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INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR DECEMBER 10

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

LESSON TEXT—Rev. 2:1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.—Rev. 2:10.

This passage most wonderfully illustrates that dominating purpose of Paul's life. More than most lessons a map will be necessary to locate distinctly the places mentioned. There are interesting stories in connection with each of the seven cities and churches. It might be wise to give to seven different people the task of bringing information to the class regarding each one mentioned.

1. Ephesus, whose love is waning (vv. 1-7). The key word to these messages is the word "overcometh." In each of the messages our Lord describes himself in a different way according to the peculiar needs of the particular church. Here he is represented as holding the stars (messengers of the churches, Ch. 1:20) in his right hand, and keeping them secure, controlling them while he walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands, literally churches. The symbolism of "lamp stand" is used because the churches were intended to be light bearers as they hold forth the light given by the act of the Spirit (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15; Zech. 4:2-6). Ephesus was the capital of a province said to be the richest in the Roman empire. In it was the great temple of Diana. Here Paul had labored and had spiritual experiences, and to Ephesus he had written a letter (See lesson 9, third quarter), but there were good things to be found in this Ephesian church (vv. 2,3). Forty years after being founded, John writes this message. He knew their "works," their general moral conduct, especially its active and passive side through its trials. Its dealing with impostors and its practical energy and enterprise; and its patience (literally steadfast assurance) in bearing witness for Christ. Jesus knew of their never wearying endurance. Surely these things would indicate pretty nearly a model church. Jesus says, "No, there is something seriously wrong," so seriously wrong that unless repented of he would remove them out of their place.

II. Smyrna, the church with a crown of life (vv. 8-11). Smyrna was 40 or 50 miles from Ephesus, and at this time had a city of 200,000 inhabitants. To this church the Son of Man (Ch. 1:11) sends another message. It is interesting to note that this church and the one at Philadelphia received from the Lord no unqualified praise. It was a church of affliction, in close contact with persecution and poverty (Ps. 1:10 on art thou rich in good works, not toward God, but in treasures in heaven; however, if you are in the fire of persecution, it was for that Paul was charged, and afterward, as looking at the end, not immediately from v. 10, O Christ, rather than give life or honor, or even death to God, for ten years have I suffered, and in Christ have me no life left. Stephen, Paul, James are king who have given all. The crown is surely life, and crown of victory. The second death is the final condemnation which will be decided at the judgment seat of God.

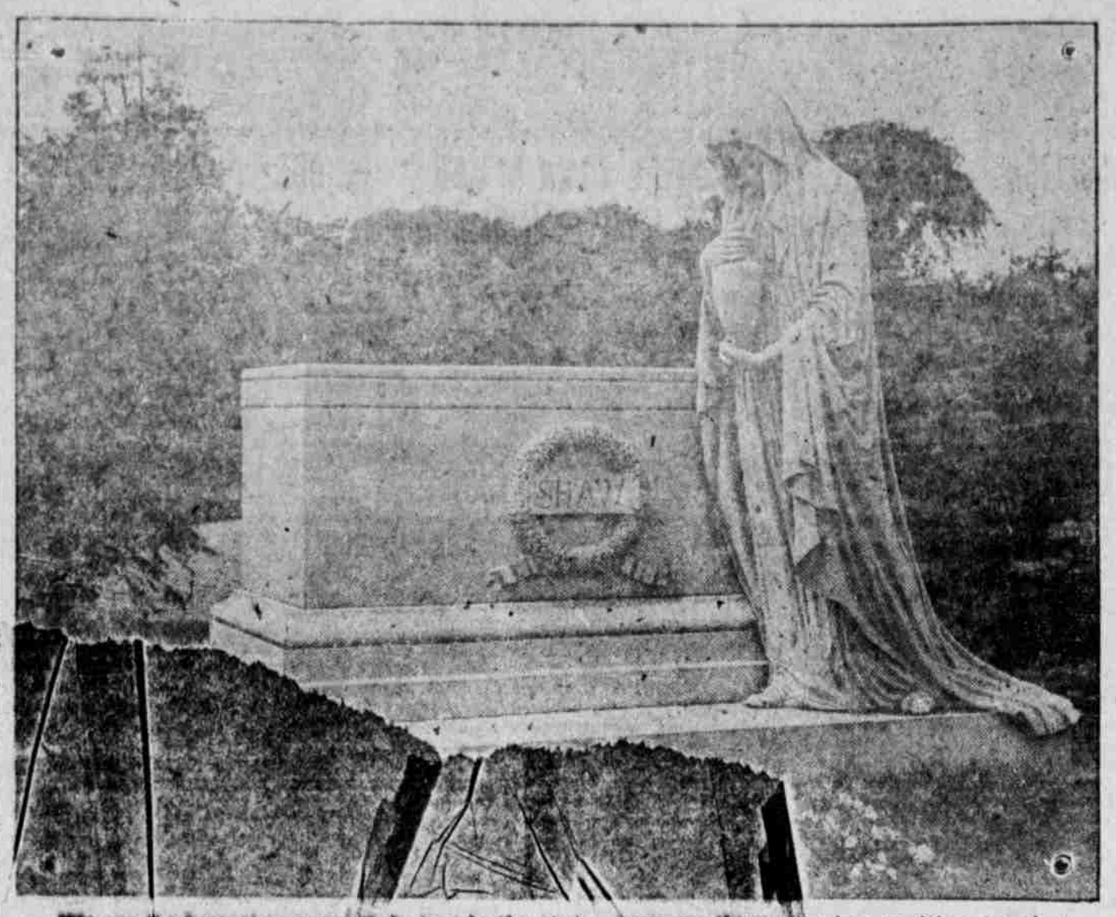
III. Pergamos, the church in a city of Satan (vv. 12-17). Our Lord addressed this church in strong terms. Since the city is in a country of a demonic cult, the Lord is represented as "the one with the sharp two-edged sword." The word sword (Rev. 1:16; 4:12-13; John 5:24). Pergamos was almost four miles north of Smyrna, a city of about 120,000 inhabitants, the capital of the province. It was brought many of the early Christians who were subjected to suffering martyrdom. Again we have a church whose works are commended, whose consistency is mentioned in that they "held fast to my name, and not denied the faith"—martyrs (vv. 13). However, dangers threatened them for there had been a compromise with the world and with other systems of faith what we would call today liberality in doctrine and broadness in view in teaching. (1) Some of their number had accepted and practiced the doctrine of Balaam (Gen. 31; Num. 31:16). (2) These teachings cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel (v. 14). This was done by persuading the Israelites to join in the luxurious feasts and revelings of the heathen, and thus their impurity of morals.

In the remaining part of the chapter we have some glimpses of the remaining four churches, the good that was to be cherished and the evil that was to be overcome.

Perhaps the most suggestive of all is that of Laodicea, the lukewarm church.

Lukewarmness is one of the most deadly evils to overcome, and hence the highest and most glorious of all the promises suggested ends with "I will give him to sit down with me in my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my father in his throne" (Am. R. V.).

MEMORIALS



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JUMP FROM BED IN MORNING AND DRINK HOT WATER

Open sluices of system each morning and wash away the poisonous, stagnant matter, says authority.

A glass of hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it, drank each morning before breakfast, keeps us looking and feeling fit.

Life is not merely to live, but to live well, eat well, digest well, work well, sleep well, look well. What a glorious condition to attain, and yet how very easy it is if one will only adopt the morning inside bath.

Folks who are accustomed to feel dull and heavy when they arise, splitting headache, stuffy from a cold, foul tongue, nasty breath, acid stomach, can, instead, feel as fresh as a daisy by opening the sluices of the system each morning and flushing out the whole of the internal poisonous stagnant matter.

Everyone, whether ailing, sick or well, should, each morning, before breakfast, drink a glass of real hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it to wash from the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels the previous day's indigestible waste, sour bile and poisonous toxins; thus cleansing, sweetening and purifying the entire alimentary canal before putting more food into the stomach. The action of hot water and limestone phosphate on an empty stomach is wonderfully invigorating. It cleans out all the sour fermentations, gases, waste and acidity and gives one a splendid appetite for breakfast. While you are enjoying your breakfast the water and phosphate is quietly extracting a large volume of water from the blood and getting ready for a thorough flushing of all the inside organs.

The millions of peope who are bothered with constipation, bilious spells, stomach trouble, rheumatism; others who have sallow skins, blood disorders and sickly complexions are urged to get a quarter pound of limestone phosphate from the drug store, which will cost but little, but is sufficient to make anyone a pronounced crank on the subject of internal sanitation.