



THE CONTENDER

August 1986

"... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith..." - Jude 3

Published for the faithful supporters of County Corrections Gospel Mission

A Message From The Director

"Oh, that God would make Hell so real to us that we cannot rest; Heaven so real that we must have men there; Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy by the conversion of Him of many concerning whom He prayed, 'Father, I long that those whom Thou has given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.' "

- Hudson Taylor

Dear Ones in Christ:

"Wherefore, beloved, **seeing that ye look for such things**, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

- II Peter 3:14

Greetings in these closing hours of summer! Praise God for continued health and soundness of mind! All too soon we must admit to another season's end and stand ready to pursue His divine will in the months of Autumn. Oh that we might not have to weep with Jeremiah, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved!" (Jeremiah 8:20)

As Peter stirred the Church under persecution, so ought we to heed the exhortation and admonishment, "Be diligent, seeing ye look for such things!"

In meditating upon this passage and many others, I was brought to ponder more seriously the direct and clear meaning of "**such things**". What are the "things" we are anticipating? The text of II Peter 3 reminds us of **two very distinct events** which ought to quicken the believer's mind and heart.

First, we as believers "look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!" Paul said to Titus (2:12, 13) "... we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, **looking for the Blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ**". He commended the faith of the Thessalonian Church as those who had "... turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to **WAIT** for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the **wrath to come!**" (I Thessalonians 1:9, 10) I am encouraged, strengthened and stirred up to continue faithful in light of **the Blessed Hope**. The wonderful knowledge that I shall see Him face to face certainly causes us to press on.

Secondly, however, Peter stirs us up to be always reminded of **the coming "day of the LORD"**. "... in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with

fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (II Peter 3:10) Oh that we might live and labor anticipating **the tragic but real crisis** of both a returning Savior and jealous God.

These two perspectives are most vital for an effective daily ministry. Oh Lord, help us to be stirred to a crucified, faithful ministry that recognizes the privilege of Heaven and the tragedy of Hell!

At CCGM, these two realities stir us to move forward in hope and joy! Please know that we count you as special companions in this ministry. "Looking forward" - how can we help but both rejoice and weep!

In His Wonderful Vineyard,
JACK CRANS

The Crisis and Character of a Burden

Ours is a day of both unprecedented corruption and unprecedented ministry. These two facts only reveal an already understood dichotomy: (a) Man is a sinner and (2) God is a Redeemer.

The three Biblical narratives discussed below reveal the redemptive heart of God for man the sinner. Jonah the prophet was a man provoked with a burden, Lot the righteous was a man paralyzed with a burden and an unnamed widow was one who prayed with a burden.

Proverbs 29:18 states: "Where there is no vision (burden), the people surely perish". In the sense of my use of the word "burden", may I define it as follows: the attitudes and actions of God toward man's lost condition and need for saving grace.

Jonah, the Prophet Provoked with a Burden

The Assyrians whose capitol city was Nineveh had for long been a menace and corrupting nation towards Israel. Their ruthless violence and injury to God's people was without excuse. But God's love and desire for Nineveh's salvation was revealed. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." (1:2) **BUT JONAH ROSE UP TO FLEE!** After realizing God's burden and chastening, Jonah saw the most wonderful of national revivals: "... they turned from their evil way and God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them; and he did it not. **BUT IT DISPLEASED JONAH EXCEEDINGLY, AND HE WAS VERY ANGRY!**" (3:10; 4:1)

As we pray for national revival and God's moving in lost hearts,

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The Crisis and Character of a Burden – Continued

may we heed the grievous testimony of Jonah – **A Man Provoked With A Burden**. Today, many would be so calloused as to enjoy the eternal damnation of the wicked. Christians, if not careful, can be hardened to lost souls as was Jonah! Perhaps this is one reason less ministry and outreach penetrates our dying, wicked cities. We would be wise to notice that Jonah “was glad for the gourd” (4:6) which comforted his selfish heart but most insensitive to the mercies of God brought upon Nineveh. I believe it is easy today to rejoice in physical comforts of religion all to miss the true joy of seeing God’s redeeming love towards lost, dying men.

Lot, a Man Paralyzed with a Burden

Lot, in contrast, was a righteous man who lived (Genesis 18, 19) in Abraham’s day. His home and family were situated in Sodom/Gomorrah, twin cities of wickedness and unsurpassed evil. He loved his God, hated evil and most evidently carried a crushing burden for his perishing neighbors. Peter’s second epistle (2:6-9) states that Lot’s “hearing and seeing” the wickedness around him so flooded his spirit that he seemingly was emotionally paralyzed to respond. Paralyzed with a burden, it was all God could do but to physically pull him from the imminent destruction. Lot was mocked by his family and neighbors as he tried so unsuccessfully to represent **the doom’s day report** of the visiting angels.

Like Lot, many today without question carry a heavy, crushing burden for lost men. Many are aware of this evil generation and many weep for its ultimate Day of Visitation, but would we be so taken back by the wickedness of this world that we would be immobilized to exalt the redemption of Christ in the marketplace? Often the greatest burden for lost souls is found in the same **idle**, useless lives of the redeemed! Oh that we would not be paralyzed! May the modern deluge of evil not inundate our effectiveness and zeal but further stir us to obedient and zealous penetrating ministries. “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world; **holding forth the word of life** . . .” (Phil. 2:15, 16)

The Widow, a Woman Praying with a Burden

In Luke 18:1-8, as introduced in July’s Contender, we see a dear faithful widow. She prayed with a burden that God would perform His most perfect will in her particular life situation. Without fainting, she represented a particular injustice in her generation of lawlessness and sin. **Unlike Jonah the angry prophet, she faithfully called on the righteous mercies of God. Unlike paralyzed Lot, the righteous man of Sodom, she actively pursued the establishment of justice and did not faint in the hour of adversity.**

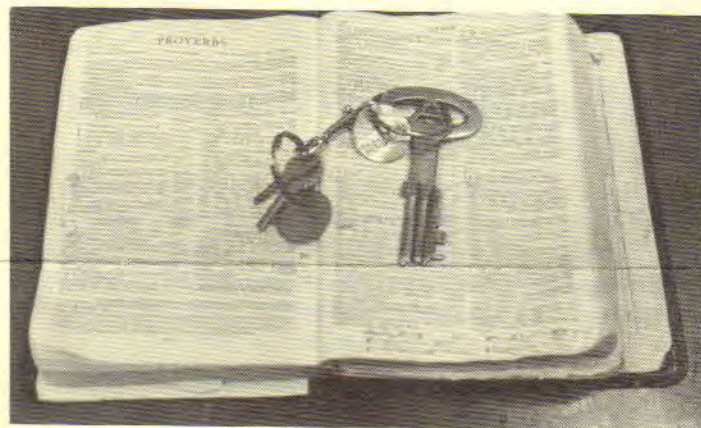
I thought seriously of these three righteous persons portrayed in Scripture. Though one is a parable, they all center on the character of a believer and servant of God. Each knew of God’s redemption and man’s wickedness. Only one responded to their generation with meaning and purpose – only one made a difference. Please note, however, that God acted faithfully in each situation.

CCGM is burdened like Lot, but we pray not paralyzed. CCGM sees the wrath of God against a generation of sinful men but surely not provoked. CCGM sees many injustices and many grievous situations, but hopefully not fainting as it grows to pray daily for the

outpouring of God’s redemption for a perishing, wicked generation.

Herein is another perspective on our desire to address Corrections and high-crime areas with the good and faithful news of Jesus Christ! **May we cry against sin, carry a burden and pray for revival.**

Know The Truth . . . It Sets You Free!



Two things to set men free

“For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

– Proverbs 1:32,

A Letter From Linda

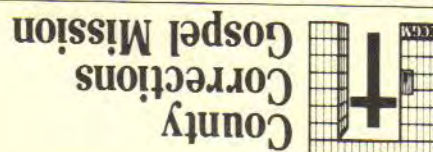
It has been a busy summer in the office with space becoming one of our greatest needs. Boxes seem to be everywhere and there is no more room for storage. I am on my way to the use of another 4-drawer filing cabinet, which is proof of my endless filing pile. In addition, the computer which was donated to us and holds all of our various mailing lists recently ‘died’. I will, therefore, be traveling back and forth to Leaman Advertising to update our mailing lists on their same system. Rather than investing in getting this computer fixed (which only has the capability of maintaining a mailing list), we have decided that it would be much more cost effective to invest funds into a word processing system which would have the capacity of storing all of our mailing lists, correspondence, finances, articles, etc. Please pray with us that the Lord would raise up people to help us with the financial burden of our growing office.

Continue to pray for the preparation of our Church Seminar as our Opposer tries very hard to put obstacles in our path to divert our thoughts and steal our time.

Our Quarterly Board Meetings have been very profitable for us, and we are very thankful for a united Board who share Jack’s burden and vision and who also care for, love and advise us in many important matters.

Jack traveled to the center part of the state this month and delivered eight Bibles to Wardens. Their reception of Jack has been

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Letter From Linda - Continued

very positive, so please pray with us that these Wardens will read God's Word and then claim the promise, "My Word shall not return unto Me void." (Isaiah 55:11)

I recently began a music ministry at the City Gate which is helping me deal with the big void of not being able to do choral directing due to the ministry. My responsibilities are to set up music for the Tuesday and Thursday evening services. This includes picking out the hymns, playing the piano and/or guitar for the singing and also setting up special music for the services. Please pray specifically that the Lord will send willing servants from this geographical area to participate in special music and also pray for my piano playing as I am a novice in playing hymns.

Within the last month, the Lord has continually brought to my mind the passage in Luke 12 concerning the Parable of the Steward and his Servants. Verse 48 challenges me so much:

"... For unto whomsoever much is **given**, of him shall be much **required** . . .

As noted above, two words stand out to me - **Given** and **Required**.

First, I can see in my own life that the Lord has **given** me above and beyond what I have ever needed in life! I have always been surrounded by the Truth, and continually thank Him for His grace in saving me. Just now as I write this letter, I am so excitedly anticipating camping with my "adopted family" who have loved me and been examples to me of Christ since the time of my birth! How I praise God for each of them and the fun-filled memories I hold!! What a privilege it is to have a Godly heritage! I could go on and on about all that God has given me but for the sake of space I won't.

Second, I know that the Lord does in fact require a lot from me. We need not think of this 'requirement' as drudgery, but you see as we appreciate all the Lord has given to us, there is a natural outpouring of being sold out to Jesus to serve Him with our lives! As we yield ourselves to the Lord, He will use us in mightier ways than we ever could imagine! I also know, however, that I need to be reminded that much is 'required' of me, because it is easy to willingly slip into attitudes which produce an undisciplined life and an ungrateful spirit for His goodness to me. Let's not be blinded!

I believe that this passage of Scripture is not only a challenge to individuals but also to the Church corporately. I believe the Church today, especially in America, has much to answer to the Lord for. I heard a very interesting statement this week: "If anyone from the first century church came back in 1986 to visit, he would have to backslide to fit in!" What a challenge to us first as individuals and thereafter as a Church! I pray that this verse causes us to stop and evaluate our lives and priorities, knowing that one day we must answer to the Lord for the use of our time!

Thanks for taking the time to read and please continue to pray for us! We appreciate it so much!

In His love,

Linda Ingham

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