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## The Ephesian Candlestick.

Rev. W. T. Gordon.

John, the servant of Jesus Christ, had a vision in the Isle of Patmos. He saw the risen and ever living Savior walking among the golden candlesticks "which are the churches" and he commands "his servant John" to write unto the Angel of the church at Ephesus a brief letter, recorded in the first seven verses of the second chapter of this Revelation. In this letter, he commends the good and condemns the wrong in that church. He praises their "works," their constancy, labor and patience, "their patience, their strict discipline, and condemns them for what he finds not right—"first praise, then censure." He does "a gently and yet firmly." He has something against them, notwithstanding all their excellencies "they had left their first love." But that one thing seems to impel the very existence of the church itself. It is a want of love—"first love"—a lack of its first fervor and devotion. To leave the first love is to have a great fall. It may result in the very removal of the candlestick, after all, unless there is "repentance" and a purging of the "first works."

And this calamity is threatened, notwithstanding all their excellency of character and praiseworthy deeds.

The Ephesian church was a model church in many things, in most things. It seems to have been well organized for work, all right as to the purity of life, and helpfulness, and constancy of its members, its discipline, and even its orthodoxy. It must have been sound in the faith, true to its doctrines—though not mentioned it is certainly implied in the fact that any heterodoxy, any looseness of faith, would have been condemned by the faithful Master. While all these things seem to be necessary to a well organized and progressive church, they are not the things absolutely necessary to the existence and perpetuity of the church. This seems to be implied in the severe threat to remove the candlestick, in the face of the existence of all these things, unless they repeated of their lack of love. It would also imply that love is of the greatest consequence to a church. The inspired writings have taught that love is the greatest thing in the world—the best and noblest in the church.

But so many have laid the greatest stress on orthodoxy, "soundness in the faith," to the neglect of these other good things commended here by our Lord. But this letter doesn't teach that orthodoxy is the greatest thing however desirable it may be to have the church sound in its doctrines. You see the Lord doesn't mention that trait, at all. It is rather singular that he does not command, in so many words, the purity of doctrines held by them, though he does not, and cannot look with complacency on lax teaching, or false and erroneous doctrines. This omission, it would seem was meant to teach us in connection with his censure for lack of love, that love, the fervor of the first love continuing in the heart—deep toned constant spirituality—is of greater importance than all else. Orthodoxy may degenerate into mere formalism, and ultimately destroy the church.

The best thing then, in all the world, in any age, is a spiritual church. The other things mentioned are certain good and necessary, but they may exist without love and fervor.

The worst thing in the church according to the teaching of this letter, is religious formalism. It is most surely destructive in all its influences and bearing on a church. It did finally cause the removal of the candlestick at Ephesus.

Therefore lay greater stress on "love."

It is certainly "the greatest thing in the world. A church may have everything else but love and fail in its mission among men. There is more hope of its success without the other things.

The church of the future, the aggressive, progressive, successful church, in my humble opinion, is going to be the church that pays the largest attention to keeping alive, in fullest measure its holy, fervent affection; that reaches

out its tendrils and takes into its heart's warmest tenderest embrace, not only its own members, but even the degraded, the sinful and wicked outside. It must be unselfish. It must cease to be exclusive.

The church of Jesus Christ under the influence of his continual presence must condescend to the humble and lowly, and love all mankind. It must be like the good shepherd himself, lovingly seeking to save the lost, while having the most tender regard for, and sweet companionship and fellowship with the saved.

The church must have an increase of that love which makes the world see that it has the largest intellect, purest, sweetest, most attractive brotherhood in all the world. It must let the light of the Son of Righteousness shine out through its body, its members, with all its beauty and excellency, and grandeur, as the greatest force to save and bless mankind. Such a church is sure to be orthodox, for love brings obedience and God is ready and anxious and able to lead the obedient into all of the truth.

Wichita, Kans.

## "That's All."

By Joel Swartz.

Poster! conspicuously along the line of travel, as one rides into the city, is an advertisement of a particular kind of whisky. The name of it is given. Over this name is a large picture of a man on a red horse. The rider is gayly flourishing his hat and seems to be shouting the name of the brand of the drink. The name is supposed to be sufficient, and hence the boastful: "That's all!"

Now, the writer could but ejaculate: "Would to God that were all!"—Instead, it seemed to him "at the dread beginning. That man on the red horse seemed to him to suggest another red horse and his rider of whom we read as follows (Rev. 6:4): "And another horse came forth, a red horse; and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another; and there was given to him a great sword."

My fancy saw this whisky rider at the head of a great procession of victims and slaves who were bound to him by a loyalty which overthrew the dignity of their natures and the power of their wills. A great, motley crowd of boisterous, fighting dilapidated persons gathered from every rank and condition of society, lengthened out the innumerable train that followed the gay rider on his red horse. Like the red horse in the Apocalyptic vision, it was given to him to take peace from the earth. The eye saw no bannered dove floating above the procession, but, instead, devices of every description of woe and sorrow, wretchedness and poverty vice and crime until they blended with the lowering horizon beyond. Nor was this vision of the fancy a mere dream of unreality. It was a shadowy resemblance of what occurs in every land where this rider goes forth. The great sword which was given to him was red with more than the blood which stains the warrior's blade. It was corroded with hot tears of widows and orphans; it was wet with the blood of lost souls; it had on it the hideous forms of serpents, gorgons, hydras and chimera's dir.

It is true the whisky advertisement did not display all that my fancy saw. It is a part of the tactics of the leader of the unseen host to conceal the dread following in the ghostly, bannered train. His flourish of "That's all" is misleading. It isn't all. If one could summon "all" and complete the spectacle it would be such a horror as one could never forget. No imagination could summon the whole dreadful, tragic drama into one view. I have been trying to envision the procession with the scenery of history. The streets through which it conducts its ghostly, ghastly crowd should be flanked with jails and penitentiaries, poorhouses and asylums, scaffolds and electric chairs, overarched with dark clouds and lurid

lightnings. Nor would it be true still: "That's all." "No drunkard shall enter the kingdom of God."

Devon, Pa.

## "He Means Me"

By Rev. W. L. Watkinson.

Many listening to the truth before it comes home. We generalize and criticize, and forget that the gospel message is direct, definite, and personal. Usually we are bad judges of our own portrait, and are specially slow to recognize our moral portrait when it is accurate and unflattering, and, in addition, we have no sincere desire to know our true selves. So the upper seats hear for the lower, and the free seats for the rich; but hearing, they do not hear, and seeing, they do not perceive that God has a controversy with them. A soldier shoots his weight in lead before he kills a foe, and the preacher knows how rarely his message reaches the heart and conscience of those who regularly sit before him. We need to cry with the disciples: "Lord, is it I?" Nothing is done until we have individualized the truth. The great problem is to rescue ourselves from the mass, to disentangle ourselves, to shake off the tyranny of the crowd, and realize our personal relation to God, His truth, and His kingdom.

But if truth that condemns means you, so does the truth that saves. "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden"; "He means me." "And when He was yet a great way off"; "He means me." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost"; "He means me." God's love to us is personal. "Fear not; for I redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "That thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel."

Is not the knowledge of this personal, redeeming, enfolding love just what we want? Happy day when we realize it! Once I was looking carelessly down a list of heirs to unclaimed property, when I suddenly saw my own name. What an electric shock! How deeply interesting that document all at once became! So it is when we recognize our personal interest in the gospel grace and promise. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

A truly converted man gets a vision of God, and a satisfaction of soul which he never entirely loses and can never forget, however far he may wander away from God. The world can never again show a truly converted man anything that compares with the vision of heaven he has had through Christ, and can never give him any pleasure to equal that he had in communion with God.

Everyone, whether high or low, a prince or a peasant, who lives in a course of sin, is the slave of sin. Sin is a hard task-master, and pays his servants out in bitter wages, even death. Sin is a remorseless master and allows of no escape. The man who gives himself up to his lusts and passions is not, as he fondly believes, using sin for his pleasure, but is, in fact, serving sin as a master. If he thinks he can dismiss sin at pleasure, he is grossly mistaken; for the moment he seeks to free himself, he finds the chains drawn tightly about him. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

## Donation.

During January the congregations of Jacksonville and Jacksonville made their annual visit at the parsonage and there left in material things about \$70.00 and in sympathetic help very much. On this field we are now on our fourth year. May this kind people be blessed and the divine word produce much fruit.

JOSEPH A. CAHILL.

Jacksonville, Car. Co. N. B. Feb. 17.