagan.

It is not Christian. It is not in the New Testament.

No Appointment of Peter's Successor

If it be so that Peter was martyred somewhere about the seventh decade, the year sixty-seven or so, *one might have supposed that some provision would have been made for a successor.* You are familiar with the New Testament. Let your mind run from Matthew to Revelation, and ask yourself whether there is the remotest suggestion anywhere of a gathering of the heads of the church to elect one of their number as Pope, a conclave of Cardinals to elect one of their number to be the vicar of Christ, God's sole representative on earth, clothed with divine authority, submission to whom is to be made a term of salvation. Was anything more absurd ever offered for human acceptance than the pretensions of Rome? How amazing that so large a part of the world's population should have accepted these claims as though they were scripturally authorized, and therefore valid!

As you read your New Testament—and I hope you will read it often—never assume that you have become familiar with the Word of God. If you have already read it through a hundred times, I beg of you to begin again. You have not received one-thousandth of the truth it contains for your edification and as you read it again, look for the Papacy in the New Testament. Talk about hunting for a needle in a haystack! That would be easy in comparison. Puzzle: find the Papacy. I can promise you that you will never earn a prize for so doing, for the simple and sufficient reason that it is not there.

What the New Testament Says of the Church

As you study, ask yourself the question, What has the New Testament to say of the church and its officers? It abounds with teaching respecting the church, a body of regenerated people, of "believers" who have been "born again", who have redemption in Christ through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who have been called out from the world, separated from the world and worldliness, unto the gospel of Christ. You will find the record of companies of people who came together to pray, and worship, and observe the ordinances, and to approach God through the one and only Mediator, Jesus Christ our Lord, without the assistance of saints or angels—and certainly without the help of an earthly priest. The privilege of direct access to God at the mercy-seat, through the one and only High Priest, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, is taught plainly in the Scripture.

Furthermore, you will find the alleged first Pope, Peter, telling those to whom he writes that they are all priests: "We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." We do not need a priest. We have one High Priest Who has entered into heaven itself with His own blood, "now to appear in the presence of God for us". The simplest and youngest child, who can but lisp the name of the sinner's Saviour, may kneel before Him and find acceptance. The vilest sinner and the purest saint come on the same terms, and find acceptance at the same place: the mercy-seat, the throne of grace—and all through the precious blood of Christ. How beautifully simple it is!

I would have you see what a grotesque misrepresentation of God is involved in the assumption that the Lord Who made heaven and earth and filled them both with beauty, is responsible for the mummery of the Roman Catholic Church. May God save us from turning again to the beggarly elements of the world from which He,

through the Spirit of grace, has for ever emancipated us! We are only the Father's little children, but we have a great Intercessor. We can talk to Him; we can stammer out our poor prayers, we can worship Him here, we can worship Him anywhere.

"Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Patron of mankind appears.

"With boldness therefore at the throne;
Let us make all our sorrows known;
And ask the aid of heavenly power
To help us in the evil hour."

THE JUDGMENT DAY

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."
—Rom. xiv. 10.

The Mogul of Turkey used to be weighed once a year. On the opposite side of the scales first was put silver, then gold, then jewels, and then the gold and the jewels were thrown among the people. My friends, the day comes when you and I must be weighed in scales of a different character — weighed not against the gold and the jewels of this world; but weighed by the law of the eternal right and the eternal wrong.

Painters have tried to sketch that day but always fail. It is easy to sketch a city on fire, but not a universal conflagration. It is easy to sketch an earthquake that destroys a town, but not that which destroys the hemispheres. All the mountains falling. All the seas boiling. All the stars dropping. All the heavens rolling. All the earth vanishing. Angels flying. Graves bursting. Dead rising. Thrones hoisting. God coming. The apostle Peter speaks of that day as "a great noise". The slide of an avalanche deafens the ear; but what will it be when the Himalayas and Alps and Mount Washington tumble into the dust. A thunder storm reaches only five, ten or fifteen miles; but what will it be when all around the earth the artillery of God shall be unlimbered? The whoop of the wind; the blare of the trumpets; the chorus of the saved; the groans of the banished; the cry of wild beasts frightened from their lair, not knowing which way to jump; the clangor and the vociferation and the echo and re-echo of earth and heaven and hell — these will be the great noise the apostle speaks of.

I do not know in what place of the earth the congregation will assemble for that great assize. Three or four summers ago I thought I saw a place fit to be the great judgment hall of the last day. We had been riding through Tete Noire pass, Switzerland, through rocky desolation, until at last we came upon a scene which I never expected to witness until I beheld the last day. I said to my companion: "This looks to me as if it might be the judgment hall for the last day." In this valley there is room for nations — a great amphitheatre. On these ledges of rocks, gallery upon gallery — first, second, third, fourth, tenth gallery of rocks — room for angels, cherubim, seraphim, archangel. That sunlit cliff, the point from which the righteous shall rise. That midnight cavern, the place from which the wicked shall depart. While amid all that surrounding upheaval of rock and forest, a vast boulder cushioned with moss rose higher and higher until we were overwhelmed with the height and the majesty of the spectacle, and I thought

that might be the throne on which the Judge is to sit. And then there came rolling through my mind the words of Bishop Heber:

"The Lord shall come! the earth shall quake,
The mountains to their centre shake,
And, withering from the vault of night,
The stars withdraw their feeble light.
While sinners in despair shall call,
'Rocks hide us! mountains, on us fall!
The saints ascending from the tomb,
Shall sing for joy, 'The Lord is come!'"

But I do not pretend to tell you where the judgment hall of the last day will be; but there will be a place of judgment where we will have to meet God and answer for this day; for what we say, for what we hear; answer for all the opportunities we have had or might have had; answer for all resistances of the Holy Ghost; answer for all sick-bed vows broken; all death-bed warnings slighted; all Sabbaths, and Bibles, and communion-tables despised. For every year we will have to give answer: every month, every hour, every moment of our life we will have to give answer; and it will be under the scrutiny of that God who has seen us, and watched us, and knows all about us. Will we be ready for such a scrutiny under the eye of the all-seeing God?

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The preacher on the past Lord's Day was Rev. Duncan Macgregor of Sault Ste. Marie. A graduate of the Seminary and a vice president of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association, Mr. Macgregor is no stranger to the local congregation.

In the morning he spoke from Rev. 1:5, 6 and his subject was "Loved, Loosed and Enriched." In the evening his subject was, "A Merciful and Faithful High Priest." The believers rejoiced in the exposition of the Word and look forward to his further ministry on Thursday and next Sunday. Also present and taking part in the services was Rev. George Olley of Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa.

A cable from Dr. Slade was read to the morning and evening congregations. It told of a successful conference at Jonkoping, Sweden and of the pastor's contemplated journey to the church at Mulhouse in France. After visiting several French and Swiss churches, he will proceed to England and thence to Canada.

A "CHARITABLE" LETTER!!

Each day's mail brings some interesting letters. We receive enough favourable comments to encourage us and enough criticism to keep us humble. One letter in today's mail, however, startled us. Here it is:

To the Editor,
So Called "Gospel Witness"

Dear Sir:

I have read your paper for years now and I am convinced that it is the most un-Christian paper in the world.

You would think that a paper with such a name as "The Gospel Witness" would tell the story of Jesus and his love, not run down his Churches. Jesus told us in the Bible to beware of such people as you. You are my dear sir the ANTI-CHRIST of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Canada. May the Dear Lord Have Mercy Upon You, Is My Prayer.

A Follower of Christ

A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. Dubarry

CHAPTER EIGHT THE BOOK OF REVELATION CONTAINS A SERIES OF HARMONIES

OWING to its peculiar nature, to its style and to its purpose, the Book of Revelation occupies a unique place in Holy Scripture. However it would be a great mistake to conclude that it has no connection whatever with the remaining books of the Bible. Such an assertion would be detrimental to its interpretation and would diminish a well-deserved admiration.

Indeed the most miraculous aspect of the book is perhaps its close dependence upon outward elements. We even go so far as to say that this dependence is even more marked here than in any other inspired book. Whereas Job, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes or the epistle of James each constitutes a separate whole without being necessarily connected with any other element, Revelation is in full harmony with and dependence upon the context of an exceptional number of writings and circumstances.

The wonder of it is that the agreement which exists between the book and this context is absolutely perfect. As we think of the tremendous problems which had to be solved, we cannot but conclude that God alone was able to achieve such a feat.

This extraordinary writing fills us with increased wonder as we consider its perfect harmony: (1) with itself, (2) with its writer's personality, (3) with the divine principles, (4) with Scripture, (5) with history, (6) with the probable course of future history.

I. THE HARMONY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION WITH ITSELF

Any writing owes its value to the unity, the balance, and the continuity of its message. The numerous incoherences and contradictions found in the spurious Apocalypses which have come to us prove that, in that kind of writings, such weaknesses are common and unavoidable.

The biblical Apocalypse outsteps all the others by the importance, the variety and the number of subjects it deals with. It generally surpasses them by its briefness and always by the soberness of its language. It also overshadows them by the perfect proportion which exists between the clear passages and the portions whose meaning is hidden, and which thus contributes to enlightening the mind without weakening the faith.

On the other hand, this book was admitted into the canon of Scripture only after being carefully tested during a long period of time. More than any other book of Scripture, it then became and still is an object of intense

examination. Every assertion has been repeatedly analyzed and confronted with other statements of the book. Innumerable criticisms were naturally advanced; but all of them proved to be gratuitous.

And yet, as far as we know, no critic ever pretended that there were discrepancies in the book. It must be admitted that its seemingly contradictory parts constitute an amazing whole, a well-ordered mosaic, a miraculous synthesis, a real unit.

Any interpretation of a particular part of Revelation which would be inconsistent with another part would therefore affect the authority of the book.

II. THE HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH THE PERSONALITY OF ITS WRITER

A perfect decision is seen in the choice of John for this unique work, in preference to Paul, Peter, James, Matthew, or any other apostle. This task did not consist in commentaries, interpretations, applications or exhortation, but in depicting visions. Who knew Jesus the most intimately? Who possessed a more intuitive nature? Who, when confronted with such visions, was the most likely to be stirred with holy emotion? Who, in the sacred recording, could use his gifts of observation and memory with more reliability? Who had been more "technically" prepared and qualified for new revelations from the Master?

This book, although its true author is Jesus Christ, adds the truest details and the finishing touch to the portrait we already possess of John. He constantly appears in it, while at the same time casting no veil on the actors of the book, nor obscuring the meaning of the narrative. The vocabulary of John's other writings is strikingly the same as that used by the Lord Himself in the Patmos visions. At the threshold of the book, we successively read: "The Revelation of Saint John" and "The revelation of Jesus Christ": This is thus a truly divine book but also an apostolic writing. As Solomon puts it in one of his proverbs: "As in water face answereth to face", so Revelation reflects both the heavenly vision and the image of the Seer. And thus another wonder is to be found here: in the least earthly writing in the whole literature is drawn a deeply human portrait, that of John.

Any interpretation which would be inconsistent with the personality, the ideal, the spirit and the teaching of this accomplished representative of the apostles' college, would therefore vitiate the sound exegesis of the book of Revelation.

III. THE HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH THE DIVINE PRINCIPLES

We shall only mention five of them.

CAUSALITY. We know of no writing offering a more absolute and more logical chain in the unfolding of its different parts. One is impressed by the frequent recurrence of the conjunctive phrases: and, then, after, when, straightway, but, again, also . . . , which are literally swarming at the beginning of paragraphs. But this principle of causality is even more noticeable in the facts than in the words. The apocalyptic visions unfold themselves in an order which is perfectly rational, and this order is either successive, gradual or parallel. Punishment is always linked to wrong-doing, and happiness to obedience.

PROVIDENCE. Revelation offers the most imposing and the most perfect picture of the principles of divine government, concerning the individuals, the local churches, the nations and the glorified people of God.

ETHICS. The concepts of truth, holiness, wisdom, justice and love, which have always constituted the best ideal ever proposed to man, are nowhere else more wonderfully expounded than in Revelation.

SPIRITUALITY. No earthly ambition or hope, no carnal desire, are approved of in this book which is so much concerned with the fate of the world.

VICTORY. Nowhere else is the logical certainty of God's triumph more transparently expressed.

Only such interpretation as is consistent with the eternal divine principles can therefore be accepted.

IV. THE HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH SCRIPTURE

Here is the central point of our study.

WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT, the harmony of John's writing is simply remarkable. Out of 404 verses, 205 literally use the Old Testament language; further, 1500 references or allusions to it may be discovered in the same book. Proportionately speaking, even the epistle to the Hebrews contains fewer quotations or references to the Old Testament than the Book of Revelation. Whereas the gospel of Matthew, particularly written to the Jews, includes 92 citations from their book, Revelation, although much shorter, numbers 285 of them.

Let someone attempt coherently to introduce the same abundance and the same variety of inspired literature in a writing as brief as Revelation, and he will find that the task offers insuperable difficulties. We can thus understand the statement of a great evangelical commentator of our day that there is nothing purely original in John's writing, that anything expressed in it can already be found in the remaining books of the Bible, and that Revelation is but the crowning-piece in God's revelation.

The Old Testament is therefore a master-key to the treasures of Revelation. Let us here mention a few of these numberless borrowings.

The Eternity past is particularly recalled to us by the divine titles: Alpha; the Lord which was; He that is alive for evermore.

The creation is represented by the four symbolical beings who celebrate it: "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

The Paradise is mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the book, in connection with "the tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

The Seducer is revealed as the "great dragon, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." He is also shown as "cast down on earth", then "shut up in the bottomless pit", finally "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone."

Man's downfall and corruption, and the curse pronounced upon him are again recalled to us as we read of the evil works and the tragic end of God's enemies.

Babel and its baleful ambitions are brought back to our memories through the figures of Babylon and of the Beast.

The Patriarchs are mentioned on several occasions, either by name or figuratively.

The divine judgments which recall those of Pharaoh, the "song of Moses and of the Lamb" remind us of *Moses*.

The picture of the *desert* comes once again before our eyes as the following are mentioned: the "hidden manna"; "the tabernacle of God with men"; "the ark of his testament"; the incense; the censer, and other figures borrowed from the Levitical worship.

Job comes back to our mind as we read: "the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

David is probably the Bible-character who—directly or indirectly—is most mentioned in Revelation. Through quotations from the Psalms or allusions to them, through the references made to the Holy City, the "iron rod", the "key of David", "he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth", the royal precursor of the Messiah is constantly connected with Him that declares: "I Jesus am the root and offspring of David."

Solomon and *Ezekiel* come back to our remembrance in connection with various allusions to the Temple.

The apostasy of the elect people finds its final reward in the malediction pronounced against Jezebel.

Babylon is repeatedly mentioned in Revelation in relation to things of essential importance.

The prophecies of *Daniel* are taken up again, made clearer, and completed by the visions of John.

The prophets are everywhere present in spirit.

The Messianic prophecies, the promises, the threats, the celestial hopes of the Old Testament are everywhere inserted in the wonderful chain of the apocalyptic visions with which they perfectly blend.

WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT, the harmony of Revelation is equally perfect. The wonder of it is that this harmony had to be divinely pre-established in most of the books of the New Testament, as the majority of them had been written prior to the Patmos visions.

The scheme of *Redemption* is the same in Revelation as in the Gospels. It is described as being made possible by the bleeding and atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God, whose name occurs twenty-eight times in this book.

The *Holiness* required by the epistles has the same characteristics as that demanded by the last book of the Bible.

The same *Christian Service* which is already depicted in Acts is also required in Revelation.

The *Sufferings* which were the share of the first witnesses and martyrs are described and predicted in John's writing.

The same *Christian Virtues* of vigilance, steadfastness, faith and love are found both in Revelation and in the rest of the New Testament.

The *Prophecies* contained in the Gospels, the Acts of

the apostles or the epistles are perfectly linked to those of Revelation. Moreover, they all have the same scope.

The *Hopes* expressed in the whole New Testament, especially those concerning the visible, bodily and glorious return of the Son of God and His eternal triumph have exactly the same characteristics and the same bearings as those of the book of Revelation.

Let us once again insist upon this miracle constituted by the perfect harmony of the last book of the Bible with what preceded it. We can thus understand why the Author of this book threatens with most severe punishments any one who would misuse it, because, by so doing, he would aim a blow at the rest of Scripture: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

What we have just established proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that more important than future events in an understanding of this book were those momentous happenings of history which occurred *prior* to the writing of Revelation and which had been already infallibly and divinely recorded elsewhere in Holy Writ. Because of the great complexities of future history, historical analysis and synthesis become impossible to man in his own wisdom. No history written by man is perfectly true; only history as recorded in Scripture is worthy of absolute reliance. Therefore, until the end of the Christian dispensation, the most reliable aid for a sound interpretation of the book of Revelation will be found in past history as *already* revealed in the inspired words.

V. THE HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH HISTORY

The preceding remarks however leave to history an extensive and well-defined role in the elucidation of Revelation. When it confirms the testimony of the inspired records, history does not only satisfy our curiosity. A historical coincidence is of the same nature as a miracle and is not meant to amaze: it only aims at accrediting the general spiritual teachings of prophecy.

Among other things, history has already given full support to the following teachings of John's writing.

The essential importance of individual piety. History has conclusively shown that the Book of Revelation and the whole of Holy Writ are right in this respect.

The divine object of the local church. Wherever the experiment has been made — and we find innumerable cases—the great interest which Revelation takes in that institution has been fully justified.

Satan's action in the world. History has unfortunately proved that Satan is indeed the Prince of this world.

Satan's action against the Christians. Either through direct opposition, or through his counterfeitings of true Christianity, the Enemy has revealed his doings, which were already denounced in the last book of the Bible.

The confederacy of evil. In conformity with the apocalyptic prophecies, amazing miracles have been wrought for the benefit of Evil during the whole course of history. Only Satan could have inspired some of the friendships which have been formed throughout the centuries or

effected breaches between parties who should have otherwise continued in harmony.

The sufferings of mankind. The strangers to God, as well as his friends, have already bitterly experienced the terrible sufferings predicted in Revelation.

The divine government of the world. History shows that a divine superintendence constantly restrains the designs of the Usurper.

The miracles of Grace. For the sake of clarity, we include under that title the numberless conversions of sinners; the saints, the martyrs, the teachers; faith, works, love; the comforting, the deliverances and the triumph of the believers. All those miracles have been wrought throughout the centuries, but were long before strikingly predicted by the book of Revelation.

VI. THE HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH THE PROBABLE COURSE OF FUTURE HISTORY

If past history can justify and throw a revealing light on Revelation, the probable course which history will take in days to come is also in striking harmony with the teachings of this book. We are not standing here on uncertain ground. For there can exist infallible predictions based on experience. Let us only mention the following points:

The increasing success of the counterfeitings of Christianity. This is clearly predicted by the book of Revelation. We know that those counterfeitings have great attraction for the flesh and thus the predictions of Scripture are confirmed.

The increasing conflicts of the Christian. Experience and Revelation reveal that they are inevitable.

The divine succours. There is a perfect harmony between the divine solicitude as expressed in Revelation and what we can deduct from our present experience of the Lord's usual dealings with His people.

The final individual victory. Both Revelation and the probabilities affirm its occurrence.

The final victory of God. Here again we have the combined testimonies of Revelation and of man whose expectations are based on past experience.

In spite of the unusual nature of the book of Revelation, any interpretation which would be inconsistent with the probable course of history should be examined with great caution.

That twenty-two short chapters may gather so many things of so great import, and that so varied constituents can be harmoniously connected with so many outward elements is truly prodigious. There can be no doubt that the book of Revelation is the most miraculous book in all of literature.

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READERS, HEARERS, KEEPERS

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Rev. 1:3)

THERE is a promised blessing for those who read, understand and keep the things that are written in the book of Revelation. We do no injustice to this verse if we apply it to the whole of the Word of God for blessings without number are in store for the believer who reads the sacred Book, who hears (or understands) its inspired contents and who obeys the divine voice.

It is however very possible that the Christian will halt at one stage of this whole process and so not gain the full-orbed blessing that the Lord has intended. Some will content themselves to be readers only, others will progress to the point of being readers and heart-hearers; blessed is that soul that is a reader, a hearer and a keeper!

I. READERS

"Blessed is he that readeth". Probably the promise is specifically made to those who read the book of Revelation publicly in the services of the churches. Through John, the Holy Spirit declares that even the reading of this prophecy will be the means of blessing.

We should however like to use the word "read" in another sense—that of private reading. Truly blessed is that person who reads the Word of God! Blessed are those families where the oracles of the living God are heard with regularity!

This "custom" of Bible-reading is one that has contributed to past sturdiness in the churches and has made a people who were acquainted at least with the letter of the Word. Sunday School scholars could recite from memory great portions of the Bible because they had acquired this "reading"-habit.

"Blessed is he that readeth". We do fear that the present evangelical trend to the "gospel" movies will provide pre-digested food for lazy believers who will be given an excuse to refrain from the reading of the Word. There is no substitute for this divine exercise and there is no blessing promised to the modern replacements.

II. HEARERS

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." While it is good that Christians should read the Bible, it is much better that they read and hear (understand). Some reading is very superficial and becomes mere rote. The reading is a matter of cold duty so that the contents do not penetrate the heart or the understanding.

Those who really hear the Word, however, are doubly blessed of the Lord for the truth is digested and becomes a means of permanent and abiding blessing to the soul. Each truth is then seen in its relation to other truths and each is assigned its proper place.

Surely it is a treat to meet Christians who are both readers and hearers of the Bible. With clarity they can discuss the precious truths of the Word in relation one to the other. From their own experience they can show evidence of the working of these truths.

A church that is composed of such persons is truly blessed. It is no easy hunting ground for the peddlers of warmed-over heresies or the teachings of strange cults. If Christians were both hearers and readers of the Word, such strange movements as the "Jehovah Witnesses" would find that they could make very little progress.

Need we remind our readers that those who really understand the Word of God are taught of the Holy Spirit? He is the great Teacher who alone is infallible. We cannot always trust the man-made foot-notes found appended to some Bibles but we can trust Him that as we read He will cause us to hear with the heart. "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly."

III. KEEPERS!

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Thrice blessed is such a soul! Commendation is due both readers and hearers but this soul is triply blessed.

Those who read and who hear with the heart may be doctrinally correct and precise but fearfully lazy in keeping the commands of the Lord. They may hold all the vital truths in the correct relationship one to the other but they are nothing more than theorists. To them the Word would apply — "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only."

How refreshing it is to meet a believer who reads the Word, who understands it and who is busily engaged in the service of the King. He is worth more than car-loads of those doctrinaire individuals who are hearers and readers only.

One great danger to those who halt at reading and hearing is that they will become so coldly correct that they become hyper-critical of others who are engaged in doing the Lord's work as He commanded. They would place more emphasis upon correctness than upon faithfulness. They are expert spectators but do not shine as soldiers. Their triumphs are measured by arguments rather than by souls won to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The saint who is a reader, hearer and keeper is the backbone of New Testament churches. While others stop short in the varying stages of growth, this soul takes all that God has for him and gives out in turn to others as the Lord has commanded. Lord, send us more like Mr. Reader — Hearer — Keeper!

For Younger Readers

"FOR CHARLIE'S SAKE"

Some years ago at a convention, an old judge was telling about the mighty power Christians summon to their aid in this petition, "for Christ's sake!" "in Jesus' name!" and he told a story that made a great impression on me.

When the war came on, he said, his only son left for the army, and he became suddenly interested in soldiers. Every soldier that passed by brought his son to remembrance; he could see his son in him. He went to work for soldiers. When a sick soldier came there to Columbus one day, so weak he couldn't walk, the judge took him in a carriage, and got him into the Soldiers' Home. Soon he became president of the Soldiers' Home in Columbus, and used to go down every day and spend hours in looking after those soldiers, and seeing that they had every support. He spent on them a great deal of time and a great deal of money.

One day he said to his wife: "I'm giving too much time to these soldiers. I've got to stop it. There's an important case coming on in court, and I've got to attend to my own business."

He said he went to the office that morning, resolved in future to let the soldiers alone. He went to his desk, and then to writing. Pretty soon the door opened, and he

saw a soldier hobble slowly in. He started at sight of him. The man was fumbling at something in his breast, and pretty soon he got out an old soiled paper. The father saw it was his own son's handwriting.

"Dear Father: This young man belongs to my company. He has lost his leg and his health in defense of his country, and he is going home to his mother to die. If he calls on you, treat him kindly,

FOR CHARLIE'S SAKE."

"For Charlie's sake." The moment he saw that, a pang went to his heart. He sent for a carriage, lifted the maimed soldier in, drove home, put him into Charlie's room, sent for the family physician, kept him in the family and treated him like his own son. When the young soldier got well enough to go to the train to go home to his mother, he took him to the railway station, put him in the nicest, most comfortable place in the carriage, and sent him on his way.

"I did it," said the old judge, "for Charlie's sake."

Now, whatever you do, my friends, do it for the Lord Jesus' sake. Do and ask everything in the name of Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us."

—D. L. MOODY

"Thy weak heart, in deep regret,
Needs a more tender comfort yet."

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THE RECORDS OF HEAVEN

The deeds that stand highest on the records in heaven are not those which we vulgarly call great. Many "a cup of cold water only" will be found to have rated higher there than jeweled golden chalices brimming with rare wines. God's treasuries, where He keeps His children's gifts, will be like many a mother's secret store of relics of her children, full of things of no value, what the world calls "trash", but precious in His eyes for the love's sake that was in them.

All service which is done from the same motive in the same force is of the same worth in His eyes. It does not matter whether you have the gospel in a penny Testament printed on thin paper with black ink, and done up in cloth, or in an illuminated missal glowing in gold and color, painted with loving care on fair parchment, and bound in jeweled ivory. And so it matters little about the material or the scale on which we express our devotion and our aspirations; all depends on what we copy, not on the size of the canvas on which, or on the material in which we copy it. "Small service is true service while it lasts," and the unnoticed insignificant servants may do work every whit as good and noble as the most widely known, to whom have been intrusted by Christ tasks that mold the ages.

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Third Quarter Lesson 8 August 21, 1955

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

BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

Lesson Text: 1 Corinthians 3:5-17.

Golden Text: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 Corinthians 3:11.

I. The Foundation: verses 5-11.

The ancient Greek city of Corinth was the centre of culture and commerce. Its pagan inhabitants were well-educated, industrious and wealthy, but at the same time pleasure-loving, idolatrous and loose in their moral standards of life. The Apostle Paul had established the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18).

The First Epistle to the Corinthians was probably written from Ephesus, a little earlier than the Epistle to the Romans (Acts 19, 20). It would seem that the members of the household of Chloe had visited the Apostle (1 Cor. 1:11), reporting unhealthy signs in the church, certain indications that the members were walking according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit. The Apostle found it necessary to rebuke these worldly-minded Christians for errors in creed and conduct, and he also desired to answer questions which were troubling them (1 Cor. 7:1). To grasp the contents of the Epistle, read it through carefully a number of times, and make a list of the various disorders, false doctrines and evil practices which the Apostle mentions and write a brief summary of his argument in each case.

Christians who exalt human leaders and thereby cause divisions and factions show that they are walking according to the ways of man, not according to the will of God (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Col. 2:8). God alone is to be exalted, for He is all in all (Rom. 11:36). Paul and Apollos were but ministers of the one Master (Matt. 23:8-10); they were stewards of the one Owner (1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 5:18; 6:1-10); they were co-labourers with God (2 Cor. 6:1). They could plant and water the seed (Acts 18:4-11), but the Lord alone could cause the seed to germinate (1 Pet. 1:23). God has reserved to Himself the prerogative of creating life, both natural and spiritual (Gen. 2:7; John 1:4; Acts 17:28).

Various metaphors are used to describe the members of the Church of God. As related to Christ, we are called His bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22, 23; Rev. 21:2); as related to one another, we are His husbandry, or branches of the vine which He has planted (verse 9; John 15:1), His body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 11-16), and His building (verse 9; Eph. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5); as related to the world, we are His epistle (2 Cor. 3:2, 3).

There is no Christianity without Christ, for the Christian life is built upon Him (Eph. 2:20). Unless the life is built upon Christ as the foundation, it can never withstand the storms of sin, temptation and sorrow (Matt. 7:24-27).

"On Christ, the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

There is no salvation apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Some would trust in their own good works, some in the church, some in forms and ceremonies, but there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

II. The Superstructure: verses 12-17.

Whether he will or no, each Christian is building upon that foundation a superstructure for which he is responsible (Eph. 2:20-22). Some of his service is acceptable unto the Lord, and will remain, whereas some is performed for selfish motives and will not remain (John 15:16). Let us not build to burn, but let us build wisely and carefully for eternity. Each individual must decide whether he will neglect or advance the welfare of his soul. We are not saved by good works, but unto good works (Eph. 2:8-10); we are justified by faith before God, but by works before men (Rom. 5:1; Jas. 2:24).

The day of testing will surely come. All Christians must some day stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards for the works which they have done since being saved (Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 4:5). It is not possible for a believer to lose his salvation (John 10:28, 29), but he may lose his reward (Rev. 3:11); he will not suffer condemnation (John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1), but he may suffer loss (1 Cor. 9:27).

In Scripture fire is a symbol of holiness (Exod. 3:1-6; Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:3) of power (1 Kings 19:12), of testing (Isa. 43:2; Mal. 3:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:7) and of judgment (Deut. 9:3; Isa. 66:15, 16). Fire will refine gold, silver and precious stones, but it will consume wood, hay and stubble. Some Christians will just be saved, although others will have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11).

Man is a trinity — body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23), and the relationship of these three to one another may be illustrated by the relationship existing between the three sections of the tabernacle: the body corresponds to the outer court, the soul to the holy place, and the spirit to the holy of holies. The body of the believer is the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21, 22). Therefore, the body must be kept pure (1 Cor. 6:15-20; 2 Cor. 7:1). Even as the setting up of an image or idol in the most holy place would defile the sanctuary of the temple, so must we worship God alone, and not allow self or sin to have dominion over the citadel of our lives (Matt. 22:37; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 9:27). "The Holy Spirit would not only be resident within our hearts, but He would also be President."

Daily Bible Readings

August 15—Building God's Temple, the Church	Eph. 2:10-22
August 16—Gifts for the Work	1 Cor. 12:1-12
August 17—Prophecy Edifies	1 Cor. 14:1-12
August 18—Love Edifies	1 Cor. 13
August 19—Affliction Worketh Eternal Glory	2 Cor. 4:8-18
August 20—A House Eternal	2 Cor. 5:1-10
August 21—An Eternal Pillar	Rev. 3:8-13

Suggested Hymns

My hope is built on nothing less.
Will your anchor hold?
Have you on the Lord believed?
"Nearer the cross!" my heart can say.
The Church's one Foundation.
To the work! to the work!