

The Christian in Sodom

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“. . . and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom . . .” (Genesis 19: 1). We, today, live in Sodom and Egypt. The world has become that. In one sense, the world always was that. So, we all live in Sodom. We are in Sodom, but not of it. There Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Can't you just hear some Christians saying, How nice! Isn't that what we need, a Lot in the gate of Sodom? In fact, there ought to be lots of Lots (no pun intended) in Sodom, shouldn't there? Some Christians hold to the principle of penetration. This means that Christians ought to penetrate the world to Christianize it. Communists penetrate the UNO and everything else in our nation in order to bring about a communist "take over". Why, then, should not Christians penetrate the spheres of government, politics, public schools, etc.? This is also known as the principle of permeation. Christians ought to permeate these spheres. The more this is done, the more Christians permeate the world, the more likely Christians are apt to "turn the world around". The idea is somewhat intriguing, but doesn't it sound like putting a good apple in a barrel of bad apples to make the bad apples good?

Of course, in principle, Lot was a good man. Peter calls him "just Lot", calls him godly, in I Peter 2:6-9, and righteous in I Peter 4: 18. Then wouldn't it be a good thing if we had more godly and righteousness men "in the gate"? Wouldn't the community be better off for it? Wouldn't the nation be in better shape than it is? Doesn't Sodom need many more men like Lot? In other words, the implication seems to be, Lot is to be commended for going to Sodom. We need more men like him in key positions, don't we? Just think, if there had been nine more Lots there, God would not have destroyed the cities of the plain. Then shouldn't the church be a means of getting people converted out of the world, to send them back into the world, so that then they will be a sort of preservative in the world to keep it from rotting all to pieces? That way, the world can become more and more converted. Like the man says, I have a dream. And that is some dream! Was it Lot's dream?

Did Lot go to Sodom because he felt it would be good for such a place to have a little Christian influence or moral atmosphere? Not at all; for first of all, "Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of the Jordan that it was well watered everywhere . . . as the Garden of the Lord." Genesis 13:10. This looking of Lot's was no more than the craving of the "lust of the eyes". "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." Genesis 13:11. As when Eve, "the woman *saw* . . . she *took* . . ." so did Lot. Then "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain. and pitched his tent toward Sodom." 13:12. This was to flirt with fire. Then, later, he "dwelt in Sodom." 14:12. The next step in his downward trend was that he "sat in the gate of Sodom". He went, you see, from shepherd, to city official, to cave-dweller.

It may be said that his sitting in the gate was to his credit, showing him to be a great man willing to bear the responsibility of civil office devoted to judgment (19:9), where city councilmen met to try cases, settle differences and dispense justice (Deuteronomy 21:19, 20). Also, it was creditable that just as Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent at noon, while others were enjoying a siesta, so Lot was sitting in the gate of the city while others were retiring from their day's labors. And though Abraham *ran* to meet the heavenly visitors. while Lot only *rose* to meet them, still he did well to urge

them off the streets, lest they fall prey to the homosexual hoodlums who roved Sodom's streets like wolves.

But it was shame enough, just to be found in Sodom, let alone to be a prominent resident there. He let his light shine, but it was fast fading to a smoking flax. His motive for going to Sodom in the first place was not good, since it sprang out of covetousness. His continuance in such a place was not good, not justifiable. He not only accomplished no good there, but incurred much spiritual hurt to himself and infinitely worse damage to his family.

Sure! Lot was a just man. He had the gift of hospitality, and probably, with a little polishing up, could have been qualified to be an elder in the church. But the Lord's messengers at first refused Lot's offer of lodging. Doesn't it seem likely that if Lot had been living in a tent in the hills, these visitors would have entered his home immediately? His home was pleasant enough inside, but it was in a horrible neighborhood. Things today are becoming so bad everywhere that it is fast becoming impossible to find anywhere a better neighborhood to move to. But Lot's neighbors were vile, hell-deserving people soon to be evicted from city, home, mortal body and from this world. Judgment was lurking in and hanging over every wicked house there, including the house of their just neighbor, Lot.

Poor Lot! He went to live in Sodom, he thought, to enjoy the best the world had to offer. He had no intention to reform the city. But if that had been his purpose, it would have been totally useless, for such an aim has never been attained and never will be. God's intention with respect to the wicked world of the ungodly is revealed in His will for Sodom, and that is, not to improve the world, but to judge it, and to raise up those who will be godly witnesses against it, all the while living for the world to come.

There are Christian movements calculated to "turn the world around" to a formerly much more moral life-style. But the world does not want to be stopped in its tracks or turned around. The world will not stand for it, will not have it, and will not have the Christian, either, who does not compromise himself and his Christian principles. There in the wicked world you observe its lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, banquetings and abominable idolatries, in connection with which they are shocked that you do not join them in the same flood of insalvability, blaspheming, as they do, despite the fact that they are the ones who shall give account to Him who is ready to judge living and dead. I Peter 4:3-5. For this reason, men of the world have nothing but contempt for a compromising or compromised Christian.

How do worldly union men regard a Christian in the labor union? Hardly with respect! Do you ever see a news headline and following article written as though it were some strange thing for labor union officials to be involved with the criminal element? Do the news reports, or any, show shock at reports of a lodge member having been exposed as a murderer, or an embezzler or a polygamist? Yet the news media will hound and attack a Christian, trying to dig up some scandal he may, or may not, have been guilty of twenty years back. Especially the minister, the Christian school teacher, the Sunday School teacher, to name but few, are most apt to suffer the world's "smear" tactic, at one time or another, but if we compromise with the world or compromise ourselves before the world, we can only expect the world's disdain and enmity. Lot undoubtedly thought that he was where it was good for him to be, even where he could do some good. But was there a man in Sodom who did not believe that Lot had no business being there?

You know that it is too dangerous going through this world unarmed with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. So keep that weapon handy at all times, trusting the Lord to teach you to use it spontaneously. Once a group of university professors were asked that if they were exiled on a lonely island, what books would they like to have with them? Some preferred *Huckleberry Finn*, *The White House Cook Book*, *The Arabian Nights* and some even *The Psychology of Insanity*. If such a question were put to all Protestant Reformed young people, the answers could very well include a list of some two hundred different books, yet with every response invariably including the Bible. Do you think so?

But what may we and should we do with respect to "the world of the ungodly" (II Peter 2:5): in the midst of which and over against which we of necessity must live? This: pray for the Lord's people in the world, testify against the world, warn it of judgment to come and call on all men everywhere to repent and turn to the Lord!

Originally published:
Vol. 40 No. 5 May 1981