

Sunday School Lesson

CHRIST AMONG THE CHURCHES

(Lesson for Sept. 16th)

Matthew 18:20; John 21:1-14; Revelation 1 to 3.

Golden Text—Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.—Rev. 3:20.

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE

Approach to the Lesson

The Book of Revelation was written by one whose name was John (1:1, 4, 9). Our earliest traditions point to John the apostle, who ministered to a circuit of churches, with centre in Ephesus, and who was banished to Patmos in the persecutions of the Emperor Domitian in the last decade of the first Christian century. The differences in the language and style between John's Gospel and the Apocalypse can be explained on any one or more of three hypotheses: (1) the great difference in the subject; (2) development of style between the time of writing the Gospel and the time of writing the Revelation; (3) an Aramaic origin, translated into Greek by a Greek scholar. The date is probably about A.D. 96.

While the early chapters of the Book have to do with conditions existing in the Asian churches of that period, we have

here chiefly a prophetic Book. The schools of interpretation are mainly four. There is the Preterist school, which practically exhausts the meaning of the Book in the early period of church history, leaving little but historical interest in it for later generations. There is the Historical school, which sees in the Book a consecutive prophecy of world history from the time of John to the consummation of all things. There is also an interpretation, sometimes called the Poetic interpretation, which sees in Revelation a poetic and dramatic presentation of the great principles governing the struggle of good and evil, with the ultimate triumph of right. The value of this is that it offers equal application to all generations. The most widely accepted interpretation in fundamentalist circles is the Futurist, which throws most of the Book over to the end time. The criticism most frequently offered against this view is that it robs the Book of all significance to all generations between John and the end of the age.

There can be no doubt that the Book points to the mighty spiritual conflict which will characterize the days of the consummation, but in seeing this (as the dispensational view clearly does), we must seek meaning in the Book for the struggling saints of all generations.

Verse by Verse

Rev. 1:9—"I John . . . tribulation . . . the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Note John's description of himself, and also the phrase, "kingdom and patience." A far cry from the impatient clamoring for place in the Kingdom (Mark 10:35-37.) John was in Patmos, exiled because he preached the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, but also because God had a word and testimony to give him there. We can see both meanings in "for."

Verse 10—" . . . In the Spirit on the Lord's day . . ." Some believe that John is here telling us that in spirit he was carried forward to the prophetic day of the Lord, which would fit in with the futurist interpretation of the Book. Most hold the simpler view, that John was lifted into the prophetic state by the Holy Spirit on the first day of the week, which by this time had taken on special significance in the church as the Lord's Day, in remembrance of His resurrection.

Verse 11—" . . . Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . ." The risen Lord gives an introduction of Himself, and a commission to His servant. He assumes divine titles. See Isaiah 41:4; 48:12.

Verse 12 to 16 contain the remarkable description of the risen Lord in phrases full of symbolic significance.

Verse 17—" . . . I fell at his feet as dead . . ." Fear not: I am the first and the last." He did not thus affect His disciples when He appeared to them immediately after His resurrection. But Paul (Acts 9:8) and John were eyewitnesses of His heavenly glory, and it was too much for mortal eyes.

Verse 18—" . . . he that liveth, and was dead . . . the keys of hell and of death." Better, the "living One." For "I was dead," read, "I died." It is an ardent, not describing a state but an action. He not only lives but is vested with all authority in the unseen world.

Chap. 3:14—" . . . the church of the Laodiceans . . . the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." See Colossians 4:15, 16. Notice how many of the introductory descriptions of Christ in the letters are taken from the full description in the first chapter. For this, see 1:5. The phrase "the beginning of the creation of God" does not mean the first item in the succession of created beings and things, but the One in whom all creation finds its origin.

Verse 15—"I know thy works . . . neither cold nor hot . . ." Note the phrase "I know thy works . . . neither cold nor hot . . ." Note the phrase "I know" in all the seven letters. Judgments are not based on half knowledge with Him.

Verse 16—" . . . lukewarm . . . I will spue thee out of my mouth." The Laodicean condition is summed up in the one word, "lukewarm"—not completely indifferent, but not sufficiently committed to do any good.

Verse 17—"Thou sayest . . . and knowest not . . ." states the tragedy of this needy, yet self-sufficient church. What we say about ourselves and what

GREEN RIVER

The many friends of Mr. Wm. Hamilton are sorry to hear that he has had a stroke and at time of writing, his condition is only fair.

Mrs. V. Postill attended the wedding of her great niece at Shanty Bay and is spending a week's holidays there.

Sorry to report that the flu seems to be prevalent amongst the children here.

Mrs. Cornutt of the Brock Road visited her son, Mr. A. Chafen.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Draper and Mr. F. Wilson were recent visitors to Welland.

Mr. H. Mitchell we understand has not been well lately. We trust he will soon be feeling better.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Draper entertained guests over the weekend. The S.S. of Regent Park United Church held their annual picnic at Mr. and Mrs. Chafen's home on Saturday last. There were almost 160 present. Needless to say, there were games and fun galore.

God knows about us are two very different things.

Verse 18—"I counsel thee . . . gold . . . white raiment . . . They would have to believe the divine estimate (v. 17) before they would accept the divine counsel. The Lord has abundant provision for every need of His Church.

Verse 19—"As many as I love, I rebuke . . . repent." Our Lord's criticism is not that of scorn, but of love, and constitutes a call to repentance.

Verse 20—" . . . and knock . . . hear my voice . . . open the door, I will come in . . ." The Lord may "spue out" a church organization as unworthy (v. 16); but He will still offer Himself to all who realize their need of Him.

Verse 21—" . . . to set with me in my throne . . ." Where the condemnation is severest, the proffered reward is greatest. To overcome in a Laodicean situation would seem to be more difficult than in any other.

Verse 22—"He that hath an ear . . . the Spirit saith unto the churches." An echo of our Lord's teaching in the days of His flesh, but now enlarged and applied to the churches. The Heart of the Lesson

The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians presents the Lord as the great head of the Church (1:22, 23; 4:1-16; 5:23-32). We are too inclined to hold this doctrine as something mystical, with little practical application. It was not so with Paul. To him, the Headship of Christ was not some far-off truth, some visionary situation to be realized only when the church is glorified, but it meant the lordship of Christ in the local church. What, for instance, is His First Epistle to the Corinthians if not an application of the headship of Christ to the affairs of the local church?

In the first three chapters of Revelation the same truth is presented. Even the glorious vision of the ascended Lord, depicting Him as the great head of the Church, relates His office to local assemblies, specifically identified for us (1:11). These seven are, doubtless, representative and symbolic, but they were seven actual churches with specific needs and conditions that called for attention and cure. We sorely need renewed emphasis on the headship of Christ in the local church today. This would do away with all the expediency, all the catering to carnal whims, all the submitting to a church "boss," and many other things which plague our churches and weaken their testimony. We must learn anew to direct our church affairs on the basis of Paul's first prayer to Christ, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The example of Christ's dealings with a local church in our lesson is the church of the Laodiceans. Here was a church into which the spirit of the world had entered. While other churches struggled with poverty (2:9), the church in Laodicea was plagued with wealth. With the wealth came a sense of self-sufficiency and independence. "I have . . . need of nothing," was the boast of the church which mistook worldly opulence for spiritual riches. Thus the first fervor was gone. There was no following after holiness with ardent desire. At the same time, these people realized the superiority of Christianity over the old paganism, and could not dream of turning back to their former state. They were proud of their Christianity. So they were not soul, but neither would they go all out for Christ. They were lukewarm, and so nauseated the Lord.

The Lord could not dwell in such an atmosphere, so He stood apart, as Moses had done before (Exod. 32:26), and called on those who would receive Him in a deep, inward fellowship of the spirit (Rev. 3:20). The local church is basic in the New Testament economy, but when a local organization ceases to function as the body of Christ, the great Head has a way of separating to Himself those who will seek His gold, His dress, His pharmacy rather than those of the world. Here is a solemn call to every church.

We'd all be better off if we lived up to the high standards we set for others.

Lemonville Teachers Recalled by Old-Timer

There is one building around the hamlet of Lemonville I failed to mention, and that is the old schoolhouse built long before the one that stands there now was ever thought of. Among several teachers who taught there before the present century began was Tobias Eckhart—I mentioned him before. He organized the band here. Johnnie Hoshel taught there before going over to Bloomington. James Lawson was teaching there in 1897 and if I remember right, one of the Wideman girls also taught there. George Cook would be good authority on that. He knows more about the happenings around there than anybody else I know. I have mentioned James before; he was a very good teacher. I was talking to one of his pupils when in Mt. Albert, who said he was the best teacher she ever had. She is now teaching in a large High School in Toronto.

Well, James was very good, considering some of the pupils he taught in that old school at Lemonville, but it wasn't nearly so cold as that old one at Bloomington. James was very strict. Seventeen boys found that out one day. He had quite a task on his hands that time and he should have trounced two more. There were only three boys in the school who didn't get a good strapping. There was a football game on and they got into a dispute and it ended up in a free-for-all. Lawson came back from dinner before it was settled and seventeen were chastised after they were caught at the fight. The boys got up a rhyme about a him then. "James Lawson is a fine young man. He goes to church on Sunday. He preys to the Lord to give him strength to strap the boys on Monday." I don't know how old Lawson was when he died, but if I looked at his tombstone at Mt. Albert, that would tell.

This is a good season of the year to stroll over a farm to find out whether it is clean or not. July or August is a very good time. I was past a demonstration farm a few days ago. This farm is known and mentioned in nearly all the farm papers in Ontario or the Dominion, or all over the world for that matter. I hope the rest of it is cleaner



Sept. 16, 1936
With the Dominion election results far from complete, the general results showed a marked falling off in the support of the Conservative cause in Ontario. At 2 a.m., Wednesday morning the summary gave the following: Liberals 112, Conservatives 87, Progressives 7, Liberal Progressives 11, United Farmers of Alberta 10, Labor 3, Independent 2, and 13 seats in doubt.

With the thermometer only three above freezing point early Monday morning, and with white frost on the ground the past week in the early hours, it feels as though the fall season has arrived in earnest.

While eggs were slightly advanced in price to 35 and 37c per dozen on the Stouffville market last Thursday and butter holding firm at 33 to 35c a pound, there was a real bargain in vegetables. Nice Bantam corn sold from the wagon at 2 dozen for 25c and tomatoes 20c a basket.

The Stouffville Creamery Co. has again come to the front in the matter of good butter making, by being a third prize winner at the Canadian National

what he was doing on his farm. Well, I had a good laugh, for I know the man and have been over his farm. Perhaps contour plowing might kill all the weeds and rubbish he has on his farm, at least it would be worth a try. This farm is not in York County; it happened there years ago. Next time I will tell about the next concession west. John Davis, the man who operated the sash and door factory, had a name for this concession but I will not put it in print. The sports editor gave me a good supply of paper and told me to be sure and use it all.

I read a lot about contour plowing in those papers. At the Provincial meeting in Toronto some man was bragging about

Exhibition last week. The townline from the 9th concession at the suburbs of Stouffville to Ringwood will be closed this week to through traffic until the contractors complete the new road being built along this mile and a quarter. Stouffville is a busy centre, especially on Saturday nights. At that particular time a man can maintain his rights the same as any other time. If he doesn't care what happens to his fenders. The 7th anniversary of the inauguration of the Dominion Stores, and the second anniversary of the Stouffville branch, is now being celebrated and to mark the occasion, stupendous bargains are the order of the day.

9th Line Markham

School re-opened after the long summer vacation, with Miss Bennett of Shelburne in charge. We are glad to report that Mrs. Dent Brown who has been a patient in Scarborough Hospital is now convalescing at home. Tommy Masters visited last week at the Robt. Simpson home at Newcastle.

Mrs. Terryberry entertained a party of visitors from Detroit over the Labor Day weekend. The party included Mrs. Terryberry's 6-month old great-granddaughter.

Miss Mary Drudge is on the staff of the Scarboro Hospital. Catherine, Thora and Margaret Masters had a most enjoyable motor trip to Quebec City. En route they visited Montreal, the St. Lawrence Seaway Project, the Thousand Islands and Algonquin Park.

"Welcome to Resolute, pronounced De-s-o-l-a-t-e," reads a sign at a high Arctic weather station, proclaimed itself "in the heart of Canada's Northland, surrounded by miles and miles of nothing but miles and miles."

—OLDTIMER

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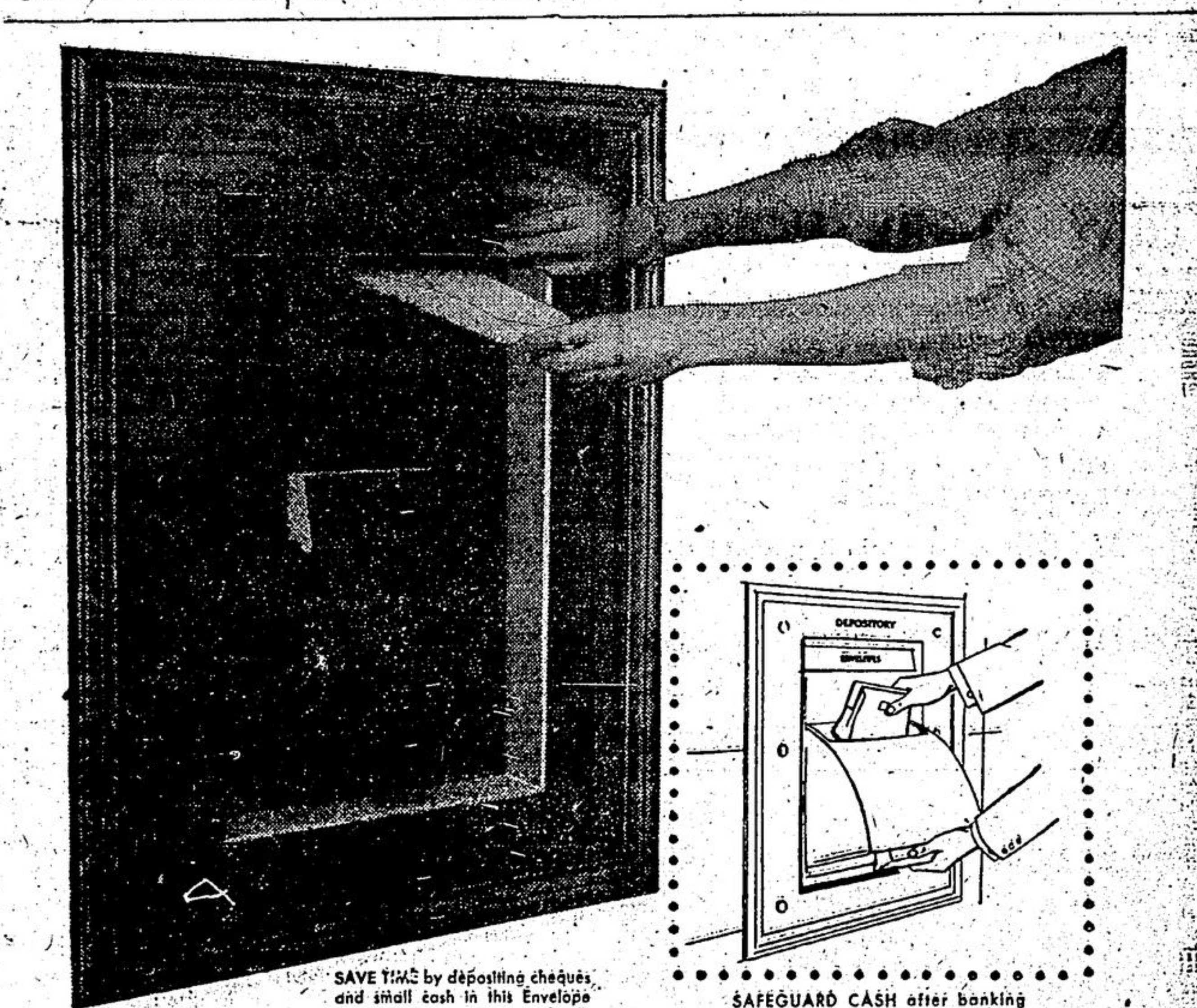
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