

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 34, No. 23

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 22, 1955

Whole Number 1739

Restoration of Truth and Revival

By C. H. Spurgeon

OH FOR a great revival of true religion! Not a burst of mere excitement, but a real awakening, a work of the Eternal Spirit. This would be a glorious reply to scepticism, and would act like a strong wind in clearing the air, and driving away the miasmata which lurk in the stagnant atmosphere. There would then be small honour paid to men who mar the gospel of our Lord, and truth, which has fallen in our streets, would again ascend her throne. Let us pray for such a visitation of the Holy Ghost with our whole souls. It is not only desirable, it is essential; we must either be revived by the Lord himself, or the churches will descend until error and ungodliness swallow them up. This calamity shall not happen, but only divine grace can avert it.

At the same time, we cannot expect a gracious revival till we are clear of complicity with the deadening influences which are all around us. A man of God writes us: "You cannot well overstate the spiritual death and dearth which prevail in the provinces. Where the 'minister is successful' no Unitarian would be offended with the preaching, and where 'not successful', we see a miserably superficial handling of the Word, without power. Of course there are valuable exceptions. What can be expected as to spirituality in the church when deacons are better acquainted with 'Hamlet', and Irving's actings, than with the Word of God? And what about the next age, when the children are treated to pantomimes, and a taste is created for these things?" This brother's lamentation is of a piece with hosts of others which load our table. They come from men who are second to none in spiritual weight. Either these brethren are dreaming, or they are located in specially bad places; or else there is grievous cause for humiliation. We will not go deep into this question, it is too painful. The extent to which sheer frivolity and utterly inane amusement have been carried in connection with some places of worship would almost exceed belief. We call the attention of our readers to the fact that *doctrine* has been the ground of battle in the Down-Grade struggle which has been chosen by our opponents, but on the matter of prayer-meetings and worldliness they have been prudently silent. Certain of

them have in this affair exhibited that discretion which is the better part of valour.

If any of our churches have been guilty in this respect, how can they expect the divine Spirit to work with them? Wherever the statement which we have quoted, or a similar one, can be proved, we are at a loss to know how conversions can be looked for. The Lord our God is holy, and he cannot compromise his own glorious name by working with persons whose grovelling tastes lead them to go to Egypt — we had almost said to Sodom—for their recreations. Is this walking with God? Is this the manner in which Enochs are produced?

It is a heart-sorrow to have to mention such things, but the work of the Lord must be done faithfully, and this evil must be laid bare. There can be no doubt that all sorts of entertainments, as nearly as possible approximating to stage-plays, have been carried on in connection with places of worship, and are, at this present time, in high favour. Can these things promote holiness, or help in communion with God? Can men come away from such things and plead with God for the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of believers? We loathe to touch the unhallowed subject; it seems so far removed from the walk of faith, and the way of heavenly fellowship. In some cases the follies complained of are even beneath the dignity of manhood, and fitter for the region of the imbecile than for thoughtful men.

Brethren in Christ, in every church let us purge out the things which weaken and pollute. It is clear to every one who is willing to see it that laxity of doctrine is either the parent of worldliness, or is in some other way very near akin to it. The men who give up the old faith are the same persons who plead for latitude as to general conduct. The Puritan is not more notorious for his orthodoxy than for his separateness from the world. Liberal divines do not always command the respect of the public, but they gain a certain popularity by pandering to prevailing tastes. The ungodly world is so far on their side that it commends them for their liberality, and rails at the orthodox as bigots and kill-joys. It is a very suspicious circumstance that very often the less a man knows

of the inner life, and the less he even cares to speak of it, the more heartily he is for the new theology, the theory of evolution, and the condemnation of all settled doctrine. Those who would have a blessing from the Lord must avoid all this, and determine to follow the Lord fully. Not only must they quit false doctrine, but they must receive the gospel, not as dogma, but as vital truth. Only as the truth is attended with living faith will it prove its own royal power. Believers must also sweep the house of the leaven of worldliness, and the frivolities of a giddy generation. The evil which is now current eats as doth a canker, and there is no hope for healthy godliness until it is cut out of the body of the church by her again repenting, and doing her first works.

Those who through divine grace have not defiled their garments must not content themselves with censuring others, but must arouse themselves to seek a fuller baptism of the Spirit of God. Perhaps these evils are permitted that they may act as a sieve upon the heap gathered on the Lord's threshing-floor. Possibly they are allowed that our apathetic churches may be aroused. We know already of several cases in which true ministers have gone over the foundation truths again with their people, and have preached the saving Word with clearer emphasis. In other cases churches have been summoned to special prayer about this matter. This is a good beginning: let it be carried out on the widest scale. As one man let us cry mightily unto the Lord our God, that he would arise and plead his own cause. Now, if never before, let those who are loyal to Jesus and his Word be up and doing. A boundless blessing is waiting for the asking. We believe in prayer. **LET US PRAY LIKE ELIJAH'S.**

SIX DAYS OF BLESSING

From Monday until Saturday of last week evening prayer meetings were held in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. On Monday about one hundred people assembled for the meeting. Attendance increased each night until approximately two hundred gathered on Thursday night. There was a spirit of prayer resting upon the people so that each meeting was energized with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Special request was made for the work of the Lord in the local church and our association of churches. The Seminary and THE GOSPEL WITNESS were also subjects of earnest petition. The main burden however was for revival in the local churches and all true Christian churches. Those who attended these prayer meetings felt refreshed in soul; more important still was the knowledge that the Lord had heard and would send the answer.

A HEAVY CROSS

"Jesus, I my cross have taken," was not written in an easy chair, or on a damask curtain. It was written by a young woman, who for Christ's sake had been driven from her father's home; and you account for the pathos of that hymn when I tell you that she dipped the pen in the blood of her own broken heart, and in her tears, wrote—

"Jesus, I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be."

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.

CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Dr. H. C. Slade, Pastor, Jarvis Street Baptist Church

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Leslie K. Tarr, B.A.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:
Dr. C. D. Cole

Olive L. Clark, Ph.D. (Tor.)
S.S. Lessons and Exchanges

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130. Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 Canada

Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem. Canada

OPENING DAY AT SEMINARY

Thursday, September 19 was registration day at Toronto Baptist Seminary. The older students and the faculty members renewed acquaintance and the new students and new faculty members were welcomed. By 3 o'clock the registration formalities had been completed and all gathered in Greenway Chapel for an informal meeting.

In the absence of Dr. Slade, the new dean, Dr. C. D. Cole, presided. After welcoming the new students he introduced the faculty—Dr. O. L. Clark, Rev. G. Adams, Rev. W. Bauman, Mr. S. Pourret and Mr L. Tarr. Each of the faculty members spoke briefly concerning the work of the coming year.

At six o'clock the students, faculty and wives gathered for a fellowship dinner in the Intermediate Hall. The student president, Raymond Reed, was in charge of the dinner and the short program. All were thrilled with the testimonies of two of our new students, Mr. Keith Davies of England and Mr. Jim McCombe of Northern Ireland. At the conclusion of the evening Dr. Slade, the Seminary President, spoke informally concerning the year's work.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The pastor, Dr. Slade, preached at both services on the Lord's Day. In the morning his subject was "Fellowship With God". In the evening he spoke on the question, "What Would a Spiritual Revival Do For Toronto?" During the day three young people responded to the invitation, signifying their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Spiritual Declension and Restoration

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

(FIRST IN A SERIES ON REVIVALS OF THE BIBLE)

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, October 24, 1929

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

"And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

"Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

"And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

"And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou camest unto Zoar.

"Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

"And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

"Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee.

"Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord."—Genesis, chapter 13.

IN THE natural world the history of progress of any sort is really a record of revivals. At this time of the year we see, in this climate, the leaves falling to the ground. Very soon the trees will be bare, and the land apparently barren. Then winter comes. But by and by the spring, the time of revival, returns, when there is beauty on every hand, and when fruit abounds.

There is an analogy between that and conditions of life in the spiritual world. The history of almost every believer and of every church is a history of revival. I am aware that it is well to set before ourselves a very high ideal. There are some who speak as though it were possible to live in such a way as to be always fruitful—and there is a sense in which it is. The man who meditates in the law of the Lord day and night "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper". But he brings forth his fruit—even he—"in his season"; even in such a life as that there are periods which are more fruitful than other seasons. Some day we shall come to a land where there is no curse, and where the day will not end

with night, and where summer will not wear away into winter. Then we shall find a condition of life where the trees will yield their fruit every month. There will be perpetual beauty and unending fruitfulness; and the day will come when God's people shall serve Him day and night in His temple. They will never weary of praising Him, and will for ever show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of nature's darkness into His most marvellous light. Toward that life we ought all to strive. We ought all to meditate in the law of the Lord, and seek to live the life of the "blessed man" which the first Psalm describes.

But I am not dealing with the ideal this evening so much as with the actual, and the fact is that most of us—all of us—have needed reviving again and again. I have no doubt we need it now. Abraham is the supreme example for the believer. His life illustrates what saving faith is, and such as believe are the children of Abraham. But we have in this chapter and the chapter preceding the story of a great revival in the life of an individual, in the life of the man who walked with God as few men have ever walked with Him.

I.

WE SHALL LOOK AT THIS SCRIPTURE TO OBSERVE, FIRST OF ALL, HOW ABRAHAM WAS TURNED ASIDE FROM THE PATH OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT. God had come to him, and he had answered the divine call; he had left home, and kindred, going forth "not knowing whither he went". And yet, divinely guided, he had at last come into the land of Canaan even as he had been appointed to do by the divine plan. Then apparently because of the unfriendliness of the Canaanites he turned aside, "he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south." For a long time he continued in the path into which he had been led, and in which he was guided of the Lord.

That is true of God's children generally. "Ye did run well", may be said of most of us; but too often the question must be asked, "Who did hinder you?" What was it that turned Abraham aside from that divinely-appointed path? If you look into the record you will find that there was a famine in the land, a very grievous famine, and this believer was face to face with a great difficulty. It is a great mistake to suppose that if we walk with the Lord we shall be saved from all trouble. It is a great error to imagine that the life that is wholly yielded to God will be spared every kind of difficulty and persecution. To these things we are chosen, and in the way of divine appointment we will very probably come to a condition of famine, to a situation in life where we find it difficult to meet our own requirements. Abraham found that to be true: he came to a place of famine.

There may be some here this evening who say, "It is true that I am not enjoying fellowship with God as once I did, but then I have had a very difficult situation. Difficulties have been multiplied to me in my home life and in my business life. In fact, in many different ways I have been face to face with obstacles which were insuperable, and if I have failed I do not think I am wholly to blame." We shall never get on until we learn that the fault is our own. We may come to times of famine, but neither "persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword . . . shall separate us from the love of Christ". The test of a man's character is to be found in the way he meets his emergencies in all departments of life. It is easy to go on when it is smooth sailing. There are plenty of people who know how to drive a motor car when the road is well paved and when there is no emergency, but they have not the remotest idea what happens when they move a lever, nor do they know how to act quickly in the time of difficulty. You will find that it is a test of any man's ability, in any pursuit, whether he is able satisfactorily and successfully to meet some extraordinary situation; whether he is able to surmount some great difficulty.

How do you and I meet our emergencies — in the time of famine, for instance? I mean, when we have got to the end of ourselves, when we have come face to face with a condition where human resources fail? The question then is "What shall I, as a Christian man, do?" We have the record of one man who knew how to meet an emergency of this sort. Elijah lived through a period of famine. Again and again he came to the end of himself, but he found in each such emergency an occasion for God specially to display His grace. He turned his difficulties

into stepping-stones to higher spiritual experience.

I tried to show you a little while ago that faith, in the biblical sense, is a recognition of God's willingness and ability to interpose in human affairs and bring victory out of defeat. Abraham had believed God for far greater things than this. His faith was a faith that laid hold of the power of a wonder-working God in a realm of life where the issues were far more difficult than the mere bread-and-butter question. But in this emergency, how completely Abraham failed! Instead of meeting his difficulty in faith, and casting it upon God, he substitutes expediency for faith — and "he went down into Egypt". He ran away from his difficulty. And yet may it not have been that God was waiting at that junction-point to prove once again that He stood ready to answer the prayer of all who should call upon Him? But it is not said that Abraham took the difficulties that inhered in the famined condition to the Lord in prayer. There is nothing to suggest that Abraham consulted God about it. Instead of seeking the Wisdom that is from above he used his own wisdom; instead of asking for heavenly guidance he did that which seemed to be expedient to him; and "he went down into Egypt".

How many people have lost blessing in that way! Individuals have done it. There have been crises in your life and mine, which, if we had met them in faith, would have stood out in our history as monuments to the divine faithfulness, for God would have stepped in to show what He could do. Instead of that, we have said, "We must be prudent. We must exercise a little common sense at this point. All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient. Yet this is one of the things that I think would be expedient. We have to act tactfully sometimes, you know. There is a legitimate diplomacy. We had better take the path roundabout into Egypt, and it will be all right. We shall escape our difficulties." How many of us have done that!

How many a church has done that! It has come to the place where it need — oh, let us apply it to ourselves — it has come to a place where it needed enlarged quarters, it needed increased accommodation. And the people said, "This is a practical business matter, can we not learn something from the world? We are to be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves." Most people, when they quote that text — or when they put it into practice, appropriate the serpent's wisdom but forget all about the doves! In order to meet an emergency they turn aside into Egypt. They say, "We can meet our problem that way."

I have seen that worked out in denominational life. In the larger matter of bringing souls to Christ there is at least a theoretical subscription to the supernatural principle, but when it comes to the everyday business affair of getting money for missions or education or something else, they say, "We must not expect it to rain gold; and inasmuch as we have not got it here, and we know it is in Egypt, let us go down into Egypt" — and away they go, only to multiply their troubles.

Follow Abraham, and you will see that one wrong step invariably leads to another. It is scarcely ever possible to take one wrong step without taking the second. When Abraham went down into Egypt he found he had to misrepresent things: he told a flagrant and brazen untruth about his wife. And yet it was not altogether an untruth — it was a half-truth — when he said that Sarah was his sister. And that brought him more trouble!

Have you not noticed that error, evil of any sort, has a way of multiplying itself? If a man tells one lie he is sure to tell two or three more — and, indeed, it may easily grow into a very great number. A man does one wrong, and he has to do another to cover it up. There is our difficulty: when we take the first wrong step off the path of divine appointment we are almost certain to multiply our embarrassments.

Then another thing: Abraham, it seems to me, must have been utterly ruined if God had not interposed. God plagued the house of Pharaoh for Abraham's sake. What if he had not done it! Abraham might never have come to his senses. We ought to give God thanks, dear friends, when trouble comes to us in Egypt. It is a bad thing to have pleasure in Egypt, to find comfort in a place apart from God.

Then you have the spectacle of one who knew not God, Pharaoh, looking down upon Abraham, and rebuking him — rebuking him for his wrong-doing. How often that is true, when a Christian steps aside from the path of righteousness, from the way of divine commandment, he falls lower than the heathen! When you find religious people resorting to politics they outstrip the worst politicians you ever saw. Always it is true. And you find Abraham, the father of the faithful, prone on the ground, in the mire, and a heathen looking down upon him in condemnation and saying, "What are you doing here?"

Have you never experienced that? I do not think there is anything for which worldly men, in their hearts, have so much contempt as for a professing Christian who is off the track, who is out of the place of duty. I know they may say a great many hard things about you if you stand true to the Word of God. They may not show much love for you; yet they have a wholesome respect for you after all. But compromise with evil, enter into the ways of the world, and you will find, in the end, that even Pharaoh himself will rebuke you. Worldly men have no respect whatever for a worldly religion, notwithstanding all they may say about the unattractiveness of "another worldly" religion. Then they begin to think of another world, it is just that kind of religion they want.

I read the other day an account of the meeting of a certain lodge where everybody who officiated at that particular gathering was a minister. It was a Masonic Lodge gathering. I do not know what the occasion was, but all the officials were ministers of prominence in this city. They represented the United Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Episcopalian Church — and I rather think, the Baptist denomination. The newspaper article said that the churches had at last found a basis of union! All churches had found a basis of union in a Masonic Lodge! But if one of those Masons who were present at that celebration, whatever it was, were brought low, and were really forced to face the future and to ask, "What shall I do to be saved", if he wanted somebody to point him to Christ, I am positive he would not send for any one of those men who officiated on that occasion.

Pharaoh has no use for Abraham while he is down in Egypt, and you and I will exercise no power for good anywhere while we mix with the world and follow its ways. That is how Abraham got off the track.

II.

THE NEXT THING IS TO OBSERVE HOW HE BEGAN AGAIN. "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And

Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Abraham's journey into Egypt had not been altogether without result. He had not made much progress in spiritual things, but he had become very rich. He was a rich man now in cattle, in silver, and in gold. It is possible, my dear friends, for anyone to "get on" in this world, and even to get rich; to make great progress in that direction, while declining in his spiritual life. Material prosperity and spiritual progress do not always go hand in hand. It is no sign that we are walking in a way that is pleasing to God when we are "getting on". That is not an infallible sign of the Lord's favour. "I have seen," said a close observer, "the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree"; and Jeremiah asked the question, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? therefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" It is not an infallible sign of the divine favour that a minister has a full church. He may have a church full of people who do not want to have their consciences troubled. He may have a church full of people who do not want to hear about God. They go there because they are sure they will not be disturbed. It is possible to go into Egypt and get rich, and be very popular with any people — although our religion will never win respect in that way.

How did Abraham get back again? He simply retraced his steps. He went back into the South: "Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning." It is very difficult for most people to go back, to admit that we are on the wrong track. Did you ever miss the road when motoring? What did you try to do? You got off on a detour like Abraham, and the natural thing, under those circumstances, is to try to get back without retracing your steps. "Is there no way around?" you enquired. It is rather humiliating to have to admit that we had no compass in our heads! I got off the track a while ago, and I asked a man if there was no way around. "Only by turning your car around and going back the same way," was his reply. "But," I said, "is there no short cut that will bring me onto that road again?" "None whatever. The only way to get onto the right road is to go back where you made the wrong turn and begin over again," he informed me. I wanted to go around a few blocks so that I might not feel that I went wrong. "No," said he, "it cannot be done. You must go back and start over again."

That is what you must do. That is what Abraham did: he went right back to the place of the beginning. What was the place of the beginning? "Unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he made there at the first." He went back to the place where the blood was shed. I do not know of any other place where we can get rid of our sin. We must come back to the Cross, and begin all over again as we did at the beginning.

I may have told you the story, but I remember reading in one of Spurgeon's sermons of an explosion in a Welsh coal mine. It was in an old mine that had been in operation for many years. One shaft had been sunk, but the work carried the miners a mile or more away, and a second shaft had been sunk. An explosion took place between the two shafts, quite near the new one, and the

workmen were imprisoned. They could not get near the new shaft for flames, and supposed they were lost. But there was an old miner there who had worked in the mine when the old shaft was used. "Come on, boys, let us get back to the old shaft! we can get out the way we used to." They went back to the old shaft, and reached the top in safety.

It is possible for us, having committed our souls to God, having been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever", having been made children of God, "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," and having learned to say, "Our Father which art in heaven", — it is possible for us even then to go down into Egypt. The sky has been overcast, and we are not quite so sure that God is our Father. We may have lost the joy of our salvation, and even the assurance of salvation — what shall we do?

Go back to the old shaft and begin where you began in the beginning, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner. If I never was a Christian before, I will be one now. If I never was forgiven before, I will be forgiven now. If the blood was never applied for my cleansing, it will be applied now." What a blessing it is that there is always a way back! What a blessing it is that there is always a place for cleansing open to us! Abraham went back to the place "of the beginning", and there "called upon the name of the Lord". The point of connection between earth and Heaven was re-established, and Abraham called upon the name of the Lord.

I have told you on one or two occasions, when giving the invitation, of what a little girl said one night at a service in Vancouver where we were holding meetings in a theatre. Dr. W. B. Hinson had preached, and I gave the invitation. A number responded and came forward. This little girl of about fourteen, while there was a pause between verses, looked up and said to me, "Please, sir, I did not come forward to-night to seek salvation; I was saved some time ago. But I lost the power of prayer, and I thought if I came back and confessed Christ over again I might get it back again. I believe it has come. Would it be all right, sir, if I were to pray?" "What do you mean, girlie," I said, "do you mean that you want to lead us in prayer now?" "If you please," she replied. I told the congregation of her desire and then said, "We will all bow while this little girl prays." And it did seem as though Heaven came down and met our souls. It was this principle: she came back to the altar, and called upon the name of the Lord; and commerce with the Skies was re-established. Abraham was once more right with God, and he came back by way of the altar.

III.

LET ME TELL YOU IN A FEW WORDS WHAT FOLLOWED HIS HOME-COMING: he was so prospered that his very prosperity became an occasion of strife. "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together." They were so rich that the very blessing of God upon them became the occasion of further conflict and strife between the herdmen of Lot and the herdmen of Abraham. It is not infrequent that the very blessing that God gives you leads you into further trouble. You must not suppose that even after

you come back to the altar there will never be a cloud in the sky, and that you will never hear the noise of thunder.

I have been a minister for many years, and have said to young ministers, "If you want to be popular with all your fellow-ministers—and with everybody else, so that no one will have anything to say against you, do nothing! Do nothing! Simply do nothing! Get in nobody's way! Be a cipher; bear no fruit for the Lord! And people will say, "I should not like to say he is very successful—but he is such a lovely man! He is such a lovely man." He never stepped on anybody's toes in all his history. But if you are true to God, and you have real blessing, and your power is multiplied, you will be sure to have a row on your hands. There is no doubt about that at all.

The question is, How did Abraham meet this new emergency? When he met the famine, he used his own judgment and said, "It is a good land down there" — but I think he had learned his lesson. I think he said to himself, "Abraham, you do not know a good land when you see it. If you are wise you will let God choose for you in future instead of trying to choose for yourself." If Abraham had trusted the sight of his eyes, and had lifted up his eyes on the country roundabout him, he would have seen exactly what Lot saw, and would probably have made Lot's choice. Instead of that he said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. Take your choice, and I will take what is left." Can you do that? Can you say, —

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
Lead me by thine own hand,
Choose out my path for me?"

In effect, that is what Abraham said. He said, "I made a choice for myself and I got into trouble; and I will choose no more. Lot, take your choice in this matter, and I will take what is left.

"Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" — that is very significant. It was like the land of Egypt. It was like the garden of the Lord. Abraham said, "I have seen a land like that before. Take your choice, Lot" — "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." That was all Lot saw. He did not see the the cloud of judgment hanging over Sodom — but God did. Abraham got the worst of it. He really did! And Lot got the best of it, judging by all natural standards. At the moment it did not pay Abraham to let God choose for him.

Do you suppose Abraham and Sarah discussed it at all? Do you suppose they said, "After all, did it pay to let Lot have the first choice? He got the best of it. Look at the beautiful country he has selected, while we are left with the barren land." If you let other people choose before you they will be likely to choose the best! I heard of two travellers one day sitting at a hotel table in a country place. They were hungry, but the table was

not very beautifully spread. There were just two pieces of cake on a plate, one a large piece and the other small. One of the gentlemen, desiring to appear very generous, passed the plate to the other — and he took the large piece. The generous one looked at him and said, "That is a selfish thing to do." "Why," said the other man, "had I passed the plate to you, sir, what would you have done?" "I should have taken the smaller piece," he replied. Then said the other, "You have it — what are you objecting to?"

If you leave the choice to Lot, he will be sure to take the big piece of cake. There is no doubt about that. Try saying in the office, in the shop, wherever you go, in all the realms of life, "I will take what is left. Let others take the first choice," and you will get what is left — and it will not be very much.

But listen: "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom . . . And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Ah yes, God had a further communication to make to Abraham after that separation had taken place. In most of our churches throughout Ontario and Quebec, altogether aside from any theological difficulty, there was and still is an urgent necessity for a separation between Lot and Abraham.

The relation of Abraham and Lot is a picture of the church. Lot was not an ungodly man, but he was a worldly man. A man may live on the carnal plane — a man who chooses by the sight of his eye, who lives by the things that are seen and are temporal, who pitches his tent toward Sodom, careless of the moral evil that is impending, if only he may advantage himself here and now in this present world. And here are the Abrahams who have left it for the Lord to choose for them, and have refused to resort to all sorts of political tricks. Lot has the best of it. Has he? When Lot is separated from him God speaks to Abraham as He never spoke before. When you get where Abraham was, where you are willing to let God choose for you, you will find it is possible to tune in and catch the music of Heaven as you never did before. You will find as you turn the pages of His Word a Voice speaking as it never spoke. Before, it was a rebuking voice, it was a searching, cutting, rebuking, Voice that came to you; but after Lot has been separated from you, after you have taken God's way, this is what he has to say, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

There used to be a man who spent most of his time in the summer out in Allan Gardens. He was a harmless sort of fellow, but not quite as bright as he should have been. They called him Gus; some of you remember him. I can see him now as he walked with proud step through Allan Gardens. Why was he proud? He owned the place! It was all his! He enjoyed it just as much as though he

did own it. He had men employed to keep the flowers and lawns in proper order. Why should he not play the gentleman? That is like Lot. That is like some people who think they own something. They think they own their own houses. They think they own their positions. They think they own themselves. They say, "I can do what I like with my own." The truth is, my friends, that no one of us owns anything until it is actually given us of God. You say, "I have the title deed of my property. It is registered down in the registry office." That makes no difference. You never own anything until God gives it to you. That is the only way to own anything. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." But I am confident of this, that if we let God choose for us, having come to the altar saying, "I have made such wretched choices in the past, I have chosen so miserably for myself, for the future I am asking Thee to choose for me." Then, instead of having part of the land, we shall have all the land, "for all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's". Let us get back to Him if so be we have wandered from Him.

From Our Files

SOME observant readers have complained to the Editor about the omission of this column from the pages of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Since some friends do prize it so highly we again include it; let our readers write us telling of their appreciation or lack thereof.

Thirty Years Ago, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, September 24, 1925—This note regarding the Sunday services of the previous Lord's day is inspiring:

"With gratitude we record that Sunday was another glorious day in the courts of the Lord's House. The morning began well with an attendance of 1,086 in the Bible School, including 404 in the Pastor's class. There was a great congregation at the morning service, when the Pastor preached on Isaiah 40:28-31. Seven or eight responded to the invitation. There was a fine open-air service in the afternoon, and another great congregation at night, when the Pastor preached the sermon published in this issue. Ten were baptized, and about ten came forward at the close of the sermon. A very large congregation gathered for the open-air service, which began about nine o'clock. One of the ten baptized had been converted through hearing the Word at our open-air service."

SERMONS ON "REVIVALS OF THE BIBLE"

In 1929 and 1930 Dr. T. T. Shields delivered a series of nine sermons on the subject, "Revivals of the Bible". In this week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS we have printed the first of these great addresses; succeeding issues of the paper will carry the other addresses in order. "Revivals of the Bible" has never before appeared in print. We feel that our readers will be blessed in soul by these addresses and that all will be pleased to learn that "Revivals of the Bible" will appear as a book in the T. T. Shields' Memorial Library.

CHORUS LINES, FASHION SHOWS, AUCTIONS, DANCES?

What Is the Church's Business?

A STORY in Saturday's *Globe and Mail* caused us to ask ourselves — "What is the real business of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Is the program of the average Protestant church of our day that of the churches of the New Testament? Even a cursory examination reveals that the two are poles apart.

The article in *The Globe and Mail* was written by Mr. David Spurgeon and is entitled "Busy Every Day—Church is Headquarters for 15 Denominations". After some introductory paragraphs outlining the history of Lawrence Park Community Church (United Church of Canada) we read the following:

Something goes on at Lawrence Park Community Church every day of the week: It's not only on Sundays that the residents appear there.

There are art classes for children and adults—with instructors supplied by the Toronto Art Gallery. Each year there is a variety show (with a chorus line) put on by the residents themselves. There are fashion shows, auctions, teas, lectures, a garden club, sports activities, Boy Scouts and Brownies, and Saturday night dances for the young set."

No one can deny that such a church is a busy one. A more pressing question however presents itself — "Is the church concerned with *the King's business*?" In short is it the business of the church of Jesus Christ to sponsor variety shows (with chorus line!), fashion shows, auctions, teas and Saturday night dances? By any stretch of the imagination, can this be considered part of the program of a true gospel church?

There seems to be a notion abroad that any bait is legitimate if it lures young people to the church building. Perhaps these ministers labour under some delusion that there is a peculiar sanctifying influence about the interior of a building; therefore, if they entice people in for a dance or a chorus line (!) some spiritual benefit will come to the participants.

Whatever be the reasoning employed to justify this procedure, the fact still remains that the whole business is abominable in the eyes of the Lord. So far removed is this species of religion from the New Testament that it can only be regarded as another religion distinct from Christianity and absolutely opposed to the spirit of the gospel.

The writer knows whereof he speaks. At one time he took an active part in such a program and was an advocate of these carnal attractions. Long since, however, he has repented of such sin. The prime objection to this whole social program is that it is contrary to the New Testament blueprint for the church. Another very practical but true observation is that the very young people which such a church is seeking to attract by entertainment finally regard with justified contempt this lowering of all standards. A dancing preacher who is a master of ceremonies at a "chorus line" entertainment is of very little use at the deathbed or by the side of the mourner. In such an hour the young person must turn to some

despised fundamentalist who steadfastly refuses to cater to the carnal appetite.

Why does the modern church turn to this gospel of entertainment? First of all, because it knows no other gospel. Having discarded the Word of God and the everlasting gospel, the churches are free to drift into the reefs of infidelity and carnal performances. In order to fill buildings that are emptied by the declaration of sweet nothings, the modern cleric feels that he must appeal to the baser desires of man. Hence anything and everything is legitimate if it can be done in the name of the "church".

While this church in our fair city (which is but representative of many more on this continent) increases its number and variety of entertainments, it is probably eliminating its Sunday evening service in summer, has no prayer meeting or a very small one and has no adult Bible class of any mentionable size. There is surely a mixing of standards!

In pointing out the failings of modern churches we do not criticize for the sake of criticism; nor do we bear any malice towards this one church. The condition in the Lawrence Park Community Church is symptomatic of the condition in many churches. How refreshing it is to turn to the pages of Holy Writ and to breathe the fresh, invigorating air of the times of the apostolic church.

The program of those churches may be summed up in a few powerful words — prayer, power, preaching, personal testimony and holy living. No dances or chorus lines were required in the church of Jerusalem. Antioch concerned itself with sending out missionaries rather than with fashion shows. The *faith* of the church at Rome was spoken of throughout the whole world; no one heard about a church auction sale promoted by the saints of the Imperial City.

Modernism which is now seeming to cut such a wide swath is doomed to failure for it may boast human power but it knows nothing of divine power. Dances and teas do not produce men who have power with God and before their fellows.

REMEMBER THE SEMINARY IN YOUR WILL

We suggest that our friends should remember Toronto Baptist Seminary in their wills. The proper form for this is: "I give, devise and bequeath the sum of to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada, associated with Jarvis St. Baptist Church." We are laying foundations for the future, and we are determined to make it as impossible as it is within human power to do, that not one dollar given to Toronto Baptist Seminary shall be used for anything but the propagation of the gospel. No amount would be too large, and certainly no amount would be too small. We earnestly solicit the gifts of those who believe in ministerial and missionary education.

More on "Church Entertainment"

SOME months ago THE GOSPEL WITNESS reprinted "*The Devil's Mission of Amusement*" by Archibald Brown. There was such a demand for the article that it was reprinted in booklet form. This booklet has enjoyed a wide circulation in Canada, the United States and Great Britain.

After we read in *The Globe and Mail* the article concerning entertainment in the churches, we turned again to *The Devil's Mission of Amusement* and marvelled at the insight displayed by the author. We print below the second section of the booklet:

PROVIDING AMUSEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE IS IN DIRECT ANTAGONISM TO THE TEACHING AND LIFE OF CHRIST AND ALL HIS APOSTLES. What is to be the attitude of the Church towards the world according to our Lord's teaching? Strict separation and uncompromising hostility. While no hint ever passed His lips of winning the world by pleasing it, or accommodating methods to its taste, His demand for unworldliness was constant and emphatic. He sets forth in one short sentence what He would have His disciples to be: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Yes, the salt; not the sugar-candy nor a "lump of delight". Something the world will be more inclined to spit out than swallow with a smile. Something more calculated to bring water to the eye than laughter to the lip.

Short and sharp is the utterance, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "My kingdom is not of this world."

These passages are hard to reconcile with the modern idea of the Church providing recreation for those who have no taste for more serious things—in other words, of conciliating the world. If they teach anything at all, it is that fidelity to Christ will bring down the world's wrath, and that Christ intended His disciples to share with Him the world's scorn and rejection. *How did Jesus act?* What were the methods of the only perfectly "faithful witness" the Father has ever had?

As none will question that He is to be the worker's model, let us gaze upon Him. How significant the introductory account given by Mark, "Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." And again, in the same chapter, I find Him saying, in answer to the announcement of His disciples that all men were seeking for Him, "Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." Matthew tells us, "And it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and preach in their cities." In answer to John's question, "Art Thou He that should come?" He replies, "Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive

their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." There is no item in the catalogue after this sort, "And the careless are amused, and the perishing are provided with innocent recreation."

We are not left in doubt as to the matter of His preaching, for "when many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, He preached the Word unto them." There was no change of method adopted by the Lord during His course of ministry; no learning by experience of a better plan. His first word of command to His evangelists was, "As ye go, preach." His last, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Not an evangelist suggests that at any time during His ministry He turned aside from preaching to entertain, and so attract the people. He was in awful earnestness, and his ministry was like Himself. Had he been less uncompromising, and introduced more of the "bright and pleasant" element into His mission, He would have been more popular.

Yet, when many of His disciples went back, because of the searching nature of His preaching, I do not find there was any attempt to increase a diminished congregation by resorting to something more pleasant to the flesh. I do not hear Him saying, "We must keep up the gatherings anyway; so run after those friends, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service to-morrow. Something very short and attractive, with little, if any, preaching. To-day was a service for God, but to-morrow we will have a pleasant evening for the people; Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it, and have a happy hour. Be quick, Peter; we must get the people somehow; if not by Gospel, then by nonsense." No, this was not how He argued. Gazing in sorrow on those who would not hear the Word, He simply turns to the twelve, and asks, "Will ye also go away?"

Jesus pitied sinners, pleaded with them, sighed over them, warned them, and wept over them; but never sought to amuse them. When the evening shadows of His consecrated life were deepening into the night of death, He reviewed His holy ministry, and found comfort and sweet solace in the thought, "I have given them Thy Word." As with the Master, so with His apostles—their teaching is the echo of His. In vain will the epistles be searched to discover any trace of a gospel of amusement. The same call for separation from the world rings in everyone. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed," is the word of command in the Romans. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate and touch no unclean thing." It is the trumpet call in the Corinthians. In other words it is COME OUT—KEEP CLEAN OUT—for "what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?"

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Here is the true relationship between the Church and the world according to the Epistle to the Galatians. "Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," is the attitude enjoined in Ephesians. "Sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,

among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the Word of life," is the word in Philippians. "Dead with Christ from the elements of the world," says the Epistle to the Colossians. "Abstain from every form of evil" (Revised Version), is the demand in Thessalonians.

"If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use," is the word to Timothy. "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him *without the camp*, bearing His reproach," is the heroic summons of the Hebrews. James, with holy severity, declares that "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Peter writes: "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living" (R.V.). John writes a whole epistle, the gist of which is, "Love not the world, *neither the things that are in the world*. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Here are the teachings of the apostles concerning the relationship of the Church and the world. And yet, in the face of them, what do we see and hear? A friendly compromise between the two, and an insane effort to work in partnership for the good of the people. God help us, and dispel the strong delusion. How did the apostles carry on their mission work? Was it in harmony with their teaching? Let the Acts of the Apostles give the answer.

Anything approaching the worldly fooling of to-day is conspicuous by its absence. The early evangelists had boundless confidence in the power of the Gospel, and employed no other weapon. Pentecost followed plain preaching. When Peter and John had been locked up for the night for preaching the resurrection, the early Church had a prayer meeting directly they returned, and the petition offered for the two was, "And now, Lord, grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they *may speak Thy word*." They had no thought of praying, "Grant unto Thy servants more policy, that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation they may avoid the offence of the cross, and sweetly show this people how happy and merry a lot we are."

The charge brought against the apostles by the members of the Council was, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with *your doctrine*." Not much chance of this charge being brought against modern methods. The description of their work is, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Then, if they "ceased not" from this, they had no time for arranging for entertainments; they gave themselves continually "to the ministry of the word". Scattered by persecution, the early disciples "went everywhere preaching the word."

When Philip went to Samaria, and was the means of bringing "great joy in that city", the only recorded method is, "He preached Christ unto them." When the apostles went to visit the scene of his labours it is stated, "And they, when they had testified and preached the *word of the Lord*, returned to Jerusalem, and *preached*

the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." As they went back to Jerusalem directly they had finished their preaching, it is evident they did not think it their mission to stay and organize some "pleasant evenings" for the people who did not believe.

The congregations in those days did not expect anything but the word of the Lord, for Cornelius says to Peter, "We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." The message given was, "Words whereby thou and all thine house shall be saved." Cause and effect are closely linked in the statement, "Men of Cyrene spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus; and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord." Here you have their method — they preached. Their matter—the Lord Jesus. Their power—the hand of the Lord was with them. Their success—many believed.

What more does the Church of God require to-day?

When Paul and Barnabas worked together, the record is, "The Lord gave testimony unto the word of His grace." When Paul, in a vision, hears a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," he assuredly gathers that the Lord had called him to preach the Gospel unto them. Why so? How did he know but that the help needed was the brightening of their lives by a little amusement, or the refining of their manners by a collection of paintings? He never thought of such things. "Come and help us!" meant to him, "Preach the Gospel." "And Paul, *as his manner was*, went in unto them, and reasoned with them out of the Scriptures"—not about the Scriptures, mark, but out of them—"opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead." That was the "manner" of evangelistic work in those days, and it seems to have been wonderfully powerful; for the verdict of the people is, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Just now the world is turning the Church upside down; that is the only difference.

When God told Paul that He had much people in Corinth, I read, "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them." Evidently then, he judged that the only way to bring them was by the Word. A year and a half, and only one method adopted. Wonderful! We should have had a dozen in that time! But then Paul never reckoned that providing something pleasant for the ungodly was part of his ministry; for, on his way to Jerusalem and martyrdom, he says, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might *finish* my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, *to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*." This was all the ministry he knew. The last description we have of the methods of this prince of evangelists is of a piece with all that has gone before, "He *expounded and testified* the kingdom of God, *persuading* them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening, *preaching* the kingdom of God, and *teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus." What a contrast to all the rot and nonsense now being perpetrated in the holy name of Christ! The Lord clear the Church of all the rubbish that the devil has imposed upon her, and bring us back again to apostolic methods!

Readers may procure the booklet, "The Devil's Mission of Amusement," by writing THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerard Street East, Toronto 2. Cost is 6 cents each; 25 cents per six; 50 cents per dozen; \$4 per hundred.

A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. D. Barry

CHAPTER FOURTEEN AFTER THE TWO WOES Révelation 10 and 11:1-14

THE visions described in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the book constitute the counterpart of those depicted after the opening of the first four seals (ch. 7). While the calamities predicted in chapters 8 and 9 seem to prove nearly fatal to the people of God, once again heartening revelations are given to the apostle John to anticipate his anxiety concerning the fate of the elect.

The scenes of the first six trumpets have successively revealed to us the influence of degenerate Judaism and the conquering Mohammedanism, as they wage war against the gospel. The following three visions will now unfold before our eyes the reaction of God in favour of His own.

I. A FIRST VISION (ch. 10)

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

The majestic being who appears here can only be the Son of God in His sovereign dignity. For every feature which is said to characterize the angel can apply only to the glorified Redeemer — His might, His coming from heaven, His peculiar garment, exclusive deity, His shining face, His burning feet, His dominion over the universe. Furthermore, two other features which complement each other summarize the whole of the divine ways: the rainbow, which speaks of grace and peace, and the seven thunders which proclaim wrath and judgment.

"And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

The apostle Paul had also heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4); and John, in his turn, is forbidden to disclose all the threatening words with which he is entrusted. For the terror they might provoke would not possess the moral virtues necessary to work a sound repentance. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." The intentional silences of Revelation must therefore restrain our indiscreet curiosities.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be furnished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

That scene presents the Son of God to us in one of the most sublime attitudes ever to be conceived by the human mind. The tremendous oath which He utters confirms the importance of the things related to the destiny of such insignificant and guilty beings as we are. However, His impressive utterance concerning the certainty and nearness of the final deliverance aims at comforting all the faithful servants.

The "mystery of God" has been the object of many a hypothesis. The context seems to show that it has reference to the long delay granted by God to all the rebels of this world and to the powers of darkness, before the divine wrath is kindled. So that the day when "the mystery of God should be finished" is the great day of judgment, which will mark the end of all trials for the divine cause.

"And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth."

The contrast between the former large book "written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals" and this "little book . . . open" seems to give us a hint as to a right interpretation. Could we not have here a picture of the Word of God, this summary of the divine revelations brought by the hand of the Master to a world above which He symbolically stands?

That interpretation would permit a logical connection between the present vision and the preceding scenes of chapter nine representing the triumphs of Islam: for on the occasion of the conflicts resulting in the establishment in 1453 of the Turkish power in Constantinople, Western Christianity, renewing acquaintance with the Greek civilization, recovered as it were the Scriptures in their original tongues. The providential discovery of printing during the same period further allowed the diffusion of the Bible — which diffusion was promptly followed by the greatest religious movement in all history — the Reformation.

"And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little

book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

That significant episode has its counterpart in the prophecy of Ezekiel 3:3. There the "little book" is likewise a reflection of divine mercy and an echo of the Law. Thus the Scriptures bring to any one who receives them into his inmost being sensations of acute pain and intense joy. Only a total assimilation of the Word of God as commanded to John can fully qualify its messenger to bear witness to the truth.

II. A SECOND VISION (11:1, 2)

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

There is a close correspondence between this vision and that of the New Jerusalem whose length, and breadth, and height are given (ch. 21, 22): The "temple of God" here mentioned cannot but be the image of the true Christian community, the "habitation of God through the Spirit", which constitutes one of the essential themes of Paul's epistle to the main church of Asia, that of Ephesus (Eph. 2:19-22; 3:18). That is probably the meaning which John, well acquainted with that writing, gave to the vision he beholds. As for the altar, it cannot but be identified with the altar of incense. The apostle is therefore commanded to participate in a kind of divine inventory: he is asked to give an estimate of the spiritual standard and fervour of the elect people.

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles."

Here is the prophecy of this essential fact in the Christian history: the mixing of truth and falsehood in the very midst of Christianity. And here is an announcement of the necessary separation of the faithful people from those who are associated with it but do not really belong to the true sanctuary. God radically differentiates between those who are within and those who are without, between the household of faith, and pseudo-Christianity.

III. A THIRD VISION (11:2-14)

"And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

The duration here indicated has been the object of most varied and often very hazardous interpretations. The main difficulty comes from the fact that the starting point of the predicted events is not known. But a good hint is given us if we notice that the forty-two months mentioned in Rev. 11:2 represent the same length of time as the 1,260 days of verse 3, and the "time, times, and half a time" specified in Rev. 12:14 and Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 — which, by a general agreement, is an equivalent for three years and a half. As seven years usually indicates a complete period of time, the limitation to three and a half years of the predicted events implies a merciful intervention of God. "Clothed in sackcloth" for a limited season, but then for ever "clothed in glory" — such is the twofold calling of the true servants of God.

"These (witnesses) are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

The picture obviously refers to Zechariah 4:3 and 11:4. It indicates that these two representatives of God draw from Him both the light of their testimony and His consuming power. Who are they? Numerous and irreconcilable the suggested identifications have been; but we would save many vain inquiries if we remembered that the authority of a testimony is fully established only on the reports of several witnesses. Jesus would send his disciples two by two, and we read that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13:1; also Deut. 17:6; 19:15 and Matt. 18:16). Whether we have here two special messengers of the Lord or more probably, the twofold message of mercy and justice entrusted to the whole people of God, the same beneficent lessons can be learned.

The command given to John to "prophesy before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" implies that the action of the two witnesses is not localized, but quasi universal (10:11; also 11:9, 10).

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

Verses as: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" clearly explain the above words. The true Christian testifies unto salvation to the earnest seeker, but unto judgment to the hardened rebel. He is divinely armed and divinely guarded against his enemies. And since the weapons of his warfare are not carnal, fire and death mentioned here cannot but be spiritual sanctions against those who reject the gospel message.

"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

Like the two great witnesses of old, Moses and Elijah, the two witnesses of Revelation have power to take vengeance upon their enemies. But they cannot be reincarnations of those Old Testament characters, since the two collectively have the power to work both miracles.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

It seems natural to apply those words to the tremendous obstacles encountered by the gospel testimony throughout history. But the opposition will reach its climax when the Christian testimony will be suppressed, when the beast, mentioned here for the first time (cf. 17:8), will have full power.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

Sodom speaks of moral corruption at its worst; Egypt is the temple of spiritual falsehood; Jerusalem is the city of false peace marred by the cruel sight of Calvary. There we have a vivid picture of human nature, always instinctively hostile to the austere truth. The sufferings of the Christians in a wicked world will always be a testimony; and to those who do not see a warning in it, it will be a constant cause of offence. The sinister rejoicing described in verse 9 and 10 shows to what extent the natural heart is incompatible with the gospel, and how the faithful witnesses can cause the world to rejoice only through their trials.

Let us again note that the reaction provoked among those "that dwell upon the earth" by the fate of the two prophets suggests that they are not *individual* witnesses, but that the reference is to the collective message of the Christian people throughout the universe and throughout history.

"And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

Could we not see here that the destiny of the people of God is similar to that of His anointed One? Was not the swallowing up of Jonah a prelude to his testimony in Ninevah? Likewise, at the very moment when the divine cause seems annihilated, the greatest victories are won. The "great fear" will not therefore be always the lot of the persecuted Christians.

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

This passage is parallel to that of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where we find Paul's teaching concerning the rapture of the saints as they meet their Lord at the close of human history. The word "their enemies beheld them" emphasizes the consternation of those who, without delay, will now be decisively struck.

"And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

We have now reached the extreme limits of history. The fall of the tenth part of the city indicates that, unto the end, grace will offer to a great number of the elect brought back to God by a holy fear, an ultimate opportunity to escape the great judgment. But seven thousand

men, a number suggesting completeness and quantity, must, through their punishment, bear in their turn testimony to the sacredness of the divine rights.

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

What a comfort to learn here that, through the working of grace, the calamities "pass"! But also what a terrible thing to be at the same time forewarned that, by God's justice, other calamities "come quickly"!

"He that hath an ear, let him hear, for his salvation, what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

By DR. C. D. COLE

Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary

A first class, 24-page booklet on this basic Scriptural truth. The best we have read on the subject of election. Order one for yourself and some for Christians and students.

Ten cents each; twelve for a dollar

Order from:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS
130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto

Boiling Hot or Lukewarm?

JOHN saw a vision of the Lord in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 1.). The Lord appeared in the aspect of a King—a King ruling in the midst of His enemies. His eyes were as a flame of fire and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. There were evils of doctrine or practice in most of the churches represented by the candlesticks. So He appeared as One who scrutinizes and judges and makes war.

Some who remain in churches which have denied the faith make the case of the seven churches an excuse for staying where they are. This attitude amounts sometimes to a claim that evil was tolerated in these churches and that therefore we ought to tolerate evil in the churches today. But did the Lord tolerate evil in these churches? Emphatically, no. Indeed, it might be said that nowhere else in the Scriptures does His anger flash forth with whiter heat than here. "I have this against thee," He says, "that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth . . . I will give unto each one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:20-23). There is no encouragement of an attitude of toleration towards error here. There is rather an intolerance of error and a pressing of the battle to the gates against it.

The seventh Epistle was directed to the church of Laodicea. This town was in the Lycus Valley in which lay also the cities of Colossae and Hierapolis. It had

been re-built in the second century B.C. by Antiochus II of Syria and named after his wife Laodice. She repaid him for this tribute later on by poisoning him. In the time of the early Roman Empire it flourished and became one of the most prosperous cities of Asia—a city of banks and millionaires. It was so wealthy that when it was overthrown by a great earthquake in the year 60 or 61 A.D., it was restored by its own resources without recourse to an imperial subsidy. It had its theatres, its stadium, its gymnasium equipped with baths, and it was the seat of a famous school of medicine. The neighbourhood was also famed for its woollen carpets and clothing.

The Church in Laodicea had been in existence for some forty years when this epistle was addressed to it. But it had fallen into a grievous state of decay. Its coffers were filled with gold, but of the true gold it was almost destitute. The city was famous for the eye-salve of its medical school, but of the eye-salve of the Spirit which brings real vision the church was lacking. Its black woollen garments were well-known and sought after, but its people were not clothed in the white array of those who walk with the Lord.

At the outset the solemn description of the speaker ("the Amen, the faithful and true Witness") prepares us for the searching criticism and the severe rebuke which follow. And we are assured that His picture of the church will be according to truth—there will be

nothing exaggerated, nothing overdrawn. His character is a guarantee of the accuracy of His testimony.

He did not charge the Laodicean church with the slightest unorthodoxy. Other churches might have a synagogue of Satan in their midst, or a Jezebel who assumed the title of prophetess and taught destructive heresies, but this church was perfectly orthodox. Nor did He accuse it of any flagrant vice; it had no Nicolaitanes — none who made their boasted liberty an excuse for licence. In other words, this was an eminently respectable church. Yet a more solemn and stern rebuke is given here than to any of the churches.

Why was this? What was wrong with this church? The answer is found in the words of the Lord: "Thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). It was lukewarmness which brought such severe reprimand upon it. This church was tepid, neither icy cold nor boiling hot. It was like the water from the hot springs at Hierapolis which flowed across the plain cooling as it went and tumbling over the cliff opposite the town of Laodicea in a tepid and nauseous state.

The city was prosperous. So to all appearances was its church — prosperous and certainly self-satisfied. It boasted of its riches — even spiritual wealth. "Not a single need have I" — this was its estimate of its own condition. But the Lord's estimate was vastly different. To Him it was the outstanding example of poverty — "the wretched and pitiable and beggarly and blind and naked one."

Is there not much Laodicean lukewarmness today? Are not the churches flabby, limp, ready to compromise, lacking in enthusiasm, and therefore nauseating to the great Head of the church?

Some earnest Christian will say, But am not I lukewarm? Yes, and even the godly Samuel Rutherford and the holy McCheyne bewailed their lukewarmness. But this is not what the Saviour speaks of. The Laodiceans were lukewarm and proud of it; at least they were self-complacent. A Rutherford or a McCheyne who bewails his lukewarmness, if he really be lukewarm, is on the way to being hot. It is not a lukewarmness which is in motion of which the Lord speaks so severely; it is the lukewarmness which is perpetually still.

Is it not surprising to find the Lord preferring the icy cold to the lukewarm? A glance at the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7) may help us here. A woman enters who was, not long before, icy cold. Now she is boiling hot. She falls at her Lord's feet and bedews them with her tears. Simon, the Lord's host, was a religious professor. He had invited the Lord to his house, but did not extend to Him even the common courtesies. His was a nauseating lukewarmness. There was more hope of the icy cold — the publicans and harlots — than of him.

O to be hot, to be full of ardour and zeal for our Lord! It is said that when William Booth heard an infidel lecturer say, "If I believed what you believe, I would never cease talking about it," he became a red-hot "salvationist." The full-orbed faith which we hold — if we hold it and hold it aright — should make us red hot. Let us search our hearts and try our ways and turn again to the Lord Jesus. He can kindle the flame in our hearts, for He is the fount and origin of all creation (Rev. 3:14).

For Younger Readers

WEIGHING A FORMALIST

"Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity."—Job 31:6.

Here comes a formalist, who gets on the scales — a man whose religion is made up of genuflections, postures, and outward proprieties. Brother, what is that you have in your pocket? He says it is a *Westminster Assembly Catechism*. What is it you have in that other pocket? He says that it is the *Heidelberg Catechism*. What is that you have under your arm? He says it is a church record. What are those books that I see scattered around on your side of the scales? He says they are *Calvin's Institutes*. My brother we did not come here to weigh books, however good they may be. We want on this scale nothing but your soul. Your orthodoxy won't save you. Men have gone to hell with a Catechism in each pocket. The forms of religion are only the scaffolding for putting up the spiritual house. Alas! if you have mistaken the scaffolding for the temple itself. "But I cross myself ever so many times," you say. That will not save you. "But I give liberally to the poor." That will not save you. "But I read a chapter every night before I go to bed." That will not save you. "But I sit at the communion table." That will not save you. "But my name is down on the Church book." That will not save you. "But I have been a professor of religion for thirty years." That will not save you. I place on your side of the balance all the edicts, all the religious counsels, all the communion-tables that were ever built, and on the opposite side of the balance I put this hundred-pound weight: "Having the FORM of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away."

—TALMAGE

From New Brunswick . . .

A TESTIMONY

I saw in your August 25 issue a request for a testimony from those who have been truly blest by reading your paper.

It must be about fifteen years ago that I noticed an ad for THE GOSPEL WITNESS in a St. John daily paper. Out of curiosity I sent in my subscription. I said — out of curiosity — for I had never heard anything good spoken of T. T. Shields. Well, I have been taking the paper ever since and although I have attended . . . for a year and a half, and have been under the lectures of many great men, yet I never emerged from the fog of uncertainty in Christian doctrine until the preaching of Shields cleared things up.

He is gone now but there is no need for the truth he taught or the sword he wielded, to die or dull. I trust that from his planting there will be thousands of Shields spring up and grow all over the country. He always seemed to me to give the enemy everything he had in every blow he struck, and I guess that was the reason he survived.

THE TRUMPET CALL

"For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible."—1 Corinthians 15:52.

We, who are the soldiers of Christ, cannot always be marching and fighting. The evening will come. The shadows will gather, and we must go to the white tents of the grave. There we shall sleep soundly. But the night will pass along, and the first thing we will hear will be the trumpet-call sounding the reveille of the resurrection; and we will come up and fall into a long line of light, the sword of Christian conflict gleaming in the unsetting sun. The roll shall be called, and we shall answer to our names; and then we will go the morning repast of heaven — manna for the bread, and wine pressed from the ripest clusters of heaven for the beverage, and a lamb, from the whitest flock that ever pastured on the eternal hills, to complete the viands, and Christ for the chief banqueter, and ten thousand kings, and princes, and conquerors for guests.

Well, our bodies can afford to lie a little while in the tent of the grave, if for them at last is to sound such a glorious reveille. Tell it to all the graveyards of the land. Speak it to all the bone-strewn caverns of the deep: "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruption must put, on incorruption, and then shall be brought to pass the saying that was written, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

If this be so, what is the use of making such a fuss about death? It will only be a pleasant sleep for us. If this be so, why be inconsolable about the graves of our dead? They only sleep. When they were here and you went into their bedrooms at night, and their eyes were closed, and they spoke not a word, you were not worried. You said: "Poor thing! she is tired, and I am glad she is asleep." So now, as you go by their resting-place, worry not because they answer you not. They are tired. They are very tired. They only sleep. The morning cometh, and the reveille of the resurrection. I cannot think of it with any calmness or composure. I break down under the avalanche of joy. Oh, for some pen plucked from the wing of an archangel, that I might write the gladness! Oh, for some harp of heaven, that I might strike the joy!

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

CAN GOD PROVIDE?

"Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"—Psalm 78:19.

With the exception of the newly adopted Western and military styles, Chinese clothes provide no pockets for either men or women. Personal possessions are carried in a bundle, which makes the bandits' work fairly simple. God used the ministries of a frightened child and of a country Christian to provide for two of His wayfarers who were robbed while busy in the King's service.

It wasn't exactly a wilderness; but in it they were entire strangers. They had already walked fifteen miles, and the afternoon was late. Soon they would have to look for a place to spend the night. And suddenly! . . .

"Halt." The command was peremptory. The spokesman meant business. Wang and Sun halted. So would you, were you met by bandits. And you would hand over your little bundle of belongings too—if you were wise. But what did their bundles contain? Bibles, hymn books, and a little roll of paper dollars.

A few minutes later our friends were again walking

along the road, their bundles slung over their shoulders; the money in the bandits' care. Evening was fast approaching. They were seventeen miles from friends. And they had seventeen cents between them! You cannot buy supper and breakfast for two men, and pay for beds too, with seventeen cents — not even in China.

Wang and Sun knelt and told the Lord about it. While they were in His service, He had allowed them to be robbed. Now they asked Him to provide for them in their need.

The landlord of the first inn welcomed them; asked them to sit down; and promised them a place for the night. They wondered just how to use their seventeen cents. . . .

Then up the road came the pat, pat, pat of running feet. Into the inn yard turned a stranger, a young man of some twenty years. "Ping An," he greeted them, "I wish you peace." "Ping An," replied our surprised friends: they didn't know there were Christians here. "Your honorable names?"

"Mine," replied the older, "is Wang; this man's name is Sun."

"Will you come and spend the night in my home?" A more unexpected question could hardly have been asked. And yet the invitation was being accepted before Mr. Wang realized what he was doing.

And then the unknown friend explained. "You wonder why I invite you thus. But I know you are Christian evangelists. You see, I was working back there and saw you robbed. Of course I could not go right close to see what was taking place, but you may remember a little child did so. The bandits paid no attention to him, and when you were gone I asked the child who you were. He had heard you say you were Gospel preachers; and he had seen them take your money.

"I went on with my work, but a voice said, 'Follow those men and invite them to your home.' Not knowing you, I just continued with what I was doing. The voice became more insistent, and finally I had to leave the field and run. You were a long distance ahead by then. So I ran the whole way — a good mile. And now, won't you come and spend the night with us? Ours is a Christian family."

That was how God provided. And He didn't even need their seventeen cents! They had good friends, good food, and a good place to sleep. And when they left next morning, they carried a gift of money with which to meet the day's expenses. Can God provide? Ask Evangelists Wang and Sun!

—China's Millions.

THE GOLD CLOCK

Martha hated getting up in the mornings. Sometimes she was late to school because she didn't get up when she was called. So when her mother went to Europe one summer, she brought Martha a beautiful little gold clock from Switzerland.

Martha was delighted, and set the clock on the mantel in her room where she could listen to its friendly little tick-tick, tick-tick. It seemed as though it were a real live person talking to her.

"Martha, you and I are just alike," the Swiss clock said to her one day.

"How can a girl be like a clock?" Martha laughed.

"We both have two hands and a face," the clock went on. "And we have to be wound up to make us run."

"You have to be wound up, but I don't." Martha declared.

"Wouldn't your body run down if you did not eat or sleep? Wouldn't your mind run down if you didn't study? And your soul would surely run down if you didn't read your Bible and pray."

Martha was amazed at the little gold clock's wisdom.

"Our inner works are more important than our outer cases," the clock ticked on. "You are a pretty girl, and I'm shining gold on the outside, but if our inner works run down or get full of dust, we're no good to anybody."

"Our inner works?" Martha questioned, smiling.

"Yes, when dust sifts into my wheels, I can't keep good time. Neither can you when unkind thoughts, or cross, angry feelings sift into your heart."

"It is funny how much alike we are," Martha mused.

"There's still another way we could be alike," ticked the little Swiss clock. "I wear the name of my maker where everyone can see it. Do you?"

Martha looked thoughtful. She had recently accepted Christ as her Saviour. Was she wearing his name so that every one would know that she belonged to him? She wondered.

—Florida Baptist Witness

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Fourth Quarter Lesson 1 October 2, 1955

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

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

Lesson Text: 2 Corinthians 5:6-21.

Golden Text: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—2 Corinthians 5:20.

I. The Ambassador's Confidence: verses 6-13.

To speak forth the message of the Lord effectively, the ambassador must himself be fully assured of the truth (2 Tim. 3:14, 15); "He who has the truth at his heart need never fear the want of persuasion on his tongue" (Ruskin). The Apostle Paul's confidence was based upon his faith in God Himself, in His Word and in His promise. Paul frequently prefaced his teaching with the words "we know" (verses 1, 6, 11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:12).

The Apostle's confidence was unshaken by circumstances: he was "always confident" in view of the promise of eternal glory. His sufferings as an ambassador of Christ were "light" and "for a moment", compared with the "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:14-18). The hope of eternal glory included the assurance of receiving a resurrection body (verses 1-5).

It is the eternal purpose of God that we who believe upon Him should one day be completely redeemed in body, soul and spirit (Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24). As a token that His will is to be fulfilled in that record, He has given to us the earnest of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:14). Earnest money is money given as a guarantee that an obligation will be fully met. The Holy Spirit indwells the body here (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19), but over yonder He will have full possession and control, as in the case of the glorified body of Christ after His resurrection (John 20:26; Rom. 8:11). While we dwell on the earth, the body is in its native sphere, it is at home; but the spirit, which desires to be with the Lord, is away from home (Phil. 1:23). Our life is governed by this hope of immortality, not by the things of time and sense (Rom. 8:24, 25).

Paul made it his ambition to live in such a way as to deserve the approval of the Lord at His coming (Col. 1:28; 1 John 2:28; 4:17), whether he should be "present", that is, in his natural body and among those who were alive and remained, or whether he should be "absent", in the sense of having passed through death (1 Thess. 4:14-17). We are responsible for the way in which we live, and Christians will be judged for their works after being saved, and they will be given rewards at the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:13-15). It is not a judgment to decide whether they would be saved or lost, and it is not a judgment unto condemnation, for believers shall not come into condemnation (John 5:24; Rom. 5:1; 8:1).

Since the Apostle had a holy, reverent fear of the Lord and dreaded lest he should do anything which would displease Him (Eccl. 12:13, 14; Acts 9:31; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21), he was faithful in persuading men to come to the Lord (Acts 20:31; 26:28). The Lord was witness to His sincerity, and so also were the Corinthians (2 Cor. 4:2; 11:6). The Apostle called attention to his sincerity in order that the Corinthians might use it as an argument against his self-righteous enemies, who were speaking of him as one who was out of his mind (Acts 26:24, 25; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14; 4:10; 2 Cor. 11:1, 16-19, 23).

II. The Ambassador's Motives: verses 14-21.

An ambassador may be constrained to do his duty because of patriotism, the love of his country, but the Apostle Paul was constrained by the love of Christ—the love of Christ for him and also his love for Christ (1 John 4:19). There was a holy urgency about his service, and nothing else seemed worthy of consideration (Gen. 19:16; John 4:4; 1 Cor. 9:16). The love of Christ for us was made manifest in His death for us on the cross (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:9). Since Christ died for all, representatively, then all died in Him and rose again in Him (Rom. 5:15; 6:3-10; Eph. 2:4-6), and the believer, who is united with Christ, should reckon himself to have died with Christ and risen with Him. All are counted as having died to sin and to self, and being alive, they are not to live for themselves, but for Christ (Rom. 6:11-13; Col. 3:1-10). The ambassador has no authority to live as he pleases: he must ever remember that he is the representative of his King, whose will he must obey.

How do we regard our fellow-men? How do we regard those whom we teach? Do we see them just as they are, or do we see in them souls for whom Christ died? After the Apostle Paul's conversion he no longer regarded men according to external relationships, and he regarded Christ Himself in a higher spiritual way.

All who truly believe in Christ who died for them and rose again are united to Him by life as the branch is to the vine (John 15:5); they are described as being "in Christ" (Rom. 16:7; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 12:2; Gal. 1:22). This is a new relationship, and it results from the new birth, the new spiritual creation (John 3:5, 7; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:15). All life takes on a different aspect for the one who has been born again of the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:20-24).

All our privileges as members of the new creation are from God, and they come to us as the result of our reconciliation with Him (Rom. 5:10, 11; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). God did not impute our sins unto us (Rom. 3:23-26), but laid them upon Christ, the spotless Lamb of God (Isa. 53:4-12; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:28), bestowing upon us His own righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 5:21, 22).

This is the message committed unto the ambassador to deliver in the name of the Lord (Eph. 6:20). He is to be the mouthpiece of God, beseeching men to be reconciled to God by accepting the salvation which He has provided for them (2 Cor. 6:1). May the Lord help us to be faithful in discharging this solemn obligation.

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 26—A Faithful Ambassador	Prov. 13:9-22
Sept. 27—An Ambassador in Bonds	Eph. 6:10-20
Sept. 28—Ambassadors of Peace	Isa. 33:5-17
Sept. 29—The Ambassador's Message	Eph. 2:11-22
Sept. 30—The Ambassador's Confidence	2 Cor. 10
Oct. 1—The Ambassador's Hardships	2 Cor. 11:18-30
Oct. 2—The Ambassador's Reward	1 Cor. 9:16-27