

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 34, No. 34

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, DECEMBER 8, 1955

Whole Number 1750

ROME IN COLOMBIA

IN THE small South American republic of Colombia the Roman Catholic Church is making a desperate stand against the missionaries of the gospel. From that land comes word of persecution and intimidation but we can praise God that there also comes good news of gospel triumphs as souls are saved and delivered from the superstitions of Rome. It is difficult for us to imagine the hardships which the missionaries face in that land where the Roman Church has held sway for so long.

A recent newsletter of the *Evangelical Federation of Colombia* brings some up to date news of the difficulties faced on the field. It provides also a concrete modern illustration of the persecuting activities of the Roman hierarchy in co-operation with the state.

The minister of government in Colombia is Jesuit educated Lucio Pabon Nunez. On October 11 of this year his office issued the following directive to the governors and mayors of the land:

"This is to confirm the instructions contained in circulars 310-R and 1785 of last year, pertaining to the labors permitted to pastors of non-Catholic religious and nationals or foreigners affiliated with those sects. At the same time I am recommending careful vigilance in order that such persons strictly observe the respect which is due the Catholic Religion. This Ministry has proof that many of them are distributing leaflets offensive to the Roman Pontiff, the Catholic clergy, and the mysteries and practices of our religion. This is equivalent to an attack on the finest characteristics of the national spirit and a clear disturbance of the public order. Such acts must be exemplarily punished as police cases. Please acknowledge receipt. Sincere greetings.

Lucio Pabon Nunez
Minister of Government."

The impression which this politician desires to leave is that the "lack of respect" which the Colombian people show to the Roman Church is due to the work of the pastors of the "non-Catholic sects". In support of his conclusion he points to literature which he claims attacks the papal church and its practices. Just what is this offensive literature? Perhaps there is some that is dis-

tributed which is in bad taste and crude in its contents. Perhaps some who are not Christians are so "fed up" with the Roman Church that they launch tirades against it. Whatever be the case, we can only conclude that Romanism in Colombia is highly vulnerable if it is so easily offended. Furthermore we can see that this order from the government could be construed to apply to the distribution of any literature which positively sets forth the gospel. For instance, any tract that exalts the Lord Jesus Christ as the only High Priest might be said to be lacking in respect to the Church. Even the Word of God might be placed in this category! Surely we see here Rome's familiar pattern as she seeks to silence all who would preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

While the government of Colombia blames the "non-Catholics" (Protestants for the most part) for this lack of respect toward the Church, the Catholic hierarchy traces the disrespectful attitude to another source: Just four days prior to the above government order, the Bishops of Colombia made the following declaration:

"The real cause of the tremendous moral crisis which the Colombian people are suffering lies solely and exclusively in their departure from God. They have separated themselves from Him, from His commandments, from His gospel, from His sacraments, from His grace, and from His love; they have paid no attention to the voices of His pastors nor to the maternal cries of the Church, and therefore (they suffer) such public and private calamities."

In elaborating on the moral life of "Catholic Colombia" the Bishops speak of "drunkenness, homicide, and thievery, sins which constitute the fatal cancer that is ruining the life of our people."

Who Is Right? — Pope or Bishops

The black description of the moral state of that South American country stands in sharp contrast with the glowing words of Pope Pius who, in a radio broadcast only three years ago (1952) stated that Colombia "is synonymous with religiousness, with a sensitive and living Catholicism, with a chosen land, where our Holy Religion is preserved in all its splendour." Which description is right? Is Colombia a land afflicted with vice or

is it "a chosen land, where our Holy Religion (i.e. Roman) is preserved in all its splendor?" Both are right! Colombia in its bleak state is a good example of a land where Romanism is preserved with the only splendor it knows.

Evangelical Work

In this land evangelicals seek to preach the gospel which is the only cure for the hearts of men who are governed by vice and sin of all descriptions. While the Bishops recognize the dire moral state of their people, they persist in doing all in their power to stop the preaching of the gospel. They are like physicians who correctly diagnose the patient's illness and then refuse to give him the only medicine that can restore him. Radio broadcasting is prohibited by the government which is instigated by the Roman Church, the distribution of gospel literature is forbidden, no open air meetings or hymn-singing is allowed beyond the confines of church buildings, chapels or homes. Finally we are told that church buildings cannot be erected in several cities.

Roman Monopoly

The Roman Church cannot escape criticism by alleging that these repressive measures have been enacted by the secular government or the people. The whole policy can be traced to the Roman Catholic contention that error has no rights and that the truth (i.e. Romanism) is to be promoted by the secular arm as well as by the Church. The Roman Catholic paper, *El Catolicismo* published in Bogota, Colombia on October 7, 1955, makes the following observation — "A conscientious government", says Jesuit Father Eduardo Ospina, vice-president of the National Committee for the Defense of the Faith in Colombia, "must not permit the divulgation of numerous errors which obscure and combat the truth." How different is this line to that sounded by the Roman Bishops on this continent! Why does Bishop Fulton J. Sheen not speak in this vein when he addresses his radio and television audiences of America? We may rest assured that if ever Rome becomes dominant in Canada or the United States we shall have some first-hand experiences with her concept of "tolerance".

While the government protests the distribution of "anti-Catholic literature" what is done about the circulation of anti-Protestant literature? This is freely allowed and is promoted by the Roman Church. The newsletter from Colombia tells us that "the Roman Catholic Church, meanwhile, circulates literature ridiculing and insulting the Protestant Christian faith. Under the imprimatur of Francisco Gallego Perez, Bishop of Barranquilla, the Marias Men's Society distributes a 16-page pamphlet called "Anti-Protestant Pills and Drops". In this tract Protestant Christianity is presented as a loathsome disease affecting Colombian life, and the "pills" and "drops" are 52 statements against the Protestant faith."

Another book *Protestantism, Its History and Its Errors*, by Bishop Miguel Angel Builes, describes Martin Luther as "lascivious", "brutal", "lewd", "drunken" and "a chilling blasphemer who called the Devil his prince and his God." The book further declares that the reformer "kidnapped a nun and lived in sacriligious concubinage with her" and his career is pictured as a "life of lust, debauchery and drunkenness". We do not desire to attribute such brazen lies to the Bishop's ignorance and so must regard them as a part of the campaign of his Church to discredit evangelicals even at the expense of truth.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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

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

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

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No one would object to the distribution of anti-Protestant literature if the Protestants in turn were free to proceed with the work of the Lord. If such were allowed, then the people of Colombia would soon realize that their religious leaders were giving them a false description of the Bible faith. In the midst of such a situation the Colombian pastors and workers must find sweet consolation and encouragement in the truth that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The pastor, Dr. Slade, preached on Sunday morning. His subject was, "The Prodigal's Elder Brother". The presence of the Lord was a reality throughout the service.

In the evening, Rev. W. W. Fleischer, professor of church history in Toronto Baptist Seminary, preached on the subject, "Living on the Wrong Side of the Mountain." At the conclusion of the evening service the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed. Three members were received into the fellowship.

God can find places of refreshment for His people even in the wilderness, wells in the valley of Baca, lest they should faint in their mind with perpetual fatigue; yet, whatever be our delights in the land of our pilgrimage, we must remember that we do but encamp by them for a time; that here we have no continuing city.

—MATTHEW HENRY

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"A Brand Plucked Out of the Fire"

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 15th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

"And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by."

—Zech. 3:1-5

Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, we would bow with humble reverence in Thy holy presence. We pray for the presence and enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit. Once more we confess our natural darkness and incapacity to receive and understand spiritual things apart from the grace and power of Thy Spirit. Graciously be pleased, O Lord, to draw near to us this evening, and as we turn to Thy holy Word, may the Spirit of truth make plain to us the things that are written therein.

Look upon the larger company who participate in this service by radio. Wherever these songs of Zion shall be heard, wherever the message of Thy gospel from this place shall reach, may the quickening power of the Holy Spirit accompany it, that many may be brought from darkness to light, and Thine own people built up in their most holy faith. Graciously use this service here and elsewhere for the furtherance of the gospel.

Thus also would we pray for Thy people everywhere, for the household of faith of every race, of every colour. We pray Thee to empower all the witnesses of the gospel; clothe them with might from on high. May this day be one of real blessing wherever Thy people, in large or small numbers, assemble in the name of Jesus Christ. Hear us in these things, and bless us all for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

JOSHUA was the first of the high priests following the return of the people from captivity. He is shown here as representing the people in the presence of the Lord. He is clothed with filthy garments; and, ready to emphasize his unfitness and his general unworthiness, his adversary stands at his right hand to accuse him, to prove himself an adversary. But the Angel of the Lord is there, the Angel of the covenant; and hurls this challenge into the teeth of the adversary, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Then He instructs the people to take away Joshua's filthy garments, to clothe him with change of raiment, and to set a fair mitre upon his head. And all this in the presence of the adversary, and in the face and defiance of his utmost effort to thwart the divine purpose.

Perhaps it is designed to show the method of divine restoration. It has its historic bearing and application — it may, indeed, have a future prophetic significance — but in principle it is applicable to the scheme of redemption in all ages. It is the method of grace by which men are divinely saved. There is the picture of **THE ACCUSED**, **THE ADVERSARY**, and **THE ADVOCATE**.

I.

The Accused

Here is a picture of one standing in the divine presence as one who has come to the place of judgment. He is described as a "brand plucked out of the fire", as though the marks of the fire were still upon him. As one who is clothed in filthy garments, he stands speechless in the presence of God. So is it with all of us, my dear friends. Joshua is only representing God's ancient people, but he equally represents in this picture all the sons of men.

Look at the figure here employed, a brand that has been in the fire. The mark of the fire is upon it. It has been subject to the destructive, devouring, element. What it was before, who can say? To what part of the temple it belonged, no one is able to judge. It may have been a pillar of the temple. It may have been some piece of richly carved rock, a fine image exhibiting the artist's skill, an ornament, a palm tree, an open flower, an ornament of the temple, or an instrument of divine service, a censer or what not. But now it is only a brand that has just escaped complete destruction.

Thus is it, dear friends, that sin leaves its mark upon men. No one of us has escaped its destructive influence! It reduces all men to one level. Sin is like the devouring flame, against which no one of us has any inherent or native protection. Combustibles are we all, subject to the fire, liable to complete consumption.

How one is tempted to nurse the figure, a brand out of the fire! Think of the noble temples of antiquity which have been destroyed, that passed among men as human souls, but which were built to be the habitations of Deity: Moses, with his meekness; David, with his goodness; Solomon, with his wisdom — not one of them escaped, all of them as brands out of the fire. See the ashes where stood the royal places known as Jeroboam, and Ahab, and Belshazzar, and Nebuchadnezzar!

The figure itself is suggestive of how sin effects its purpose, how it accomplishes its work — lurking and smouldering in secret places, and then by and by bursting into flame, reducing all materials to one common level, and turning to ashes the noblest work of God.

The fire starts in the garret and burns down, or in the cellar and burns up — or anywhere, and burns through. So sin may set on fire the passions and destroy the body, or inflame the imagination and corrupt the mind, or sear the conscience and pollute the soul.

One cannot forbear the mention of its attractiveness. What an attractive thing sin is! It is like the flame to which the moth flies. It is specially winsome to things with delicate wings. So sin lays hold upon the noblest aspirations of the soul, and the finest qualities of human nature; and unless the Wind that bloweth where it listeth blows strong heavenward, even these higher attributes of the human soul are often used like wings to fly to hell with. Only as some gracious hand, some power beyond ourselves, shall pluck us as brands out of the fire may we hope to escape its devastating power.

But there is another figure which represents Joshua as standing in the place of the people as one of responsibility. The principle is there. He is clothed with filthy garments, standing in the presence of God, standing before the judgment seat, self-accused, and without defence, as though a murderer should come to judgment with the blood of his victims upon his garments, as though a robber should appear before the judgment-seat with his spoil about him, as though Judas should come to judgment with thirty pieces of silver in his hand. No witness is necessary: his condition is his own condemnation, even as the filthy garments make argument unnecessary, as in the case of this representative of a rebellious people. When the little child comes in from playing in the mud, the mother needs to ask no question; nor need the child make any excuse. The marks of its offence are upon it. When the prodigal came home, it was not necessary that he should tell his father where he had been: the filthy garments he wore proclaimed the fact that he had laboured among the swine-troughs. So, my dear friends, when we come before God we may as well plead guilty: our filthy garments proclaim our guilt.

But I would remind you that Joshua does not appear here as a criminal, but as a priest who would exercise the offices of religion. Here in this holiest of all vocations he dared to stand before God with filthy garments. Oh no; sin is not to be defined in terms merely of the vicious and vulgar aspects of life. Sin enters the mind. Sin corrupts men, even in the realm of religion. Indeed, it is in that realm that we become most offensive to God. Your righteousness, your own works, the best you can do, your prayers, your praises, your alms-givings, your holiest aspirations naturally — they are all but filthy rags, a stench in the divine nostrils. We make ourselves objectionable even in the exercise of religion. If it be a religion without Christ, then it is prayer without sacrifice, the censer without sweet incense, a smoking wick without oil. If there be nothing of Christ in our devotion, then our religion is a sham, and an offence to the Almighty.

II.

The Adversary

So the people were represented by Joshua, the high priest, having no defence, having no excuse to offer to the divine government — and there stood by him the adversary, Satan, the "accuser of the brethren", there to misrepresent God to men, and to accuse men before God. That is a doctrine which is perhaps not very generally believed in our time. But there is an adversary. I wish it were more difficult to believe that doctrine.

I wish there were not such abundant evidence of Satan's reality, and of his deadly work. But here he was even in the presence of God; standing at Joshua's right hand, if possible to exaggerate all his offences, to emphasize his ill-desert, to denounce him before the Supreme Judge. And what a theme he has! How easy it would have been to accuse him, and to plead against him in the divine presence!

My dear friends, we have such an adversary. Let it be accepted as a fact. We cannot escape his antagonism, his malicious efforts to bring us into condemnation and ultimate ruin. How bitter a prosecutor he is! The very fires of hell are in his speech. No language could exaggerate his enmity; no imagination could conceive, I think, his murderous intent. His eye never pities, his heart has no feeling. His hand is laid alike upon men and women and little children. He accuses everybody. He is the pitiless enemy of the souls of men. Have you not been subject to his machinations? Has he not brought you a world of trouble already, this shrewd, this astute, this venomous, old lawyer?

Well did Satan know Joshua's condition, for the fire was of his kindling, the filth of his garments was his production. He had his victim before the throne of judgment red-handed, and without defence, with all the evidence of guilt, and ten thousand witnesses, if necessary, that he could call to accentuate the villainy of the accuser, — "Satan standing at his right hand to resist him". So is it, my friends, even in our holiest exercises. Here he is as a high priest, as though he had actually come into the temple to exercise his office, and Satan comes with him. He always does. The great Christmas Evans, having preached with great power on one occasion, was descending the pulpit stairs, when an appreciative listener gripped him by the hand and said, "You preached a great sermon this morning." To which Christmas Evans replied, "So the devil told me before I left the pulpit." He is always persecuting us.

Have you not found, when you have bowed the knee in prayer, that things throng your mind which you had no idea had habitation there, as though the very pit had opened, and all the lice and flies and locusts of Egypt had come to corrupt your thought. Many a person have I dealt with who has said, "I do not understand it: I am not troubled with gross sins. I have no temptation to lie, or steal, or get drunk. No profane word has ever dropped from my lips. But when I try to approach God, when I say, I will pray and commune with the Most High, and I bow my knee, then a flood of corruption comes into my mind, all manner of evil thoughts, that are not native to me, and that never assail me elsewhere. Why is it that thus in the exercise of religion I should be so conscious of evil?" Here is the explanation, "When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them." By which perhaps we are to understand, not merely men of flesh and blood — though that is true of them — but even the denizens of the upper world; for Satan has access to the divine presence. He was asked in Job's case whither he had been, and whence he had come, and he said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." But he was there to accuse Job. When asked if he had considered this perfect and upright man, he admitted that he had considered him much, and had discovered the strength of his moral character, namely, that God had put "an hedge about him, and about his house,

and about all that he hath on every side". But he was there to destroy him if he could.

And he would destroy us. If you are a Christian, I do not believe your life would be worth a day's purchase if it were not divinely preserved. This enemy alike of our souls and our bodies — of the whole man — is ever persecuting us.

Have you not read of one possessed of the devil, of whom Jesus said, "Bring thy son hither"? It is written, "And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." Even in the very presence of God Himself! Thus are we subject to this satanic power. None of us is immune from it. None of us can acquire or achieve exemption — and certainly none of us is naturally immune. It is the common enemy of all mankind. The adversary in the presence of the Angel of God! What hope is there? Verily, "the strong man armed keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace."

On the human side there was no possibility of Joshua's acquittal. He was condemned already. His filthy garments were evidence of his guilt, and his prosecutor was armed to the teeth to ensure his ruin, and to make rescue impossible.

III.

The Advocate

But look at the other side of the question. Here is an Advocate as well as an adversary: "the angel of the Lord" stood by. I read it to you this evening, and I read it particularly for this passage, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Observe, no word of Joshua's is recorded. He was silent. He could offer no defence in the presence of God, in answer to Satan his adversary. But why should he speak when there was Another there to speak for him?

I love that sweet story in Genesis of the appearance of Benjamin before the governor of Egypt, when he was brought back, the governor's cup having been found in his sack. The stern governor demanded that he in whose sack the cup should be found must remain his servant for ever. Benjamin uttered not a word. He was as silent as though without power of speech. But there stood one in the breach between him and the governor, and offered his prayer, his plea, before the governor. Among other things he told him how his father had entrusted him to his care, how he had been reluctant to yield consent to Benjamin's going down to Egypt. He told the governor that thus he had spoken to his father, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." By the eloquent plea of the surety the governor was convinced of their change of heart, and said, "Cause every man to go out from me" — you know the sweet story.

Thus you can offer no excuse to God. Do not come this evening, if you would seek salvation, with excuses, with argument. Do not dare to tell God that you are not so bad after all, that your garments are spotted, but not quite as filthy as the garments of some other people. Do not speak at all. You will only add to the condemnation. Let Someone else speak in your behalf. Let Jesus represent you. Let the great Advocate on high plead the merits of His blood, and cry, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom."

You see, there was another will than that of Joshua,

or that of the adversary. The Angel of the covenant, none other than the Lord Jesus Himself — for that, I believe, is the meaning of this passage. It is an Old Testament appearance of the Lord Jesus. He appears in behalf of the accused, saying, "Is not this a brand" that saved itself? "Is not this a brand" that tumbled out of the fire, that was evolved out of the flames? No! "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" This is a brand, "plucked out". No one of us would ever get out of the fire if a divine hand did not pluck us out. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." It is His work always, and never ours. There is not a man or woman here this evening who does not know that unless a power outside yourself, and superior to all your own power, that intervenes to change the current of your life, you will never have other than filthy garments in which to appear in the presence of God. Nor indeed can you deliver yourself from the flame that would utterly consume you, alluding to the other figure. Only as we are plucked out of the fire by divine grace can we be saved.

I know how the modern preacher laughs at that principle. Often have I heard it in one form or another said, "The old preachers used to talk about plucking the brand out of the fire, but in these modern days we talk about and devise means for, putting the fire out." It does not look as though it were put out in Germany, does it? Nor in Russia, nor in New York, nor Chicago — and certainly it is still burning furiously enough in "Toronto the good". Sin is still here, and never had it greater power in the lives of men than it has to-day. We need a religion with a divine dynamic. We need Somebody to plead for us, as did the advocate on this occasion.

He said, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." That is the gospel. "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Thus does He clothe us with the garments of salvation. Thus, by the imputation of his own righteousness, and by reckoning to our account the merit of His precious blood, are we acquitted.

"I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" — "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"; "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." He causes our iniquities to pass from us. He clothes us with garments acceptable to God, and we are permitted — and enabled — to stand unabashed in the presence of the Holy One.

It is the old, old story. I never have a new one. I know of no other gospel but the old one, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." What a blessing it is that in Him Who is our Saviour we have One Who has been exalted to God's right hand, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"! He is superior to all powers of evil within ourselves, to all the powers and principalities that would destroy us, to all the machinations of our adversary the devil himself. Himself triumphant, he lifts us up into union with Himself: "He gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Trust Him. Trust Him now. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Let us pray:

Once more, O Lord, we praise Thy holy name for the privilege of hearing and proclaiming the gospel of the sovereign grace of God. We thank Thee that when we could not save ourselves — when indeed we did not know we needed to be saved — Thou didst interpose, Thou didst devise means that Thy banished be not expelled from Thee, and didst open a door into Thine own presence, Thou didst send Him into the world Who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." We would come, O Lord, in the one appointed Way.

Are there some this evening who have heard Thy Word, who are more conscious of the presence of the adversary than of the Advocate? who know more about the power of evil than about the dynamic of grace? Reveal Thyself to such, we beseech Thee. Bring deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Let this be to many, not only the acceptable year, but the acceptable day and hour, of the Lord, when many shall see Jesus Christ and be saved with an everlasting salvation. We ask it in His name, Amen.

BOOK REVIEW

THE PILTDOWN FORGERY, by J. S. Weiner, published by Oxford University Press; 214 pages; \$2.50 in Canada.

For two generations after its "discovery" in December, 1912, the fossil known as The Piltdown Man, which was claimed to be an ancestral form of Man, was regarded by many as offering proof that Man was descended from the ape. On November 21st, 1951, an announcement appeared in the Bulletin of the British Museum, department of Natural History, stating that a clever hoax had been perpetrated. Although at the very first doubts had been expressed that the jaw, which was that of an ape, really belonged to the skull, evidently that of a man, extensive experiments were necessary to give final proof that someone had deliberately fastened together two separate fossil remains.

The author of THE PILTDOWN FORGERY, Dr. J. S. Weiner, Reader in Physical Anthropology at Oxford University, is one of the renowned scientists whose painstaking and thorough investigations led to the unmistakable conclusion that the Piltdown Man was a hoax. As his search brought forward much information of a personal nature, he was in a position to describe accurately the history of the original find, the lengthy controversy and the steps leading to the startling conclusion. He gives his own opinion as to the identity of the person responsible, but suggests that this man "could have been the victim, innocent or coerced of the real perpetrator."

Three possible motives for the deception are suggested. The culprit may have had a grudge against one of the scientists involved; he may have desired to bolster the theory of evolution; or he may have been motivated by pride and personal ambition, coveting the prize of fame. The timing would suggest this last motive as being the one of paramount significance.

The great efforts put forth by the hoaxer in reconstructing and foisting the Piltdown Man upon the world would indicate how anxious some men are to further their own interests. Scientists who are worthy of the name labour honestly and patiently, and do not, and need not, stoop to such unscrupulous methods. The Piltdown Forgery was a blow to the prestige of real scientists, many of whom are now discarding the once popular evolu-

tionary hypothesis as being without foundation. At the same time, the Holy Scriptures, being the authoritative Word of God, while not given as a text-book in Science, will speak the truth on scientific matters, since God's revelation in His word always harmonizes with His revelation in His world. Truth is truth in every realm. At every point the Scriptures assert the fact that Man was created by the direct act of God, a truth which is diametrically opposed to the theory of evolution with its corollaries of the transmutation of species and spontaneous generation. Any fossil remains which apparently support the theory of human evolution must in the end be shown to be false, as in the case of the Piltdown Man of Sussex, or to have been mistakenly interpreted. Thus, although acknowledging a great debt to Dr. Weiner and his associates for arduous, conscientious and successful endeavours, many will not share his opinion as expressed in the Epilogue: "Though today we are still far from an understanding of many matters concerning Man's origins; we are in no doubt about the reality of the transformation which has brought Man from a simian status to his *sapiens* form and capability."

Dr. Weiner has presented in scholarly and straightforward manner the details of the scientific investigations relating to the exposure of the Piltdown forgery. He has dealt justly, yet kindly in regard to the personal elements involved. THE PILTDOWN FORGERY is beyond question a work of great historical significance.

—DR. O. L. CLARK

SANCTIMONIOUSNESS

"If ye loved me, he would rejoice."—John 14:28.

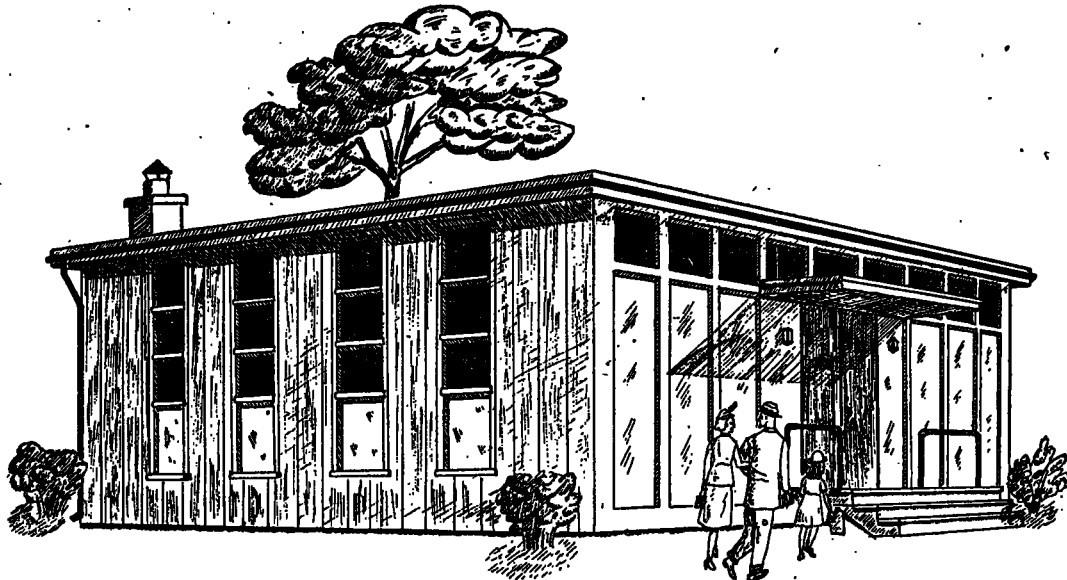
I have no faith in a religion made up of equal parts of wormwood, vinegar, and red pepper. If the religion that is presented to us be a depression, we will get along better without it. If it be a joy, let it shine out from your face, and from your conversation. If a man comes to my house to talk about religion with lugubrious countenance, and manner full of snuffle and dolorousness, I feel like saying to my wife, "You had better lock up the silver before he steals something." I have found it an invariable rule that men who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, priding themselves at the same time on their sanctimoniousness, always turn out badly. I never knew an exception. While those who are the most consistent, the most useful and the most consecrated, have perfume in their conversation, and heaven in their faces.

The happiest Christians that I have ever known have been persons from sixty to eighty years of age. By that time people get over the shams and pretences of society, and have no longer any patience with anything like imposture in religion. O Christian! how dare you be gloomy? Is not God your Father? Is not Jesus Christ your Saviour? Has not your path all through life been strewn with mercies? Are you insensible to the fact that there are glories awaiting you in the better land? —doxologies of celestial worship, eternal chorals, tearless eyes, songs that resound under arches of strength, and hosannas that clap their hands at the foot of the throne? Is it nothing to you that all the hills of heaven are radiant with the faces of those who have gone up from you, and who are waiting for your coming, ready to keep with you eternal holiday?

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

AMONG THE CHURCHES

WITH THE SECRETARY



Shown above is an outline drawing of the temporary building mentioned below.

A Possible Answer to a Vexing Problem

Undoubtedly many of our readers, interested friends and members of the Dollar-A-Month Club desire to know more about how the fund could be utilized.

As many are aware, the immediate and pressing hindrance our men meet in opening up new works is the almost perennial problem of a building. Often suitable accommodation is not available at all. In many cases the progress of these struggling new causes is retarded with all the discouraging elements associated with such hardships.

Without exception the attendance at Sunday School has increased in a most significant manner immediately suitable accommodation is available.

Recently we became acquainted with a firm which produces pre-fabricated portable buildings. These churches have been used by educational agencies and churches and have been tested, tried and proved.

The building is easily assembled and dismantled and the initial price includes the erection of the building on the site, complete and ready for occupancy.

The size 24 ft. by 36 ft. is adequate for a new work. Being fully insulated and equipped we believe these splendid buildings are just what we need.

Now a few details — The building comes completely equipped with electrical wiring and lighting, heating system and washroom facilities. The cost of these units is \$5,980.00. The terms of contract are 20 per cent on acceptance on the contract and progress payments as progress merits. This means that we could have a building erected on the site complete for \$1,196.00 and then pay the balance off monthly.

We can use three such buildings immediately. Many needy centres are wide open. We pray and trust that many reading this article will see the vision and pray and also give the enabling means whereby we may go ahead and secure at least one of these buildings.

Some of our readers may not belong to the Dollar-A-Month Club. We would not have you excluded however and wish you to understand that you can contribute any amount to the above project without joining the Club unless you so desire.

Look at the drawing — a potential soul-saving station — the answer to our building dilemma.

PLEASE HELP US!

REPORT FROM MILLIKEN

It has been said that "little is much if God is in it." — This is certainly the experience of the testimony established in Milliken where our brother Rev. Acheson is pastor. From very humble beginnings the work has progressed and advanced to become one of our virile Home Mission causes. We rejoice with Brother Acheson as he writes:—

Dear Brethren:

We thank the Lord for His blessings on our labours. During a four-week visitation programme for our Sunday School, thirty-five new scholars were added to our enrollment. Attendance last Sunday was 134. We do not feel that we could successfully handle any more than 150 in our basement, if we would eliminate confusion and have effective teaching. Defeat in teaching is too big a price to pay for victory in numbers.

At present we are carrying on a weekly visitation plan to increase interest in our church services. The Pastor goes out visiting in the afternoons making appointments for our groups (two by two), to go into the home, read God's Word and pray. At first there is not even an invitation to church, never argument, always a welcome. The same homes are visited every week until confidence is won by consistent, guileless interest.

It is amazing by tactful approach by the Pastor how many people welcome Bible reading and prayer in their home. At present, we have five groups going out every Friday evening.

The idea is not original. We stole it from the Jehovah Witnesses, whose minister made an appointment with one of our members for two or three of their people to visit every Friday evening. For 18 months they drove from Toronto to Milliken every week until they turned her against the truth. Does our zeal and endeavour for the Truth match that?

Sunday, November 13th, was the 5th Anniversary of our church. The church was pretty well filled for the evening service. As we look back over the past five years, we can say with Samuel, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Sincerely,

A. ACHESON

NEWS FROM BROWNSBURG

Tucked away in very picturesque scenery just two hours' drive from Ottawa is the town of Brownsburg, Quebec. Here our Brother Hicks maintains a steadfast and consistent testimony. The church at Brownsburg is the latest addition to The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. We appreciate the prayers and support of these faithful friends. The following report has just arrived from Rev. Hicks:—

The Brownsburg and Gore services have been well maintained with good attendances, high interest and some blessing. A new Bible School attendance record was established at Brownsburg this summer. At the Gore church a Bible School was opened. The interest of the kiddies and adults has been an inspiration to us.

Brother Hurtubise and his Valleyfield saints visited us at Prayer Service recently at which an offering was taken for their building fund. A few weeks later some of us paid them a return visit. These were times of good fellowship and an uplift to all. May they soon have a meeting place of their own.

A long-hoped-for dream came true this month when a company of Toronto Baptist Seminary students were with us at both churches for services on Saturday and Sunday. In song, sermon, music and testimony these consecrated young people bore faithful witness to the saving, satisfying and keeping power of the Gospel. They were a benediction to us. The WELCOME mat is out for another visit. Long may our school of the prophets continue in its world-wide ministry of teaching and training our workers.

Our secretary also paid us a brief, unexpected and welcome visit last week.

THE NEW SECRETARY

At the last meeting of the executive of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada, Rev. B. R. Oatley-Willis was elected as full-time secretary. Mr. Oatley-Willis has been for over five years the pastor of First Baptist Church in Essex. With the increasing number of opportunities for new works, the Association felt very keenly the need of someone to survey the prospective spheres of operation and to assist the pioneer workers. Already the new secretary has demonstrated his ability and zeal in this labour. "Gospel Witness" readers will be acquainted with the progress of this expansion work as the Secretary reports periodically through these pages.

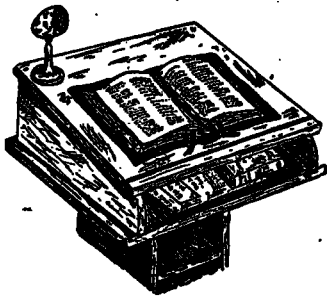
The Attraction of the Bible

By the late Dr. T. T. Shields

WHEN we approach the Bible as being instinct with the personality and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, what a world of intellectual and spiritual treasure it becomes to us! We have walked with Him among the flowers of Eden; and where first the shadow of the curse fell athwart the path of sinful man. We have seen Him walk the waves of the shoreless sea of judgment; and, in the patriarchs' tents, in the voice of angels, we have heard the Word which was in the beginning with God. In the tabernacle of the wilderness, with its crimson ritual, and in all the forty miraculous years, we have heard Him speaking in righteousness and mighty to save. We have followed Him with Joshua in His triumphal progress into Canaan's promised land; we have found Him sitting among Israel's judges; and in the fields of Boaz, near to Bethlehem, we have heard His whispered promise of the marriage of the Lamb. Where, indeed, have we not found Him? Is there a scripture path untrodden by His feet? Is there a valley which has not echoed with His voice? Is there a mountain which has not been transfigured by His presence? — "The voice of My beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart; behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." And we have followed Him — through historical wildernesses, and biographical mountain solitudes, and through genealogical deserts, only to find that the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for Him; and in His presence the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. In psalmist's melodies; in words of transcendent wisdom; in pregnant type, and glowing symbol; in wheels that are dreadful; in chariots of fire; in seraphic visions of enraptured spirits of prophets, priests and kings, we have seen and heard the form and voice of our Beloved; until, at last, He has come to us from out the grave; and being declared to be the Son of God with power; according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, with perfect knowledge of both worlds, He has joined us on the Emmaus Road; and with burning hearts we have heard Him, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expound unto us in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

And so, by the illumination of His presence in its pages; by the seal of His authority upon all its principles, and precepts, and promises; by His own invariable assumption of the Scriptures' infallibility, there is wrought into our deepest spiritual consciousness the unwavering conviction, that the Bible is the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever!

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart."



English Bible Course

TENTH LECTURE
in the
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY
By Dr. C. D. Cole
December 1st, 1955

PAUL AND HIS FAVOURITE CHURCH Philippians 1:1-11

WHAT a joy and stay young Christian men and women are to me daily and how I thank God upon every remembrance of the students of our school.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." This verse establishes my thesis that the Philippian church was Paul's favourite church. Nothing like this was said concerning the churches of Galatia or the church at Corinth or any other church of New Testament times. The apostle Paul carried a heavy load. There was the burden of livelihood and he worked much of the time with his own hands to support himself and those with him. There was the burden of persecution from the world that hated him because it hated Christ. And in addition there rested upon his heart daily the care of all the churches. But the church at Philippi made Paul happy at every thought of them and they lifted his financial burden by making repeated offerings to his work. Paul's trying experiences were but the fulfilment of the prophecy made by Jesus Christ to Ananias at the time of his conversion when He said, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." What a miracle this man of God was from the day of his conversion to the day of his martyrdom.

The City of Philippi

Philippi was a Roman colony which means that the citizens of Philippi had the privileges of Roman citizens. The city of Philippi was governed by magistrates who were responsible only to the Emperor. This territory was formerly a part of the Greek empire but the Romans conquered it and cut it up into provinces. It was formerly called Crenides, "the place of fountains", somewhat like our Hot Springs down in Arkansas. Philip of Macedon made a real city of it and named it after himself and his son Alexander the Great fortified it. After Philippi passed into the hands of the Romans they had a big fight among themselves and Julius Caesar was assassinated. Brutus and Cassius wanted to make it a republic but the Caesars and their followers were just as determined to make it an empire and the battle that decided the issue was fought here at Philippi in the year 42 B.C. And it was after this that Philippi was made a Roman colony. This city was important industrially. It was in the vicinity of gold mines and they brought much wealth to the Roman empire. It was also

a religious city. Philippi was not poor for any lack of gods. There are traces of a temple dedicated to Sylvanus who was one of the most popular deities of the Imperial epoch. Sylvanus was the god that guarded the Emperor. Dionysius, the favourite god of the Tracians, had a sanctuary in the nearby mountains, and other oriental gods had their votaries in the city of Philippi. And so Philippi could boast of the religious zeal of her citizens. There were not many Jews in the city and the few who were there were not very popular. When Paul had healed the slave girl her owners, angered at the loss of profit from her divination, seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates, saying, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city."

The Burdens of Paul

The church at Philippi was about ten years old when Paul wrote this letter to them. He had founded the church but had not spent much time with them. As a pioneer missionary he was constantly pressing on to new fields of labour. These ten years had been filled with difficulties and trials and hardships. And Paul was bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in his body and carrying scars made in the service of Christ. He had fought with beasts at Ephesus. He had been hounded by the Judaizers who tried to tear down his work. The church at Corinth was critical and stubborn, some of them going so far as to deny his apostleship. The Galatians had suffered themselves to be bewitched by the Judaizers. And these churches drew from the apostle the sharpest letter he ever wrote. The Thessalonians could not get straightened out on the doctrine of the second coming and their situation called for two letters from the apostle's pen. There was an incipient gnosticism that threatened the churches of the Lycus valley. Therefore letters to Ephesus and Colossae were written by the apostle. He had spent a lot of time and effort in raising money for the poor saints in Jerusalem and his troubles reached their climax while he was in Jerusalem delivering this fund to those who showed little if any appreciation of what he had done. And while on this visit to Jerusalem some well meaning friends talked him into what some think was a compromise, although I do not share that view. Paul went into the temple to perform certain rites involved in making a vow and he was seized and almost mobbed. The Asiatic Jews had seen him on the streets with Trophimus the Greek and had jumped to the conclusion that he had desecrated the temple by taking this Gentile into its sacred courts. And two years the apostle had lain in prison in Caesarea waiting for his trial. It had been deferred again and again and the Jews had made repeated attempts upon his life. So he finally appeals to Caesar, exercising his rights as a Roman citizen. And his appeal to Caesar takes his case out of the hands of the local court and to Rome and Caesar he must go. The story of his journey to Rome is too long to recite here and now but he has been in Rome now for some time and his trial seems to be proceeding and a favourable verdict appears to be impending. At least there is hope of his release. The Philippians had first heard that Paul was lost at sea and then the news was corrected and they heard that he was a prisoner at Rome. The church is stirred into action and Epaphroditus, probably one of the deacons, was sent to Rome with a pecuniary offering for the apostle. And to make up for what the money could not do Epaphroditus

threw himself into the service of the apostle and hazarded his health and fell ill. And Paul writing about it said that he was sick nigh unto death, but God in mercy for all who were involved raised him up. Epaphroditus learned that his people back home had learned of his illness and was greatly distressed at the sorrow it was causing them. And now that he is able to travel Paul sends him back to the Philippians with high commendation.

The Epistles of Paul

This epistle to the Philippians is unique in many respects and particulars. He makes no reference to his apostolic authority. This implies that nobody at Philippi questioned it. And he saw no reason to affirm that which was not denied. There is nothing in the church at Philippi that makes a letter necessary. So this letter is purely personal, a love letter from the apostle to his favourite church. He has no theme to develop, no sin to attack. We think of the Roman epistle as a grand exposition of the glorious doctrine of justification by faith. In the Galatian letter Paul throws everything he has at the Judaizers who wanted to combine the law of Moses with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Corinthians Paul is correcting grave errors in morals and in doctrines. But in Philippians the note is one of joy and it runs through the whole epistle. Sin is not mentioned in this letter. There must have been a bit of friction between Euodias and Syntyche but Paul only admonishes them to be of the same mind in the Lord. These two women had once laboured with Paul in advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were evidently energetic. But it appears that they could not agree as touching the work of witnessing for Christ and advancing the gospel. There was perhaps a bit of selfish ambition on the part of both of them but Paul does not take sides. He merely admonishes them to be of the same mind in the Lord, and then calls upon an esteemed brother in the church to lend his help in getting them together. We have a pretty good lesson in pastoral theology in the way Paul handles this case. Brethren, be careful in dealing with personal friction among the members of the church. Don't take sides. Do like Paul did; put the job into the hands of some brethren. I am speaking from experience. The only occasion for this letter was the opportunity Paul had to get it to the Philippians. Epaphroditus is about to leave for home and this affords Paul an opportunity to write to them and to send a receipt for the offering Epaphroditus had brought from the church. That is the most joyful letter of the New Testament although it was written by a man in prison and in bonds. The key words of this epistle are joy and rejoice and they occur over and over again. When the church at Philippi was being born Paul and Silas sang songs in the night in a Philippian jail and now that Paul finds himself in another prison he has not forgotten how to sing in times of trouble. True joy is a spiritual secret that few Christians have learned. True joy is not found in environment or in circumstances but in the Lord who giveth songs in the night. And a bad environment and untoward circumstances cannot destroy the joy that is in the Lord. It reminds us that the martyrs had something that the world could not understand. They had the joy of the Lord and the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Now with this lengthy introduction let us get on with the exposition.

I.

The Salutation (1, 2)

In verses one and two Paul associates Timothy with himself in the salutation but the letter is entirely from Paul. Both of these are styled as bondslaves of Jesus Christ, and the Philippians are addressed as saints or sanctified people. Sanctification in its primary meaning means separation. In its secondary meaning it is consecration. Sanctification is both external and internal. Through faith in Jesus Christ we are separated from the world, made holy in the eyes of God. The believer is also sanctified internally by the Holy Spirit and made fit for the Master's use. There is no thought here or elsewhere of sinless perfection. Included in the address are bishops and deacons, literally overseers and servants.

A New Testament Church

Here we have a picture of a New Testament church. A New Testament church is composed of saints, of those born of the Holy Spirit and justified by faith in Jesus Christ. A New Testament church is an organization with two kinds of official servants, bishops and deacons. The bishops serve in spiritual things. The deacons serve in material things. The distinction is not one of personal character but of official duties. The bishops minister the Word of God. The deacons minister to the material needs of the church. The spiritual servants, here called bishops, go by different names or titles, to denote their office and their work. Various titles are not any ground for a graded ministry. When the church is thought of as a congregation, the spiritual servant is a preacher proclaiming the Word of God. When the church is thought of as a body of working people, witnessing people, the spiritual servant is called a bishop or an overseer. When the church is conceived of as a flock, the spiritual leader is called a pastor or a shepherd. When the church is thought of as a school, then the spiritual leader is the teacher. The spiritual servant of a New Testament church is also called an elder to denote the dignity and authority of his office. Elder is the proper word to use when speaking of office and bishop is the proper word when speaking of work. Now as a proof that bishops and presbyters or elders are not different church officers but identical we have only to compare Acts twenty and seventeen with Titus one verses five and seven. The spiritual leaders from Ephesus whom Paul addressed at Miletus are called elders. In the letter to Titus they are called by both names, that is, the names are used interchangeably. Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain elders in the various cities where churches had been founded. Then when the qualifications of these men are described they are called bishops because their work is in view. Further proof of this is found in first Timothy third chapter where Paul is dealing with church organization and official duties and here we find the qualifications for bishops and deacons with no intimation of any intermediate order of officers. Since the days of the apostles and prophets there have been no scriptural officers of a New Testament church save bishops and deacons. Every pastor is a bishop in the New Testament sense of the word. I think we have made a mistake in popularizing the word pastor to the well nigh exclusion of other scriptural terms such as bishop and elder. The word pastor occurs only one time in the New Testament. The word bishop occurs several times and the word elders a great many times, because

elder denotes the office of the spiritual leader of a New Testament church. Even Mr. Lenski the Lutheran commentator says, "Not until a time that is much later than the New Testament, does episcopoi appear in the sense of our present bishops, men who are placed over several congregations and their pastors." It has to be admitted that you have to go out of the New Testament to find a bishop in the popular sense of the term. The only New Testament organization is for a local congregation of baptized believers in covenant relationship for the purpose of world evangelization. The offices of apostles and prophets passed away with the completion of the New Testament. Evangelists remain but they are not church officers, but kingdom workers, holding membership in a New Testament church and subject to its discipline. They belong to nothing more and nothing better than a local congregation. There is a graded ministry in a New Testament church as between bishops and deacons. The office of bishop is more important than that of deacon. The difference is not in persons but in work. Any godly deacon will gladly admit that ministering the Word of God is more important than serving tables or ministering to the material side of the church's life. The word for deacon comes from a word which means, "raising the dust by hastening". It is blessed to have deacons that are willing to raise the dust by diligence. That which is involved in the office is humility and diligence, a rare combination of virtues.

In this salutation Paul wishes for the saints grace and peace. What better wish could be exercised for anybody? As long as we are here below we shall need grace from God because we are ever unworthy and as long as we are here below we shall need the peace that only God can give us in Jesus Christ. Grace always comes before peace. There can be no peace apart from the grace of God in Christ. Christ bequeathed to His people His peace before He left the world because in grace He obtained eternal redemption for them at Calvary.

II.

The Thanksgiving (3-8)

In verses three to eight we have Paul's thanksgiving for the Philippians. He thanks God upon every remembrance of them. What wonderful saints these Philippians must have been to evoke such a spirit of praise from an apostle. Paul thanked God for them because he could see the work of God's Spirit in them. And beloved, if there is anything in anyone of us to call forth praise, that praise should be always given to God. Are you and I the cause of anybody being thankful to God? Paul thanked God for what they were and prayed to God for what he would have them become. Thanksgiving and prayer here are distinct. Thanksgiving looks to the blessings already received while prayer looks to the blessings that are to be needed in the future. In all his prayers for them Paul made his request with joy. Praying for these Philippians was a happy task. We ought to be glad to pray for one another. We ought to be glad to ask our Heavenly Father to bless His other children. We must engage in intercession for others as well as supplication for ourselves.

Co-operation in Gospel Work

Verse five gives the ground for Paul's thanksgiving. He thanks God for their fellowship in the gospel. The Revised Version says, "for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel." Weymouth renders it, "for your co-

operation in spreading the gospel". Paul is not here so much alluding to the money they had sent him but he is thinking of their larger work in furthering the gospel. "From the first day," takes us back to the day of Lydia's conversion and, "until now", takes in all the days up to the present when their fellowship had manifested itself again in an offering sent to the apostle. Their fellowship in the gospel included what they had done for Paul but was in no wise limited to that. Their fellowship was active in all manner of ways and constantly, and for this Paul thanks God. They were partakers with him of the grace of God.

Church work is partnership in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. And anything that does not contribute to that is not scriptural church work. Many people today think they are doing church work when they are not touching the hem of the garment of church work.

Further ground for thanksgiving was Paul's confidence that God had begun a good work in them and would carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ. Their fellowship in the gospel was to Paul a sure sign of their regeneration and he believed that God who regenerated them would do all the rest to fit them for glory.

III.

The Prayer (9-11)

Verses nine to eleven give us Paul's prayer for the Philippians. He prays that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in sound judgment. It is not so much a prayer for more love as it is for their love to develop in the direction of sound knowledge and right moral perceptions. Their love needed to become a little more intelligent and discriminating. Love without knowledge is blind; knowledge without love is cold. Paul does not want the Philippians to love blindly. There is a lot of blind love in this world. I heard a woman say once that she couldn't discipline her daughter because she loved her so much. Blind love! Paul does not want the Philippians to love blindly. He wants their love to be joined with knowledge. Knowledge puffs up; love builds up. But love with knowledge will build far better and far more wisely. Paul is not criticizing. He is not pointing to any lack. He recognizes that the Philippians had not reached perfection. He wants them to have such knowledge that they may not only be able to choose between good and evil but that they may choose the best among the good. He prays for their utmost sincerity. He prays that they may become transparent Christians. He wants them to be genuine through and through. This word for sincerity, we are told, means "tested by sunlight". He wants these Philippians to be Christians that can be looked through without causing anybody to stumble. In short, he prays for their perfection. There is nothing short of perfection that Paul desires for the Philippians. He prays for a fulness of Christian graces. He wants them to be filled with the fruits of righteousness "unto the glory and praise of God". Glory here denotes the divine majesty; praise its acknowledgment among men. God is glorified by our bearing much fruit. And this fruit is by Jesus Christ as its source and strength. The flesh in the believer produces no fruit to the glory and praise of God. Christ is the only source and strength for fruit bearing. Oh, how precious, how indispensable our Saviour is! He said, "without me ye can do nothing". We have no strength of the flesh to produce any fruit to the glory of God. And how we

need to draw near and abide in Him constantly for in no other way can we bear fruit that will redound to the glory and the honour of God. Unless we abide in Him, there will be no fruit in our lives to the praise of God and all our time will be wasted and our years will be spent in vain.

The First Reading

Now let us visualize if we can the first meeting of the church at Philippi after the return of Epaphroditus from Rome. There must have been an air of expectancy at the first reading of this epistle. Imagination if let loose is very apt to run riot. But news must have soon reached the ears of all the members of the arrival of Epaphroditus from Rome. And of course he would have news from Paul and probably a letter to be read at the next meeting of the church, if indeed they did not have a called meeting for this very purpose. The meeting may have been held in the home of Lydia who in all probability was the only wealthy member in the church. We learn from the Corinthian letter that the Philippian church was a poor church. The deacons must have been busy advertising and arranging for this special meeting. And now that the time has arrived the deacons are on hand greeting the members as they arrive. It is probable that Clement was pastor of the church, who will preside. Epaphroditus is expected any moment and all eyes are glued to the door. What emotions must have filled every heart as Epaphroditus enters the room pale and thin from his illness and long journey. But he walks with a steady step, with the light of heaven in his eyes, and the joy of the Lord in his soul. What greetings the members of the church must have given him!

The meeting is called to order with the singing of a psalm followed with a prayer. And what a prayer this must have been by whomsoever made. What praise to God must have gone up for His mercy in healing Epaphroditus and giving him a safe trip home. What thanks must have been rendered God for His goodness to the apostle Paul. What intercession must have ascended for Paul's release and what thanksgiving to God for such a wonderful Saviour as the Lord Jesus Christ. The devotional ended. The pastor must have been very brief in welcoming Epaphroditus back home.

Epaphroditus takes the floor and begins to unroll the scroll, a rather large scroll, something like eight by twenty-five inches. And with breathless interest all present must have listened to this wonderful letter. I am quite sure that Epaphroditus read quite slowly so every word could lodge in the hearts of the members. This letter can be read in about fifteen minutes but I expect Epaphroditus took an hour in the reading. And as he read there would be mixed emotions and varied reactions to the contents of the letter. They must have needed a thorn in the flesh to keep them humble when he read, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." There was nothing in the letter to cause grief or sorrow. How happy they must have been when Epaphroditus read how the gospel had been advanced by the bonds of Paul. It is probable that Euodias and Syntyche at the beginning of the meeting sat on opposite ends of the pew. And each of them must have felt a twitch of conscience when Epaphroditus reads where Paul appeals for unity urging them to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. And when he reads what Paul says about the mind of Christ and His humility and His obedience unto

death, even the death of the cross, the spirit of selfish and ambitious pride in the heart of each of these women, must have flown out the window. And when he goes on and reads Paul's direct appeal to Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord there must have been complete surrender on the part of both of these dear women, so that the esteemed yokefellows would have nothing to do.

Now after the reading was finished there was a love feast and such singing and handshaking was never heard nor seen on sea or land.

And may God bless our study of this epistle and use it to the slaying of any ambitious pride that may lurk among us to cause division and cripple our testimony.

RED VISIT BLASTED BY CHURCH PAPER

London, Dec. 2 — (UP) — A semi-official organ of the Church of England said today it strongly opposed the scheduled visit to Britain of Nikita S. Khrushchev, Communist party boss, and Premier Nikolai Bulganin next April.

The Church of England newspaper, in an editorial on the tour of the Soviet leaders through India and Burma, asked its readers if they really wanted "this circus" to visit Britain.

"Are we to line the streets, mouths agape, while Khrushchev clowns with his hat and shouts 'British, Russians, Bhai, Bhai,'" the newspaper asked. (Bhai is Indian for brothers).

"Or are we to cheer to the echo the man who has just accused us of starting the last war by employing Hitler and his troops against Russia . . ."

—Toronto Star

COME TO JESUS

"My next step," said an anxious inquirer, is to get deeper conviction." "No," replied a Christian friend, "your next step, and only step, is to go to Christ just as you are. He does not say, come to conviction, come to a deeper sense of sin, which you have been labouring to get; but He says, 'Come unto Me.'" "Ah," she exclaimed, "I see it now. Oh, how self-righteous I have been, really refusing Christ, while all the time I thought I was preparing to come to Him!" "Will you go to Jesus now?" the Christian hastily asked. She looked up, and then humbly and decisively said, "I will." The Lord had made her willing in a day of His power.

—Selected

The fear of the Lord is the fit fountain of holy living: we labor in vain for holiness apart from it: none but those who fear the Lord will ever walk in His ways.

—C. H. SPURGEON

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Chapter 23

THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD AWAITING THE LAST JUDGMENT

Revelation 20:1-10

AMONG the seven beatitudes contained in the book of Revelation, the first and the last lay stress on the blessedness of those who study this book:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein!" (1:3).

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book!" (22:7).

It is therefore necessary and extremely profitable to draw as many spiritual lessons as possible from this peerless writing. And that, in spite of the numerous obstacles which we come across in the course of our study. Such obstacles generally originate in the human incapability or in the mental sloth of the students. For Revelation records things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," things which, baffling the darkened understanding of the natural man, can only be "spiritually discerned".

But those obstacles also originate in the presumption of many commentators who, anxious to explain everything, have too often ignored the warning of supreme importance found at the end of the book: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

It is thus our own duty to heed that solemn warning, and to study the book with trembling awe, for the described punishment is of a most threatening nature.

Now, as we come to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, we are confronted with the question of the "millenium". Many theories have been aired concerning that thousand year period. But every single one of them has been conclusively and reciprocally refuted: for they all encounter insuperable obstacles.

All research in that particular field therefore remains legitimate, whereas the nature of our study morally forbids us to skip the question. Further, we must give the reader a positive interpretation and not content ourselves with stating the different theories propounded by those who hold the millennial views.

In the following pages we shall therefore offer to him the hypothesis which seems to answer best the many questions of the problem set before us in the first ten verses of Revelation 20. The future alone will substantiate our interpretation.

A sound and conscientious elucidation of the Apocalyptic visions evidently requires an enormous amount of work together with a certain tension of mind with any student who makes every endeavour to understand them. The young prince who of old was asking for a royal road to geometry was greatly mistaken. In studying the final revelations of Scripture, let us show just as much goodwill as in the reading of the newspaper, which is never laid aside on account of its obscurity, even when it speaks the jargon of the Stock Exchange or of sports, or when it deals with intricate political or economical problems.

The above remarks are necessary for we are about to grapple with the most controverted page in biblical prophecy. Let us also notice that the opening verses of Revelation 20 constitute the only New Testament basis for all the teachings concerning the "millenium".

According to most of the systems of interpretation now in favour, a considerable period of time must elapse before the Day of Judgment, which will witness an earthly reign of Christ in a temporal world power kingdom. Although the interpreters are at variance on many particulars, they mainly differ with regard to the chronological position of the period in relation to Christ's return. Some place it before, others after. Others still declare that the Second Coming will be in two stages, one at the beginning, the other at the close of the millenium.

No conciliation can be attempted on logical grounds between those dissimilar views. On the other hand, it is impossible to give preference to either theory on scriptural grounds. For the holy Book, strangely enough, keeps a significant silence on the matter. Not a single word of Jesus Christ in the gospels or in primitive tradition predicts a thousand years' reign. Nothing in the Acts of the Apostles, nothing in the epistles, nothing in the remainder of Revelation clearly points to such a reign. The word "millenium" itself is never found in the Old Testament. On the other hand, it is a recognized fact that the idea of a millenium — be it true or false — is traditional; we can also safely say that it is a product of Jewish thought. Finally, it is obvious that a thousand years' period taking place in a partly unregenerate world completely differs from the spiritual and invisible reign of God over His elect during the present economy. It also differs from the visible and final reign of Jesus

Christ over a renewed earth. Thus, it can be easily understood why, as soon as the millennial views were propounded and since then, the idea of an earthly millenium has appeared too insufficiently grounded to many pious scholars to be blindly accepted.

On the other hand, if we leave aside the idea of an *earthly* millenium, if we examine the portions of the Old Testament and the passage in Revelation which has been linked with them *in their proper contexts*, and if we give them a *spiritual meaning*, we shall reach clearer, and truer conclusions; further, our interpretation of the Bible will have *more unity*, whereas the spiritual lessons drawn from the study of those portions will prove just as much — if not more — edifying. If the above suggestions can be realized, then we might impute to the Seducer the invention of the whole theory: for Satan uses every possible means to divide the Christians and to *materialize their religious ideal*. As we say those things, we however fully recognize and have the highest regard for the sincerity and the scholarship of all the interpreters with whom we may differ concerning the question of the millenium. Besides, we shall here only briefly expound our own interpretation, as we shall devote a later book to the sole study of prophecy.

This being said, it seems to us that Revelation 20 must needs be interpreted in the light of its immediate context. Now, in the preceding chapter we read: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." (19:17, 18, 21). If we interpret this passage in all simplicity and without preconceived ideas, we must conclude, with the majority of expositors, that, at the time when the angel's proclamation is made, all men without any exception have gone beyond the grave. It seems therefore legitimate that the following verses should give an answer to the question: "What has become of all those dead?"

Behind the highly symbolical language we distinguish a twofold answer: 1. The condition of the elect awaiting the Last Judgment. 2. The condition of the rebels.

I. THE CONDITION OF THE ELECT AWAITING THE LAST JUDGMENT (20:1-6)

Let us first notice that between the final disappearing of mankind, described in the preceding context, and the Day of Judgment, depicted immediately after, *there is no room for any intervening earthly vision*. Therefore, there can be no reference to history in the passage with which we are now dealing. On the contrary, we suggest that those few verses are giving us a glimpse of the invisible world. The following five facts are presented: (1) Satan's powerlessness in the accursed place; (2) the condition of the elect; (3) the condition of the rebels; (4) the persistent hostility of the rebels against the elect; (5) the final destiny of Satan. What seems to confirm our interpretation is the fact that, in the remainder of Scripture and of the book of Revelation itself nothing is said concerning the intermediate world. It

would thus appear natural, and even necessary, that a vision be here given of the state of things on the other side of the veil.

According to the most acceptable interpretation, it is *only* with regard to the intermediate world that Satan is powerless. This limitation of Satan's activities is of divine origin, as evidenced by the picture of the angel coming down from heaven. Let us make due note of the following details: the use of the "key of the bottomless pit"; the "great chain"; the sovereign authority of the angel over the one whose titles John enumerates with triumph and relief ("the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan"); Satan's binding for a thousand years; and his being cast into the pit; his imprisonment and the seal placed upon him (a divine revenge for the attempt that was made to seal Christ's body in the tomb) — all those features lay stress on the absolute impotency of the Adversary. That impotency which obviously applies at least to the intermediate world, implies a considerable limitation of the diabolical power: those by whom, until their death, he had been regarded as the dreaded "prince" are now beyond his reach.

Satan's power is restricted for a definite purpose: "That he should deceive the nations (that is, the Gentiles or Pagans) no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." In connection with our interpretation, those words would confirm that the rebels, brought into this place of waiting which the Scripture elsewhere terms "Hades", must remain there without any possibility of changing the evil nature which they will have acquired during their earthly life. Satan will not deceive them any more, and they will by themselves become deeply rooted in the wicked spiritual attitude they will have chosen. That new condition — a kind of final test — will conclusively prove that they will have acted of malice aforethought. They will therefore be held entirely responsible for having made light of God's grace.

On the other hand, the scene which follows the binding of Satan seems to picture an aspect of the blessed state of the elect for which the apostle Paul yearned when he wrote: "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." The reference would thus be here to the "souls" or "lives" of the martyrs and faithful witnesses who have come out of the earthly tribulation. Although the world thinks they are dead, those elect, already spiritually renewed, are "living" on the other side of the veil: that is the first resurrection, the second resurrection being the final putting on of the glorified body. The Patmos Seer declares that those who share that privilege are "blessed and holy". They are "blessed" because they live and reign with Christ while waiting for their final glorification. They are "holy" because the "second death" suffered by the rebels will have no power over them. Further they are "holy" because "separated" from all evil, from the company of the wicked and from the influence of Satan.

II. THE CONDITION OF THE REBELS AWAITING THE LAST JUDGMENT (20:5, 7-10)

The interpretation of the vision we shall now behold will be greatly facilitated by the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus: "Son," declares Abraham, "now is Lazarus comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither

can they pass to us, that would come from thence." In other words, once the earthly testing is over, man's nature becomes eternally immutable. After enjoying his freedom of will, man falls captive of a kind of irresistible instinct.

The above considerations are confirmed by the following facts in Revelation twenty:

(a) "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." We have here a figure of speech which, in full harmony with similar scriptural phrases, can be thus translated: "during the whole thousand years, the rest of the dead lived not." In other words, even during that long period of time, they could not take hold of "eternal life", that gift which is for ever inaccessible to those who will have deliberately chosen the wages of sin—that is, "death". This does not mean that, after the thousand years, they will be different from what they were on earth. For our text simply implies that, during the course of the thousand years, no change will be possible in the dispositions—and therefore in the nature—of those dwelling in Hades. Most of the evangelical commentators agree as to such immutability.

(b) The next vision (20:7-10) seems to indicate that, at the close of the thousand years, the rebels will give an ultimate and conclusive proof that there has been no change of heart in them: Satan will be "loosed for a little season" and enabled for the last time to play his guilty part. In the "four quarters of the earth" we can read, "the four hidden places", by analogy with Acts 26:26. The phrase, "They went up on the breadth of the earth" would confirm that the starting-place of that bold enterprise is in Hades itself, which is elsewhere designated as the lower parts of the earth."

This being granted, the "camp (or, army) of the saints" and the "beloved city" (or, population) are easily identified with the company of those who have experienced the "first resurrection".

That vision of happiness, and probably also the presentiment of what is about to happen, arouses within the rebels the lower passions which have always characterized their contacts with the Christians: a blind jealousy and a bitter hatred prompt them to "battle", in the hope of overcoming the saints and destroying their bliss. The names "Gog and Magog" direct us to the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39 in which the fierceness of the attacks described there symbolically points to the present vision of Revelation 20. But those ultimate manifestations of the powers of evil are warded off without delay. The attempt tragically fails at its very beginning: "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." To the slow tactics of the forces of Satan is contrasted the divine promptness.

Have we not in this scene some suggestions with regard to the moving problem of the destiny of those who will have lived before the crucifixion or whom the message of the gospel will have never reached? Deprived of the necessary light (revelation) they were thus unable to be acquainted with the person of God and with the plan of redemption: having lived without the law, they will be judged without the law. Their "deeds" will condemn or justify them. They shall go each one of them, to their appointed place, according to the dispositions of their hearts. Those who will have "received the truth in the love of it" will hail on the other side of the veil Him whom they will have loved without knowing Him. By virtue of the same principle of grace which applied to

the Old Testament saints, they will enter, with repenting and believing hearts, into the joy of their Lord. Although having but vaguely caught a glimpse of the will of God, they will however be received into His fellowship, on the basis of their elementary faith. As to the others who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge", they will be rejected from before His presence, for He knows that their hardened hearts would refuse the offer of grace or accept it out of sheer interest. They will only be given a supreme opportunity to conclusively show forth their wicked nature and their hostility toward God, as they gather together against the "camp" of those who bear the divine resemblance. For as it is written: "He that despiseth you, despiseth me", and "he that rejecteth me, hath one that judgeth him" (Luke 10:16 and John 12:48). Nothing could more forcefully describe those aspects of the divine justice than the symbolical vision we have just beheld.

One verse (v. 10) depicts the end of the extraordinary career of the Prince of this world: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Following such boldness, no epitaph has ever been so concise and so significant. As we fight on the "good fight of the faith", let us always remember the prophecy of the dreadful end of the Prince of darkness and his accomplices.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Fourth Quarter Lesson 12 December 18, 1955

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

UNION WITH CHRIST

Lesson Text: Colossians 3:1-17.

Golden Text: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."—Colossians 3:1.

I. New Life in the Saviour: verses 1-11.

This chapter describes the believer's union with Christ, who is preeminent in His person (chapter 1) and in His ministry of reconciliation (chapter 2).

Our Saviour, being God from all eternity, took upon Himself the form of sinful flesh, that He might die on our behalf (Phil. 2:6-8). Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, He was exalted to the Father's right hand (Phil. 2:9-11). The believers, to whom the Lord reckons the work of Christ, are counted as having died with Him, having risen with Him, having ascended on high with Him (Rom. 6:2-5; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 2:12, 20); and sharing His exaltation as well as His suffering, they will one day appear with Him in majesty, power and great glory (Rom. 8:17-19; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 2:28).

This high standing with Christ, which is the position of the believer in the reckoning of God, involves a solemn responsibility to live in a manner worthy of that Divine calling (Eph. 4:1). If we are regarded as having risen with Christ in newness of life, our interests, thoughts and desires should be directed to things that are heavenly and spiritual, rather than to those which are material and worldly. If we have died with Christ to the world, let us put away all that belongs to the old, unregenerate nature (Rom. 6:5-14; 8:13; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 4:17-25). These things characterize unbelievers (Eph. 2:2, 3; 5:1-7). As we have been made new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) we are to take off, as it were, the garments of sin (2 Cor. 7:1); any sin of thought such as anger, wrath and malice (Eph. 4:31), and any sin of speech such as blasphemy, impurity or untruth (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:25, 29).

We who belong to Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), receiving by faith His righteousness, which has been imputed to us (Rom. 3:20-28; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). We have been renewed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5; Tit. 3:5), and the process of sanctification has commenced (Heb. 10:10, 13), whereby we who were originally made in His likeness, a likeness which sin to a certain extent has marred, shall be ultimately entirely like Him (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 1 John 3:1, 2). One might illustrate this truth by reference to a photograph. The likeness of the subject is stamped upon the sensitive paper in a moment of time, but development in a dark room is needed before the likeness is made manifest. Sanctification as a crisis takes place the moment we believe upon Christ, but sanctification as a process may take years to be complete. Whatever our condition as regards things national (Greek or Jew, verse 11), religious (circumcision or uncircumcision), cultural (barbarian or Scythian) or social (bond or free), we shall be found in the image of Christ, the Preeminent One, our All in all (1 Cor. 1:26-31; Eph 4:10).

II. New Love for the Saints: verses 12-17.

If in the purpose of God we are His chosen ones, destined to be made perfect, like unto Christ, let us aim to have His mind in all things (Phil. 2:5); let us practise the virtues which are appropriate to those who are clothed in the holy garments of His righteousness (Rev. 19:8).

Since Christ has loved us and saved us, regardless of our national, religious, educational or social standing (Gal. 3:28), we are to remember that He is All in all, and that in spiritual matters, human distinctions do not count (Gal. 6:15). We are to love others, even as Christ loved us (1 John 3:16; 4:21). We are to follow Him in being merciful (Luke 6:36), kind (2 Pet. 1:7), humble (Matt. 11:29), meek (Matt. 5:5; 21:5) and long-suffering (Col. 1:11). Like Him we are to be patient and forgiving, one toward another (Matt. 6:12-15; Eph. 4:32). If the love of Christ is allowed full sway in our hearts, it will knit us together, as we all strive toward maturity of character and the perfection which is promised.

Our relationships one toward another will be free from jealousy and angry strife, if in each heart the peace of God is allowed to rule, "to sit as umpire" (literal meaning of the Greek word translated "rule" in verse 15). As peace is the gift of God to each member of the body of Christ, so righteous and holy unity, a harmony based upon conviction, should prevail among those members (Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4:2-4). But peace which is gained at the expense of righteousness is not true peace (Jas. 3:18).

Thanksgiving to God for His mercy, for His grace in calling us to Himself, will also tend to promote unity among His children (2 Cor. 1:11).

How are the Christian virtues of love, peace and thanksgiving to be fostered? How shall we be made like unto our Master? By beholding Him in His word (Psa. 119:9, 18; 2 Cor. 3:18), and by letting His word find a lodgement in our hearts (Psa. 119:11). Then heavenly wisdom shall be our portion (1 Cor. 2:5; Col. 1:9).

Another means of grace is Christian fellowship (1 John 1:3). We may teach and admonish one another, praising God for His manifold grace (Psa. 34:3; Heb. 13:15).

The Apostle sums up the practical duties of a Christian in verse 17 (compare verse 23). These words may also be used as a test: whatever we may say or do with thanksgiving to God is approved (Eph. 5:20); but if any word or action cannot be for His glory or be the subject of prayer and praise to Him, it is not lawful or expedient (Rom. 14:22, 23).

Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 12—The Fruits of Union with Christ _____ John 15:1-19
 Dec. 13—The Certainty of Union with Christ _____ John 14:1-20
 Dec. 14—Union with Him through the Spirit's Baptism _____
 1 Cor. 12:1-13
 Dec. 15—Life through Union with Christ _____ Gal. 2:15-20
 Dec. 16—Walking in Union with Christ _____ 1 John 2:1-6
 Dec. 17—Christ's Prayer for Unity _____ John 17:13-23
 Dec. 18—Unity of the Brethren through Christ _____
 1 Cor. 1:10-17

Suggested Hymns

Behold, what love!
 The church's one foundation.
 Blessed be the fountain of blood.
 There is a fountain filled with blood.
 Once I was dead in sin.
 Dying with Jesus.

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