

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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OUTLOOK FROM THE WALLS OF ZION

"For the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."--Luke 21:26, 27.

THE Savior indeed in response to question as to what Signs would accompany His, return and the end of the Age, among other statements declared that "the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Earnest students of Divine prophecy have had no difficulty in locating the fulfillment of that graphic description, given by Jesus of the closing days of this dispensation and the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom.

For a number of years past we have witnessed most surely the shaking of the ecclesiastical and civil powers of heaven (Christendom) in the rumblings of strife and unrest among the nations of the earth. In the world-war of recent years these disturbances in a sense reached a climax, and while it is said that the war is over, yet the world is far from a state of peace and quietness, which they had anticipated would obtain by now. The turbulent and discontented state continues on everywhere. The world's, condition was sad enough prior to the great conflict, but all know that problems have grown out of the war that have increased the gravity of the situation many fold. The plunging of the nations into the' most bitter conflict. of history, exhausting their best blood and treasure, has upset the equilibrium of the entire world's social fabric. New problems of finance and economics confront the rulers of the earth, and threaten to baffle the skill of the Wisest statesmen. The facts are repeatedly made prominent 'in our daily -papers, bringing conviction that what is witnessed in the affairs of the nations today can be none other than the fulfillment of our Lord's Great Prophecy, as well as that of many other authors of Holy Writ.

We give below a statement which has recently appeared in the public press of America, written by one of their representatives abroad, which to some extent we believe sums up in a conservative manner the situation developed in recent years, especially as it concerns the European nations:

**"DOLLAR AND RUSSIA MASTERS OF EUROPE; BOTH ARE
FEARED"**

AMERICA HATED BY MASSES.
SOVIET RUSSIA MENACES GOVERNMENT HEADS

"London, March 3--Europe today has two masters, the American dollar and the Soviet of Russia. As strange as it may seem, everything in government, finance, politics, industry and business from Petrograd to Rome, from Constantinople to London, is subject to the supreme influence if not the domination or fear of these two powers, the money power of America and the propaganda power of Russia. There is not a statesman in Europe who does not fear both. Every word and every

act of responsible men is tempered according to the possibility of the reaction upon foreign exchange or the possible aggression of the Bolsheviki.

"Still both powers are almost equally hated-America by the masses and Russia by the governing and directing classes. One cannot travel far in Europe today without reaching the same conclusions. There was a time when President Wilson expressed the aspirations of the world, when Europe paid homage to his ideals. That day has passed. There was a time when the Bolsheviki were riddled with vituperation. That day, too, has passed, and it would not be* surprising if the prophecy of an Italian I met in Rome comes true.

"Within a year,' said he, 'Lenine will be welcomed in every capital in Europe.'

"EIGHT REASONS FOR PEACE WITH RUSSIA"

"The apparent inconsistency of the American-Russian stranglehold on Europe may be easily explained. Examine the Russian situation and the Allies' Russian relations and one discovers eight reasons for the Allied desire to make peace with the Soviet. In order of importance they are:

"1. Failure of all other Allied and American policies in Russia; chiefly their inability to meet on any common ground opposing the Bolsheviki.

"2. The public demand in England and also in Italy, where the Chamber of Deputies two months ago voted for Italian recognition of the Russian Soviet, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

"3. The urgent need for food and raw materials by all countries, including the Central Powers.

"4. The decision of the Bolsheviki to cease their international propoganda. This, of course, may be only a temporary decision as an emergency measure.

"5. The change in the Bolsheviki's policies and government. In Switzerland I was informed that scores of Russians, Monarchists and Social Revolutionists, were returning to Russia and were being given employment by the Soviet Government. Nearly all the Red generals of today served tinder the Czar. In Switzerland one of the Czar's former ambassadors has been living in the exile since the 1917 revolution. He is returning to Moscow to enter the Soviet diplomatic service.

"6. The fear of revolutions' in Allied- countries because of the Bolshevist propoganda in England, Italy, France and Central Europe.

"7. The Allied desire to free their own countries from economic dependence upon America, which was rapidly becoming economic bondage.

"8. The possibility of lowering the price of the dollar in foreign legislation. It should be explained, to America's credit, that those who have been following closely the world revolutionary movement from European capitals declare the movement was broken by the United States Government when it adopted its vigorous policy of. breaking the industrial revolutionist program in America. The Bolshevist leaders had counted upon success in the United States to bring victory in. Europe. It is significant that almost immediately after Moscow learned of the failure of the Bolsheviki in the' United States the Soviets decided to cease their international revolutionary propoganda, but Europe generally does not understand

the importance of America's action. Because of this the United States today is generally considered the most reactionary and despotically controlled nation in the world.

"POWER OF THE DOLLAR IN EUROPE"

"Most of us in the United States before we come to Europe do not appreciate the power of the dollar over here. We know that \$1.00 buys 14 French francs or 18 Italian lire when the normal exchange rate is less than 6 francs or lire to the dollar. To Americans in Europe this means we can buy much more in Europe today than formerly, but for the French and Italian merchants and government agents, who must buy food and manufactured articles in the United States and pay in dollars, it means that the food and articles when they reach Europe are almost prohibitive as to price.

"One of the Paris bankers told me of a French house which contracted for \$800,000 worth of rice in New York when the dollar was worth 7 francs. Today he must pay a bill which, instead of amounting to 5,600,000 francs, is 11,200,000 francs. I give this as an illustration because it explains the burden which the French importer bears with American dollars selling at such a high premium, and also because it explains how the high dollar prices affect the French people.

"For this rice the public must pay what it terms a profiteering price. The people criticize, America -because they think it is America *which is* trying to bleed France by boosting the price of the dollar. The people of Europe carried the burdens of short rations during the war, but they think now that there should be an end to the suffering. They make demands upon the Governments which no Government can ignore. Because the Governments of Europe have not been able to do anything to reduce the price of the dollar on the international exchange they are turning to Russia as a possible source of supply, believing that soon they will be able to buy what they need in raw materials and food in a low market instead of a high American market.

ALLIES HOPE IN PEACE WITH RUSSIA

"By making peace with Russia the Allies hope definitely to put an end to the Soviet international revolution movement. They trust that by resuming trade relations with Russia they will weaken America's economic grip upon the Allied countries. But they all expect supplies from Russia by next year to lower the high cost of living in the Allied countries. They hope to feed Central Europe and get to work.

"Everyone in all the countries I visited realizes that only through work can Europe save itself, but they know that work is impossible so long as the high exchange rates of America make it more and more impossible for prices to drop, so long as opposition to the Russian Bolsheviki gives the Soviet cause -for continuing its international revolutionary propaganda. It is obvious to any traveler that the people will not work as long as present conditions exist-as long as they have to work harder and obtain less for their labor, and as long as they are constantly aroused to a state of agitation by propagandists.

"This bold move of the Allies, led by England and Italy, unless it is upset by the United States, is, in its final analysis, an attempt by the people and the

government's of Europe to free themselves from the economic domination of America and the revolutionary propaganda of Russia.

"Will this policy succeed? Time alone can answer."

The situation stated above involving to a more or, less extent the whole of the civilized world was foreseen and pointed on! by earnest students of Scripture many years ago. Nor was it because they were naturally more worthy to know, - or more intelligent than others, but because having taken the Lord and His Word as their guide, in accordance with the Apostle's admonition, have been giving heed to the "more sure word of prophecy as unto. a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn." As these sacred words of prophecy continue to unfold and are manifest in current events of the affairs of the world, the faith of God's people should indeed grow stronger. Such need not despair nor realize failure of heart under present circumstances. To the contrary, amidst all the shaking of the earth (organized society) and of the heavens (the ecclesiastical powers) those who discern in it the outworking of the. Divine Plan of the Ages rejoice in the assurance that this terrible shaking will be the last that the earth will ever, have or need;, for, as the Apostle Paul assures us, it signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken -- the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of light and peace -- may remain.

Bible students have no reason to change their viewpoint, that the hope of the groaning creation and the remedy for its present mental, moral and physical ills lies in the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," which will mean the healing of the nations.-Rev. 22:2.

RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IN RUSSIA

The following clipped from one of New York City's recent Dailies is of interest as showing that even-in benighted Russia there is a feeling that somehow present unusual events and changes must mean the intervention of Divine power, preparatory to a new order of affairs airs in the earth:

"CHURCH GATHERS RUSSIAN ANTI-REDS"

"A great religious movement is taking place all over Russia. The Church is the only organized body in-Russia, apart from those of the Bolsheviks. Therefore all who are dissatisfied with the Bolsheviks unite around the Church. In spite of their obvious desire, the Bolsheviks do not dare to take measures against the clergy and Church, as they are afraid of an outburst of popular indignation, writes V. Anichkov in 'Asia' Magazine.

"All the Church hierarchy-patriarch, -metropolitans, bishops and priests--have remained at their posts. The patriarch's letter reaches the people. Diocesan and parish assemblies sit and act. The diocesan journals are printed on Bolshevik machines since printing presses have been confiscated. The people pay for typewriters. The patriarch has anathematized the Bolsheviks; sermons are preached against them from the altar, In their turn the Bolsheviks try to contend with the religious feeling of the people in newspaper articles and by means of appeals and pamphlets. They have long stopped anti-religious propaganda, they have changed it for anti-Church propaganda, which the people, however, identify with anti-Christ.

The Bolsheviks hope to persuade the people that Christ Himself preached Bolshevism, but this opinion-is rejected and scoffed at. At present widespread ideas of the second advent and millennium are noticeable among the people, which have originated in the recent assemblies of the Holy Council and the patriarch. There is a conviction everywhere that the time of God's wrath has come, that prophecy is being fulfilled, that Lenin is anti-Christ. The Bolsheviks in their appeals, state that they do not believe in anti-Christ fables and exhort the people not to believe them."

THE. REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES XXIX

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

"And Another a Third Angel followed them, saying with a loud Voice, 'If any one worship the Beast and his Image, and receive a Mark on his Forehead, or on his Hand, even he shall drink of That Wine of the Wrath of God, which is Mingled undiluted in the Cup of his Indignation; and he shall be tormented with Fire and Sulphur in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the Smoke of their Torment rises tip for Ages of Ages; and They have no Rest Day and Night, who Worship the Beast and his Image, and if any one receive the Mark of his Name. Here is the Patience of the Saints,--Those who Keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus.'"--Rev. 14:9-12.

THE vision of this third. angel and the message of solemn warning proclaimed by him, undoubtedly represents another phase of the special movement among the Lord's consecrated ones in this present Harvest period. The proclamation that these saints are represented in the vision as giving implies that they have obtained the knowledge that all the various phases of the anti Christian systems, embodied in the term Babylon, have fallen--been rejected and cast off entirely from God's favor, and their destruction is close at hand. All this was clearly seen and proclaimed by Pastor Russell and his associates as far back as December, 1881; and it was foreseen by him at that time that this proclamation would continue to be given-by others throughout the whole Harvest period. His words, while showing that at that time he did-not have the full light concerning all that would be involved in the complete fulfillment of the vision of this third angel's message, are yet very interesting and instructive as confirming the, method of prophetic interpretation, namely, that of the gradual unfolding and under standing of prophetic visions as history unveils them. We quote from this exposition as it relates not only to the message of the third angel, but to that of the preceding second angel, also:

"We were led to see [before 1881] very clearly that the nominal church of the Gospel Age, is the Babylon (confused, mixed condition of worldly-mindedness and lukewarm arm Christianity) described in Rev. 18:2-4.

"This spewing out [Rev. 3:161, or casting off, of the nominal church, as an organization in 1878--we then understood, and still proclaim to be the date of -the commencement of Babylon's fall, as recorded there. And since then we feel

ourselves led of the spirit, through the unfolding of this portion of the Word of Truth, to say in the name of the Lord, to all God's true children in Babylon, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues! (v.4.) This seems to accord wonderfully with the second [angel's] message--'Babylon is fallen.'--Rev. 14:8.

"The third [angels] message (vs. 9-11) concerning. the worshipers of the Beast and his Image-showing the nominal church in the colors in which the Word of God paints I it, pointing out, how all who remain in her either in spirit or name, -in opposition to the Word of God, say ing, 'Come out of her,' will be subject to torment and vexation so long as they are worshiping creeds and doc trines and organizations of men. The remembrance of which distress (smoke of torment) will never be forgotten.

"As with the preceding two, so with this third message -it could not have been more accurately fulfilled than it was. (And here we would remark, that the 'resemblance of the teachings of our company, to the. descriptions now being considered, was only noticed about six months ago.) The meaning of -the symbols of Rev. 13, the Beasts and image, we first published in the January 1880 number of this paper. . . . All three of these messages yet continue, and will doubtless continue to be repeated by others so long as they contain - in truth due to the Lord's children." -*Z Dec. '81. P.- 5.*

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN NEAR FUTURE

The history of the last forty years has confirmed all these utterances to be true. However, the Lord has continued to give increased knowledge on this and other visions, and later on it began to be seen and made known by him that the fulfillment of this -third angel's message would involve more significant matters pertaining to the last testimony of the Lord's consecrated. His latest writings on this matter all show that its complete fulfillment could not take place until the Image of the Beast (Confederated Protestantism) had received its life (authority), -indeed, not until the great predicted federation of Christendom had become an accomplished fact, and this great triple Alliance would feel compelled to act together to hold back the rising tide of insubordination to governmental authority, lawlessness, that even now threatens, and will soon if not restrained be a reality.

The complete fulfillment-of the vision is therefore in the future-the near future, it would seem. It appears to describe the final testimony of the last of the Lord's faithful followers. Keeping in mind the predicted usurpation of Divine power that will be exercised by this last great federation of Christendom, as described in the vision of the. Image of the Beast (Rev. 13:15-18), and as shown in a previous article, will enable us to see that certain seemingly necessary laws will be enacted which would so conflict with God's laws and with the Christian's duties and obligations as to make it impossible for law-abiding, conscientious Christians to obey. In 'other words, to be obedient to the "powers that- be" at that time would require on the part of true loyal Christians a violation of conscience before God. The vision of this third, angel and his message, therefore, would seem to require that a more conspicuous movement than as yet has taken place will -occur, involving a testimony against this last anti-Christian Federation, and a very

conspicuous exhortation to fellow Christians to keep themselves separate and free from this great Federation.

Of all the earlier expositors of this vision, D. N. Lord seems to have had the clearest conception of how it would meet its fulfillment. However, the increased light on God's great Plan has since revealed that his understanding of the nature of the punishment to come upon the individual worshipers of the Beast, Image, etc., was very hazy. He wrote his exposition in 1846, and understood that the vision would have its fulfillment in connection with the final testimony of the Church. In reference to this he says :

"The tremendous punishment threatened to whoever continues to worship those anti-Christian powers and unite in their idolatries, implies that their assumption (of power) are a virtual usurpation of the throne of God, and arrogation of His essential prerogatives, and that whoever accordingly submits to their claims, and renders them the allegiance they exact, exalts them to the station of -the Almighty, and yields them the homage that is due only to, Him, and- must necessarily thence be treated as a deliberate and incorrigible apostate. It indicates, therefore, that at- that period, the principles on -which those arrogations and that worship proceed are to be so fully discussed and developed that all shall be able to discern and appreciate their relations to the rights --of - God- and the obligations of creatures

"This symbol, then, foreshows, that after great Babylon has fallen from her station as a combination of nationalized hierarchies, numerous teachers are to arise, who, publicly and strenuously asserting the exclusive right of God to enjoin the faith and institute the worship of the Church, and pointing out the error and impiousness of the principles on which civil and ecclesiastical rulers proceed, who usurp dominion over His law, and demand supreme homage to their authority, shall denounce His avenging judgments on all who thereafter yield submission to' those anti-Christian powers; and that the wild Beast will obstruct them and endeavor by persecution to compel them to apostatize, and put them to death; but that they will sustain the conflict with a patience and fidelity worthy of prophets and receive for their steadfastness a speedy resurrection and elevation to the station of kings and priests, and participate in the momentous agencies on which the glorified saints are immediately thereafter to enter with Christ at the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

"The great principles on which the pure and apostate Church proceed, are thus immediately before the advent. of the Redeemer,* to be brought into the most open and violent antagonism; the worshipers of God are to give the most public and perfect demonstration of the truth and inflexibleness of their allegiance, by resigning their lives, rather than apostatize; and the anti-Christian powers and their vassals are to give the most resistless proof of their deliberate and incorrigible apostasy by continuing their rebellion amidst threatenings of avenging judgments."--D. N. *Lord*.

*He, living in that early time, could not be expected to have understood that the Second Advent would be invisible to mortal eyes.

DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN TO THE POWERS THAT BE, AS SEEN BY PASTOR RUSSELL

It is only by discovering what the Scriptural requirements and obligations of the Christian are to the "powers that be," that will enable him to understand what, and what alone, could possibly be involved in this exercise of authority on the part of this great Federation, that could cause Christians to be brought into such trying conditions. It is quite certain, that nothing of this nature has yet, in this Harvest period, occurred. It becomes therefore a matter of the utmost importance that the true followers of Christ, should know, understand, what are their duties and obligations to worldly governments, good or evil. Speaking of the Christian's attitude and duty to, the world powers under conditions and circumstances of this character, Pastor Russell's words, as expressed in various places in his writings, sum up very clearly the Scripture teaching in this respect. We quote a few of his utterances in this connection:

"The Prophets declare that because of the increase of knowledge a still more general and wide-spread dissatisfaction will finally express itself in a world-wide revolution, in the overthrow of all law and order; . . . but that in the midst of this confusion the God of heaven will set up His Kingdom, which will satisfy the desires of all nations. . . .

"Knowing this to be the purpose of God., neither Jesus nor the Apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. On the contrary, they taught the Church to submit, to these powers, even though, they often suffered under their abuse of power. They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, even if they were not personally worthy of esteem; to pay their appointed taxes, and, except where they conflicted with God's laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29), to offer no resistance to any established law. (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21.) The Lord Jesus and the Apostles and -the early Church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in, the governments of this world."--*Studies*, Vol. 1, p. 266.

"Christians should recognize the true character of these kingdoms, and, while they keep separate from them, should render to them due respect and obedience, because God has permitted them to rule. As Paul teaches, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God.'--Rom. 13:1."--*Studies*, Vol. II, P. 81,

"The true Christian . . . is not to expect his rights in the present time, nor to strive for them; but that, on the contrary, he sacrifices them to the will of God-to the doing of the Lord's will so far as he may have opportunity, and to the having of the Lord's will done-in him, according to the Lord's wisdom and providence. If oppressed, and -dealt with unjustly,. he will look to the Lord for deliverance, and

whatever way it shall come will accept it as of Divine arrangement; and whatever God does not provide in the way of deliverance along reasonable and just lines, he will accept as the rulings of His providence, and render to the Lord thanks for His watch-care, and seek to learn the lessons of patience and experience and longsuffering, which these trials may inculcate; recognizing in such a case that these trials, from whomsoever they come, are permitted of the Lord, if not ordered by Him, and intended for his welfare and spiritual benefit."--Z '00-335.

"It is our business to render obedience to the laws, customs, usages, of this world, in so far as these do not infringe upon our conscientious obligations to the Lord, and the Truth. . . . The commands of the judge or court are to be obeyed-, whatever others might be disposed to do, Christians are never to be found in contempt of court, but are to obey its rules to the very letter, whether they consider 'them just or unjust, because the judge is the representative of the law, and God permits the law and the judge., and commands us to be subject to whatever He, permits. If, therefore, as our Lord explained, some one shall sue thee at the law, and take away our coat, or if it include our cloak also, all that we had, we are not to resist; we are to be obedient to the powers that be. This does not mean, however, that we shall willingly submit to the coat or cloak or other articles being taken front us illegally. or unjustly without process of law."--Z '03-120.

"The Apostle [Paul] declared that he was a debtor both to the Jews and the Greeks; and looking at matters from a similar standpoint, we may say likewise, that we are under many obligations to many people. . . . We owe a debt to the community and commonwealth in which we live-for the measure of peace, order, social convenience and advantages every way, which we, in common with others, share; we owe a debt to our nation at large in consideration of the many blessings, liberties, advantages, etc., which come. to us through it by Divine providence." -Z 02-187.

HERE IS THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS

From these clear Scriptural unfoldings of our duty and relation to the powers that be, it will be seen that this great predicted federation of Civil and Ecclesiastical power, Will in some way be moved to exercise such an arbitrary authority as to bring the enlightened Christian into a position in which the choice of obedience to God or man will be the supreme test. In the light of the fore going this could be nothing less than a compulsory enactment to I either I unite with, or give support to, this great Federation's usurpation of God's place in the conscience of the Christian. This is, doubtless what is meant in the words of the Revelator, "Here is the Patience (patient endurance) of, the Saints, Those who keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus." (v. 12.) It will be remembered that a similar statement to this was made in connection with the first Beast's usurpation of Divine power, causing the terrible persecutions of the Dark Ages. (See Rev. 13:10.) The teaching evidently is that the great trials of true Christians at-that time and those who live in the last time, will require patient endurance of wrong under most trying and difficult circumstances. One, writer has said, "Here the patience of the saints is sustained in a reign of terror such as never yet has been." Mr. Barnes, in commenting on this verse (Rev. 13:10) as it related to the Dark Ages, has said:

"Nowhere on earth have the patience and the faith of the saints been put to a severer test than under the Roman (Papal) persecutions. The same idea occurs in chapter 14:12."

We give his comment on this latter verse respecting those who exercise this patience in these persecutions and trials.

"They will show that they belong to those who keep the commandments of God, and are His true children. Or, perhaps the meaning may be, -here is a disclosure respecting the final destiny of these persecutors, which is adapted to comfort and sustain the saints in the trials which they will endure; an encouragement to constancy in obeying the commands of God, and evincing the meek faith of the Gospel."

It will be noted that Papacy is still, at the time of this fulfillment, denominated the Beast, because it still (although having lost temporal civil power) possesses all the beastly characteristics. It -is so recognized, because it continues to claim temporal as well as ecclesiastical authority over the hearts and consciences of men; and furthermore, it is still recognized by millions all over the world as having this authority, and these bow, even at the present time, in submission to its decrees, in both temporal and ecclesiastical matters. It needs to be kept in mind that "Papacy is served by an extensive sacerdotal organization, embracing about a thousand bishops and half a million of) priests. This organization controls the convictions and actions of two hundred millions of persons, be longing to more than thirty nations." (H. G. Guinness in 1887.) Its adherents, both of clergy and laity, has increased to much larger proportions 'since these words were written.

THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT

Concerning the punishments described in the vision to be meted out to the Beast and Image of the Beast worshipers, the older commentators are inclined to interpret these symbols- to mean eternal torment. Mr. Barnes, commenting on the expression, "The smoke of their torment shall rise up forever and ever," has said:

"This does. not indeed affirm. that their individual sufferings would be eternal, since it is only a declaration that the 'smoke of their torment ascends;' but it is such language as would be used on the supposition that they would suffer forever, and as can be explained only on that supposition."

Thank God, however, that the true knowledge of God's Plan enables us to see clearly the symbolical signification of these and the contextual words. Pastor Russell's comment on this verse and also Rev. 19:3, where the same expression is used, and others referring to the same time .and same occurrences is perfectly reasonable and harmonious with the Scripture teaching on this much misunderstood subject.

"Of Rev. 14:9-11 we remark, incidentally, that all will at once concede that if a literal worshiping of a beast and image were meant in verse 9, then few, if any, in civilized lands are liable to the penalty of verse 11; and if the beast and his image and worship and wine and cup are symbols, so also are the torments and smoke and fire and brimstone.

"Rev. 19:3, speaking of one of these systems, says: 'Her smoke rose up forever and ever.' That is to say, the remembrance ('smoke') of the destruction of these

systems of deception and error will be lasting, the lesson will never be forgotten--as smoke, which continues to ascend after a destructive fire, is testimony that the fire has done its work."--See also Isa. 34:8-10."--Z '10-42, 43.

We conclude our consideration of this vision of the third angel and his message with the inquiry, What is meant by the expression (v. 10), "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb",? The meaning evidently is, that the judgments that will destroy the anti-Christian systems will be in the days of the Presence of the Son of Man, and will be witnessed by all the holy messengers of the Harvest period, some on the other side of the veil, and others, the much smaller number, on this.

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD"

"And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying, 'Write, from this time blessed are Those Dead, who Die in the Lord; Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labors; for their Works follow after them.'--Rev. 14:13.

It is interesting and instructive, as confirming the principle of prophetic interpretation, namely, that history unveils prophecy, to note how the earlier commentators labored to overcome the difficulties connected with the interpretation and application of this "Voice, from Heaven.", They all, of course, understood that a great blessing would come to all those who died in the Lord, but were unable to see what special blessing would be for those who died in the Lord, at -the time of the vision's fulfillment. We believe it will be-very helpful to confirm the truth of progressive interpretation, as also the correctness of Pastor Russell's interpretation of this Scripture, to quote extensively from these, unquestionably consecrated men of God. Mr. Barnes, who wrote in 1856, thus comments on the words, "from henceforth":

"This word has given no little perplexity to expositors, and it has been variously rendered. Some have connected it with the word blessed--'blessed henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord'; that is, they will be ever-onward blessed; some with the word *die*, referring to the time when the Apostle was writing-'blessed are they who *after this time* die in the Lord,' designing to comfort those who were exposed to death, and who would die as martyrs: some as referring to the times contemplated in these visions--'blessed will they be who die in those future times.' Witsius understands this as meaning that. from the time of their death they would be blessed, as if it had been said, *immediately*, after their dissolution they would be blessed. Doddridge renders it, 'henceforth blessed are the dead! The language is evidently not to be construed as implying that they who *had* died in the, faith before were not happy, but that in the times of trial and persecution that were to come, they were to be regarded as peculiarly blessed who should escape from these sorrows by a Christian death."

Mr. Barnes, in summing up his understanding of the text, fails* as we should expect, writing at that early time, before the *parousia*, to solve the difficulty. We quote his conclusions:

"The *design*, therefore, of the verse is to impart consolation and support to those who would be exposed to a martyr's death, and to those who, in times of persecution, would see their friends exposed to such a death."

APPROACH OF GRAND EPOCH OF BLESSEDNESS

Mr. Elliott has thus explained the verse, or we might -say attempted to explain it. His words are:

"After this a voice from heaven was heard by St. John to follow, saying, 'Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, etc.' In which voice the words *from henceforth blessed*, or as they may be rendered, *from time near at hand*, referred to, I conceive, and indicated the near approach of the grand epoch of blessedness predicated in Scripture of departed- saints: I mean the blessedness of their reward and joy at Christ's coming. . . . Where then the distinction of the vision? [Mr. Elliott means here, the distinction between those who died formerly and those at this time] For, though doubtless another notice, just previously given, did intimate that it is to be eminently an era of trial both to the faith and the patience of Christ's true saints: and one to show very notably whether they will keep, as their one, rule of action, 'the commands of God, and of doctrine, the -faith of Jesus,' yet many such times of trial' had been before-I cannot but add that the intimation seems to imply a settlement of the great premillennial question. For how could the saint's blessedness and reward be viewed as imminent, if a Millennium of the spiritual evangelization of the world were expected to precede it?"--Horae Apocalypticæ.

D. N. Lord in his comment on these words, although brief, seems to us to approach nearer to the true interpretation. We quote these words:

"To die in the Lord, is to die for His sake as a witness to the truth. . . . That their works are to follow with them, denotes, doubtless, that they are immediately to be raised from the dead, and as kings and priests in Christ's Kingdom on earth, to resume their work towards the nations and exert an important instrumentality in converting them to the homage of God."

Another commentator, whose expositions of the Revelation otherwise we cannot commend, being Futuristic, comes, we believe, even closer to the true interpretation. This commentator wrote later than those already quoted. His words are:

"Faith too is sustained in another way, namely, by the consolation as to those who die as martyrs at this time: 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from *henceforth*.' That is clearly encouragement under peculiar circumstances. All who die in -the Lord must be blessed at any time; but that only makes it plainer that the circumstances must be exceptional now which require such comfort to be so expressly provided for them. Something must have produced a question as to the blessedness of those at die at this time; and in this we have an incidental confirmation-stronger because incidental--that the resurrection ion of the saints has already taken place. Were they it waiting to be raised, the blessedness of those who as martyrs join their, company could scarcely be in doubt. The resurrection having taken-place, and the hope of believers being now to enter alive* into the Kingdom of the Son of Man at His appearing as the Lord says at that time, 'He that endureth unto the end shall be saved (Matt. 24:13), the question, necessarily raised, What shall be the portion, of these martyrs, then, must not remain a question; and in the tenderness of Divine love the answer is explicitly given. Specialty blessed are those who die from

henceforth: they rest from their labors; they go to their reward. The spirit seals this with a sweet 'confirming 'yea'-so it is. Earth has only 'cast-, them out that heaven may receive them; they have suffered, therefore they shall reign with Christ. Thus accordingly we find in the twentieth chapter, that when the thrones are set and filled, those -that have suffered under the Beast [and we would add, the Image of the Beast also] are shown as rising from the dead to reign with the rest of those who reign with Him. Not the martyrs in general, but those of this special time are marked distinctly as finding acknowledgment and blessing in that 'first resurrection,'. from which it might have seemed that they were shut out altogether.

*In this we believe he is evidently in error.

"It may help some to' see how similar was the difficulty that had to be met for the Thessalonian saints, and which the Apostle meets also with a special 'word of the Lord,' in his first epistle. They too were looking for the Lord, so that the language of their hearts was (with that of the Apostle) 'We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.' They had been 'turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven'; and with a lively expectant faith they waited.

"But then what about those who were fallen asleep? It is evident that here is their difficulty. He would not have them ignorant concerning those who were asleep, so as to be sorrowing for them, hopeless as to their share in the blessing of that day. Nay, those who remained would not go before these sleeping ones; they would rise first, and those who were alive would then be 'caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.' This for Christians now [i.e., before the resurrection occurs] is thus the authoritative word of comfort For them the old difficulty appears once more [severe tests of faith through persecution at the hands of the Image of the Beast] and must be met with a new revelation (contained in the words 'Blessed are those dead who die in the Lord from this time'). How perfect and congruous in all-its parts is the precious Word 'of God! And how plainly we have in what might seem even an obscure or strange expression 'blessed from henceforth,' a confirmation of the general interpretation of all this part of Revelation."-F. W. Grant.

PASTOR RUSSELL PROCLAIMED FULFILLMENT OF THIS VISION

All of these expositors, except the, last, wrote some years before 1878. The last one wrote, so far as we have been able to learn, in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The first one who clearly unfolded this Scripture and proclaimed it in the "heaven" of the vision, was Pastor Russell. He, and those who were associated with him in his work, are doubtless represented by the "Voice" of the vision. In this statement we have another convincing confirmation of the fact that the interpretation we have given of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, met the. beginning of its fulfillment in 1878. The statement is such a peculiar one, and to all expositors up to that time, so obscure, so difficult to explain, so seemingly conflicting in, its meaning to all other Scriptures on the subject of death, that a discovery of the date when this message Was first made clear, and began to be

proclaimed will in itself be sufficient to establish the correctness of .all our interpretations thus far for Rev. 14 as being correct, and in perfect harmony with Pastor Russell. It is a matter. of proving the fulfillment of prophecy by the unfoldings of history," -- And now I have told you before it come to Pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." It is a matter of Divine providence that we are enabled to do this by having in our possession the, expository records of those -eventful, early days of the *Parousia*. We quote Pastor Russell's words written in those days-December, 1881:

"Uniformly throughout the Bible, except this one instance, death is represented as a dreadful disaster, a terrible enemy, a devouring monster, and the grave as a great prison, permitted of our loving Heavenly Father, only because. men had become sinners and must be destroyed. . .

"In- view of the general expression of enmity to death, in the Scriptures the above solitary text speaking of it as a blessing, is rather peculiar until we notice that the application is limited by the word 'henceforth' ["this" time," Diaglott]. Not always, but *henceforth* death may be a blessing. But notice another limitation; it will not henceforth be a blessing to all mankind, but only to those in the Lord-members in particular of the Body of Christ, the Little Flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom-to all others death will continue to be an enemy until its final destruction in the Millennial reign.-- Hosea 13:14.

"Again, it is unusual to speak of those already dead as dying; but the spirit uses this seemingly incongruous expression, evidently desiring to limit the application of the death blessing to a certain class, 'Blessed are the dead (dead to the world-crucified with Christ--'ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.) who die in the Lord from. henceforth.'

"THEIR WORKS FOLLOW AFTER THEM"

"Now, we are full of interest to know when, from what time forward, will it be blessed for the special class mentioned, to die.. These words were written for our edification and we should 'be able to know when they apply; especially -if we are in the Lord and *dead* to the world; for it is a part of our Master's promise that the spirit should guide us into an understanding of the Truth and show us things to come. (John 16:13.) If as we believe the last members, of the-Body of Christ are now living, 'the feet of Him'--it is time that we understood this passage, which clearly refers to the feet. . . . But we inquire, In what respect will death be a blessing to us now, that it his not always been to other members of the Body? We answer, The difference is that we shall not sleep, but we will be instantly invested with our heavenly, spiritual bodies, being changed -in a moment, dropping all that is human and earthly, and being clothed upon with our heavenly condition. In the case of Jesus, there were nearly three days of- sleep-the unclothed condition between the times when the earthly body was resigned and the heavenly body was received-Paul and others have been nearly two thousand years waiting 'unclothed' or 'asleep in Jesus,' and this is one of the principal reasons ,why death was undesirable even to Christians: We do not wish to be unclothed, even for a moment, but we do desire to be clothed upon or, have the change an instantaneous one.--1 Cor. 15:52.

"Herein consists the blessing to those of the Body now taken. Death of the human will be instantaneous with the perfecting of the Divine nature, hence it will be a blessed change.' 'Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.'"--*Z Dec.* '81, pp. 4, 5.

Let it be noted especially that the above words were written in December, 1881. We now quote a later utterance on this passage of Scripture which fixes the time that this knowledge was imparted to have been 1878. We quote:

"Nowhere in the Scriptures is death represented -as in any sense a-blessing, except in this one instance; and here it is particularly limited and made applicable 'to a certain specific time -- 'from henceforth.' And even then notice, it is blessed only to a special class--'the dead who die.' This expression must not be considered a blunder, but as a very pointed and forcible description of the small class to whom death will be a blessing. This class constitutes 'the feet of Him.' And, as already shown, each in I ember -of the Body of Christ must finish-his sacrifice in actual death,

"These alone are the dead who die. They are reckoned Of God as being already dead, and they are exhorted so also to reckon themselves: 'Reckon ye yourselves 'dead indeed unto sin.' No other dead men can be said to die but this class of dead ones, who must finish their course of sacrifice in actual death.

"Thus will God help Zion in the dawning of her morning -in the morning of the eternal day of Christ's triumph. Thus He is already helping her. One by one, imperceptibly to the world, the saints are now being changed, and are joining the company of the Church triumphant; and those who remain to the last' proclaim the everlasting Gospel until the door is shut and all opportunity to labor is at an end. Then they will 'stand' in faith and patience and await their change, accepting -deliverance joyfully through whatsoever agency God may be pleased to permit its accomplishment.

"Thus they will be saved from that great hurricane of trouble which will follow their departure, as well as preserved in the forepart of the battle in which a thousand will fall into infidelity, and be overcome by the various pestilences of error, to one who will stand.-Psa.. 91:7."--*Studies Vol. III. pp. 240, 241.*

"CHANGED IN A MOMENT"

We are now in the time described in these closing words. In, a footnote to this exposition we learn when this "Voice from Heaven" began to be first heard:

"When, in a succeeding volume,* we examine the wonderful visions of the Revelator, it will be clearly seen that the time here pointed out by the word, 'henceforth,' as marked by events, synchronizes closely with 1878, as indicated by the prophecies herein noted."--*Studies, Vol. III, p. 241.*

*Though Pastor Russell had expected to write and publish a volume dealing with Revelation alone, yet under the Lord's providence death came to him before he was permitted to realize his expectations in this regard; he did not write this book, nor did he leave any unpublished manuscript bearing upon the Revelation.

The prophecies referred to here by Pastor Russell are those of the three "angels" and their messages recorded in chapter 14, which we have been considering in this and the two preceding articles of this series. And as we have seen, it was Pastor Russell's interpretation (and we believe it was well founded) that the vision of the Lamb and the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion, the voice of the Harpers, the singing of the Song by the 144,000, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, the announcement of the judgment Day, and the proclamation of Babylon's fall, were all due to have their fulfillment, and have been in process of fulfillment simultaneously, during the Harvest time of this Gospel Age. Thus as these various events of transcendent importance were fulfilling, the "Voice from Heaven" was heard to say, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth," that is, from the time of the events just mentioned, blessed indeed are the dead who die in the Lord. There can be but one meaning to this announcement, and that is, that it marks not only the time of the resurrection of the sleeping saints of the past Gospel Age, but also indicates that from that time forward those who finish their course in death will experience their change immediately by the power of the First Resurrection; the reason for this being that the presence of the Great King Himself is due. The events pained above-the Lamb upon Mount Zion, the Harpers, the Singers, the announcement of the everlasting Gospel, etc., are events -that follow immediately the Second Coming of Christ, whose presence is invisible, and for a time, of such secrecy as to be known only to the Church. Then contemporaneous with the advent of the Savior, and the fulfilling of these events, the resurrection of the sleeping saints is due, as the Apostle announces--"The dead in Christ shall rise first: *Then* we which are alive and remain shall [as we die] be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." It is, therefore, these who are "alive and remain" unto the presence of the Lord that come under the benediction of this announcement: "Blessed are the dead who die!" Blessed are these who from the date 1878 (that marks the Second Presence of Christ, as King) finish their course and die in the Lord. Why blessed? Because they will not need to wait and remain asleep in death; but as they finish- their sacrifice they are "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and join the heavenly throng that has gone before. Pastor Russell wrote further on this point:

"Accordingly, when the setting up of the Kingdom was due, their awakening from the sleep of death was due. Why should their waiting and sleep continue after the Lord is present and the time for His Kingdom has come? There can be no reason for it; and we believe, therefore, that they 'sleep' no longer, but are now risen, and with and like their Lord. And if their continuance in the sleep of death is no longer necessary, neither is it necessary that any of the saints who now die in this time of the Presence of the Lord and the setting up of His Kingdom should 'sleep' or wait in death for a resurrection at some future time. No, thank God! the

Life-giver is present; and, since 1878, when He took His great power and began the exercise of His authority, none of His members need to sleep. Hence, with all of 'the feet' who die since that date, the moment of death is the moment of change. They die as men and like men, but in the same instant they are made like their Lord, glorious spirit beings. They are caught away from earthly conditions, to be forever with the Lord -'in the air'--in Kingdom power and glory."--Studies, es, Vol. III, pp. 239, 240.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

SEVEN MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

STUDY VI--APRIL 11

(26) What was the message addressed to the Church at Ephesus, and what were the advantages of this Church? Name some of the characteristics of the Church of this period that merited the words of commendation. Rev. 2:2-7; Z.'16, p. 346.

(27) What facts concerning the Church at Ephesus justify the Master's reproof? Rev. 2:4, 5; Z.'16, p. 340.

(28) What is the force of the statement, "Thou hast left thy first love"? and what is the significance of the further words of warning? H.'19, p. 23.

(29) What are the deeds of the Nicolaitanes? Z.'16, p. 346; H.'19, p. 22.

(30) What is embodied in the promise to the overcomers of the Church at Ephesus? Z.'16, p. 346.

STUDY VII--APRIL 18

SEVEN MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES (Cont.)

(31) What was the message addressed to the Church at Smyrna? What are the facts of history concerning this period? How do the various features- mentioned by Christ as describing this Church apply to this second period of the Church's history? Rev. 2:8-11; Z.'16, p. 346.

(32) What is the import of the promise, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"?

(33) What was the message addressed to the Church at Pergamos? and how does it fit the circumstances as recorded in history covering the third period of the Church? Rev. 2:12-17; Z.'16, p. 346.

(34) What is the meaning of the expression, "Where Satan's seat is"? What is the import of the reference to "Antipas, my faithful martyr"? Z.'16, p. 347.

(35) What is meant by those in the Church at Pergamos holding the "doctrine of Balaam"? What of those holding the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"? and have these evils been continued in the other stages of the Church since that time? Z'16, pp. 346, 347; H.'19, p. 22.

STUDY VIII--APRIL 25

SEVEN MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES (Cont.)

(36) What is the import of the promise to the overcomers of this period--the "hidden manna," and the „white stone"? t. 122, 123; Z.'12, p. 315.

(37) What was the message addressed to the Church at Thyatira? and how does it harmonize with the facts and circumstances recorded in history concerning the fourth period of the Church? Z.'16, p. 347.

(38) What is the significance of the reference to the "woman Jezebel" in connection with this stage of the Church? Name some of the characteristics of the woman Jezebel, and how do they apply to the Church of Thyatira? What is the import, of the statement, "I will kill her children with death"? Z.'15, pp. 252, 253; '16, p. 347; B. 256.

39) What is the import of the remark, "As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon *you* none other burden"?

(40) What is implied in the promise to the overcomers of this period--"to him will I give power over the nations, etc."; "And I will give him the morning star"? A. 256; D. 624.

FEAR NOT, LITTLE FLOCK

Though the Church of Christ is a little flock, it is of priceless value. It has been purchased with blood. It is the flock of God, however divided and distracted; and though scattered in the dark and cloudy day, yet it will be gathered together at last by "our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the sheep."

But even now it is under His care, His supervision, His control, and/no grievous wolves can devour those who listen to God and to the word of His grace. -No one can pluck even the feeblest lamb in all that flock from the hands of the 'Heavenly Father. The Great Shepherd cares for His little ones; and as there are flowers that bloom in desert wastes and in lonely valleys, which are seen by no human eye and watered by no human hand, but are as fair and as fragrant as those which share the most costly culture, so the Good Shepherd feeds His own flock in the wilderness, in green pastures, and by the side of still waters, restores and guides, and comforts, and protects them, even to the end.

"He shall feed His. flock like a shepherd," and while he feeds them, how blessed to know -that "He that keepeth Israel shall never slumber nor sleep."

"The Lord is our shepherd, our guardian and guide;
Whatever we need, He will kindly provide;
To the sheep of His pasture His mercies abound,
His care and protection His flock will surround."

-Christian.

THE VICTORY OF GIDEON'S BAND

--APRIL 18--JUDGES 7:1-8, 16-21--

Golden Text--"There is no restraint, to Jehovah to save by many or by few."--1 Sam. 14:6.

GIDEON was one of the judges of Israel raised up by the Lord. He delivered his people from the Midianites who had invaded Palestine and taken possession of its most fertile part, pillaging the country of its produce. Under God's special covenant with Israel we know that He would have protected them from these invaders had they remained faithful to Him. We are not surprised, therefore, that the narrative shows that the Israelites at this time had succumbed to the idolatrous influences of the Canaanites who still dwelt in the land. Gideon's father was one of the chief men of his tribe and district, and upon his plantation he had erected a statue to Baal in the midst of a consecrated grove, on a hilltop. Notwithstanding this established idolatry in the home, Gideon appears to have had considerable knowledge of the true -God and of the deliverances effected by- Him for His people in the past, and when conversing with his angel visitor he shows not only his knowledge of the Lord's dealings in the past, but his surprise that the Lord had ceased to care for His people. It did- not even seem to occur to him that the Lord's disfavor, as manifested in the successes of the Midianites against Israel, was on account of Israel's disloyalty to the Lord in idolatry, etc. It is probable that this same sentiment pervaded the nation in general and that, in some sense of the word, they respected Jehovah at the same time they worshiped Baal also.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL SICKNESS

God's favors to spiritual Israel and His protection are along spiritual lines against spiritual enemies and spiritual difficulties; and yet how few spiritual Israelites when they get into spiritual difficulties realize that it 'must, in some sense of the word, be traceable to the Lord's providences. How few of them properly look to see to what extent their spiritual adversities, weaknesses, coldness, alienation from the Lord, etc., are due to the permission of some kind of idolatry in their hearts! *Not an idolatry, probably, that entirely ignores the Lord; but one which, while thinking favorably of His spiritual blessings and victories of the past, simply wonders at His disfavor of the present, and fails to recognize that it is impossible to serve at the same time both God and Mammon; that God's favor and close communion and protection can not be expected while we permit in our hearts a rival reverence for wealth or fame or human institutions and creeds, or self or family to any degree or extent.*

Evidently the Lord saw that the Israelites were at this time ripe for a change-that under the adversities inflicted through their enemies they were humbled to such an extent that they would be ready to see where was their fault, and to turn from idolatry again to the Lord. But the Lord wished an agent for His service, and instead of using a supernatural one-an angel-He chose, as usual, to use a man. And He chose, as usual, to use a suitable man, fit for the purpose. Gideon seems to have been a man of middle age, for he had a son at this time of probably fifteen years of age; he was well born, as is implied by the record that he was fine of form and feature.

True, the adage is, "Handsome is that handsome does." It is true, too, that some who are handsome fail to measure up to their appearance in the conduct of life;

nevertheless, it is beyond question that to those who can-read character, the face and form, unless marred by accident, indicate the character and the training. The noble, the brave, the generous, the wise) by nature, by birth, show these qualities. in feature and form; nevertheless God does not always use as His servants the naturally noblest and finest of the human family. Too frequently with such nobility goes a spirit of pride and self-conceit, which renders the individual unsuited to the Lord's purposes of the present time, when humility and obedience to the Lord are the prime essentials. The Apostle noted this, saying that not many wise, not many noble, not many learned hath God chosen, but the weak things and the ignoble things, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 1:26.) How gracious is this arrangement which opens the way to the highest Divine favor for the humblest -who hears the voice of the Lord and responds with humility and zeal! Let the ignoble, then, who have tasted of the Lord's grace, be encouraged to trust that, even though ignoble by nature, the grace of the Lord is able to work in them such a transformation of character that they may in heart, at least, become copies of God's dear Son, and thus be prepared for the finishing touches of our promised "change" in the First Resurrection.

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

It was to Gideon, a stalwart young Israelite, that the angel of the Lord was sent with a message and with a work. His salutation was, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon replied with excellent logic, "Why, if the Lord be with us, hath all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles of which our fathers told us?"

The Midianites and others of the nomadic peoples, from the East, discerning that the land of Canaan was very fertile, repeatedly invaded it, confiscating -much of the product of the land, so that on this very occasion Gideon was threshing out a few sheaves of wheat; fearing to have a customary threshing lest the Midianites should rob them of all their possessions and increase their levy.

The angel was not there to discuss theology, but to inspire Gideon and to make of him a messenger of the Lord in the deliverance of His people. The humility of the man shines out in his protest that his family was one of the poorer of the tribe of Manasseh, and that he himself was inferior to his, brethren-of his own father's house. Surely a mistake had been made in the selection, and a more capable person should be found! But to this the angel of the Lord replied, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

When we remember the Lord's promise to Israel that He would defend them and protect their interests-when we remember that their interests were earthly interests, then we should remember also that this protection was dependent upon Israel's maintenance of heart-loyalty and faithfulness to God. In the same covenant the Lord assured the people in advance that if they would wander away into idolatry He would. bring upon them various adversities that their enemies should reap their harvests, etc. Thus we may know the answer to Gideon's question of why the Lord allowed the distress in which they were. It was not that God was unfaithful to His covenant, but that the Israelites had been unfaithful.

A proof of this unfaithfulness is found in our lesson and its context. Gideon's father had the charge or was caretaker of the groves of Baal and Ashtaroth. Their

images were near his home-' apparently on his property. These groves were large posts, significant of honor, erected near the idol; and these were maintained by the people of Gideon's own time, his own father being one of the principal of them. Here was the secret of Israel's helplessness and subjection to the Midianites.

Although Gideon apparently did not surely know who was his visitor, nevertheless something in the conversation persuaded him that he had an honorable guest. He prepared him a feast, and brought it to him. Instead of eating it the angel directed that the soup, be poured out on a rock round about the food, and then touched the cakes and the lamb with his staff. A miracle followed which demonstrated that the visitor was the angel of the Lord -- fire proceeded from the rock and entirely consumed the food, which thus was accepted as a sacrifice. Immediately the angel vanished from Gideon's sight; for he had accomplished the purpose of his mission.

Here we have another illustration of the fact that we are surrounded by spirit beings, invisible to our natural eyes, and the fact also that in God's providence in olden times He communicated to mankind through these angels, of whom we read, -"The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." And again, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" Doubtless the angels of the Lord are as present with His people as ever-indeed more so during this Gospel Age since Pentecost than, ever before, because now God's people are the Spirit-begotten ones specially precious in their Father's sight.-Psalm 34:7; Heb. 1:14.

"Their angels do always have access to the Father," was the comment of the Lord, Jesus respecting His followers. It is a part of their business to look after the interests of the consecrated members of the Body of Christ and to, deliver them from everything that would not be for their advantage, in harmony with the assurance that "all things shall work together for good to those who love God." But it is the interest, the good, of the New Creature that is being considered and not the interests of the flesh. These messengers, no less powerful, are invisible throughout the Gospel Age because the Lord would have the members of the House of Sons walk by faith and not by sight. 2 Cor. 5:7.

GIDEON'S GREAT COURAGE MANIFESTED

The same night following the visit of the angel, the Lord made a further revelation to Gideon, instructing him to destroy the idols upon the property and to overthrow the altar of Baal and to build instead an altar to Jehovah, to kill one of his father's bullocks and therewith to make burnt offerings unto the Lord, using for the purpose the wooden pole, or "grove," which formerly did honor to Baal. The work was accomplished in the night because his father, his brethren and the men of the village would have stoutly resisted the work, had they known of it. Gideon, therefore, was very courageous when once he knew that he had been called of the Lord to do the work.

Indeed, we may say that conviction that our work is of Divine authority is a power of itself in the heart of any man or woman. This is part of the lack of today--lack of faith in God, and failure to recognize a mission that is of God. Much of the preaching, praying and good endeavors is, therefore, formalistic, "having a form

of godliness without its power.". From such we turn away, as St. Paul directed. We are seeking to be God's servants and we want surely to know the Divine Word. Armed with it, "one may chase a thousand." A young Hebrew pursuing his course in Harvard University said, "I have a talent for music and am pursuing it; but, oh, I feel as though I want to find some great object worthy of my life and to give my life for that object!" Undoubtedly there is such a sentiment in many of the young, especially between the years of twelve to twenty. Happy are the youth who, in God's providences, come under wise, helpful instruction, that they might realize that the grandest use of life possible is to render it to God in His service and in the service of 'humanity! Gideon was one of this type, as is manifest all through the story. He had the courage and the faith, and merely needed, to have the knowledge of God and to be commissioned to go forth in His name to do His will.

When the villagers found what had happened and traced it to Gideon they called upon his father to deliver him up to death, but the latter wisely responded as to whether or not a god of mighty power would need to be defended. If Baal could not defend himself he could not defend Israel. The argument was potent. The people were prepared to look for a better God as their deliverer.

Thus the Lord protected the one whom he had chosen for his servant, and brought him more markedly than ever before the attention of the people, so that when he sent out invitations for volunteers from various quarters, an army of thirty-odd thousand assembled to his standard. But the Lord said to Gideon that there were too many, and that all were not of the kind desired. From the human standpoint the thirty-two thousand of Israel had no show of conquering the hundred and thirty-five thousand of their enemies (judges 8:10) ; but from the standpoint of faith in God, who called them to this service, victory was certain, though none could foresee in what way it should be brought about.

The Lord had in mind a glorious victory, but it was to be achieved by His might and power alone. The honor due to the human instruments who were privileged to share in it was not to be in their skill and strength in battle, but in their faith in God and in their zeal in obeying His orders, as an evidence of the strength of their confidence in God.

Then the Lord commanded Gideon to prove them. Gideon's army had a chance to see the hosts of the enemy; they had a chance to consider that their enemies were used to warfare while they as a people had for now a long time been accustomed to the peaceable pursuits of agriculture. Accordingly, the first test of faith applied was permission for all the fearful to return home. This reduced the army to ten thousand; yet many if not all of these who first volunteered, but were now rejected, probably had an opportunity a little later 'on of joining in the battle after the Midianites had been discomfited and were in full retreat. But the ten thousand 'courageous, men, fearless in the presence of an enemy many times their own strength, must have been men of faith in the Lord, men who, in some respects at least, resembled Gideon in their hearts, in their courage, in their trust in Jehovah; nevertheless there were still too many for the Lord's purpose. The next test was a test of zeal. When led down to the brook to drink, all but three hundred halted very leisurely and knelt down to drink, which required the loosening of their armor and unfastening of their swords. But three hundred did not stop to do this,

but hastily scooped up a little water and lapped it from their hands. This zeal, inspired by a living faith in God, was just the element of character for which the Lord was looking; and these three hundred "peculiar people," full of faith and active zeal, were the only ones acceptable to God and privileged to share the honors of delivering Israel from a mighty host of oppressors.

GIDEON AND HIS BAND PICTORIAL

As Gideon's band may be considered a figure or illustration of the overcomers of this Gospel Age-the Church, -the Little Flock--so Gideon himself would fitly represent the Captain of our salvation, whose example we are to follow, and whose character is to impress all His followers. Of Gideon it is declared that he looked like the king's son-that in appearance, form, etc., he had a 'nobility Which marked him as above the ordinary rank and file. So our Lord Jesus is the King's Son, and so all whom He accepts-to be of the little band, His Little Flock, are to be -conformed to His image by the power of God working in them "to will and do of His good pleasure;" working in them through a knowledge of the Truth--the knowledge of the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Whatever they are by nature, it is God's design that eventually they shall be like their Lord and Captain, see Him as He is and share His glory, honor and immortality.

The Lord Jehovah contemplates the conquest of the world for Christ (Zech. 14:3) and Christ, like Gideon, is called of God to lead a "little flock" of "called and faithful and chosen" ones '(Rev. 17:14) forth to the -conquest of the hosts of sin. The selection of Gideon's army was at! illustration of the Lord's method in the selection of a ((peculiar people" who will share with Him the honors of victory in the conquest of sin and all its defiling host.

Of these there is first a call to faith in the Lord, resulting in justification and acceptance; secondly, there is a call to consecration,. in full view of the requirements, in full view of the enemy, and our Captain requests all of the justified ones who come to Him to sit down first and count the cost, whether or not they are willing to sacrifice their all under His leadership. The large majority, when they come to see the cost, to realize the battle that must be waged between the followers of the Lord and the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, are rather inclined to say, We prefer not to engage in battle, we are timid, we are fearful, we have not sufficient confidence either in Gideon or in Gideon's God. It is in ac cord with the Lord's will that such should be considered separate from God's army, though they may have subsequently an opportunity for joining in the battle against evil.

THE TESTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

It is not sufficient that, we should have faith in the Lord and in the Captain of our salvation, and should make our 'consecration to the Lord's will; but further tests are made with a view, to making a final selection of a very special class to constitute the Little Flock. It will be a test of water--symbolizing the Truth. It be comes a very important question to every consecrated one as he is brought to a knowledge of the Truth how he will receive it-appropriate it. In the picture or type those accepted of God to be Gideon's little flock used their hands to lift the water to their mouths, a sup at a time, as a dog uses his tongue to lift the water; while

the others drank like as a horse who puts his mouth into the water and sucks it. The hand is a symbol of energy, and we might understand this to signify that the persons most approved of the Lord will use energy and discretion in partaking of the Truth-these will not bow down in the mire of human servility, but will maintain their own erectness of manhood and will partake of the water of Truth, lifting their heads upward and acknowledging its heavenly origin by whatever stream or channel it may come to them.

The selection complete, the remainder of the brave men were not sent home, but to Gideon's tent or headquarters, there to be ready for their share in the battle later. Those whom God would specially use were supplied with peculiar implements: (1) a ram's horn; (2) a pitcher; (3) a lamp, or torch, placed inside the pitcher and thus obscured from the view of their enemies. The three hundred were divided, into three companies and the individuals of each company were scattered. They approached close to the enemy and practically surrounded their camp. When Gideon blew, all who heard the blasts made similar blasts upon their trumpets; when Gideon broke his pitcher and let the light of his torch or firebrand gleam forth, the others did the same, blowing meantime with their trumpets and alternately shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." It was the Lord's battle and the Lord's arrangement, and it was carried out as intended; the Midianites awakened from their slumbers panic-stricken, believed themselves surrounded by immense hosts, and fled precipitately, killing one another in their fright and confusion. Perceiving the routes they would take, Gideon hastened with his ten thousand followers to intercept them and to complete the defeat. Meanwhile others of the people, learning of the condition of things, joined in the battle to the ultimate and utter discomfiture of the Midianites, and the destruction of the vast, majority of their hosts, including their leaders.

Our Captain, the Lord, has given special instructions to those whom He will specially use in the conflict of evil now in progress. Each one shall follow the example of the Captain of our salvation. First, he shall blow upon the trumpet, representing the proclamation of the Truth, and proclaim that the sword of the spirit of Truth is of Jehovah and of His anointed Son; and secondly, they shall break their pitchers and let their light shine out. The pitchers, represent our earthen vessels, and the breaking of them in order to let the light shine out signifies that to which we are exhorted by the Apostles, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service." We see how our Chief-Captain broke His earthen vessel; we see what a light streamed forth. Our highest ambition must be to follow His example, to walk in His steps, to lay down our lives for the brethren as He laid down His life for us. Meantime the blowing of the trumpet is to progress as well as the shouting in the name of Jehovah, our Captain, and the Sword of the spirit of Truth is to be wielded. The result will be victory; the enemies of the Lord will be overwhelmed.

But many others than the Little Flock will be associated in the work of overthrow, though theirs will be a special work as specially chosen instruments of the Lord. Now is the time, for response to the call of our Captain; now is the time for standing the tests and being full of faith and confidence in the Lord that He is able to give us the victory. Now is the time for understanding the will of the Captain, following His example, and imitating Him and, laying down our lives for the

brethren', and as sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and our reasonable service. Now is the time for the proclamation and for publicly declaring our confidence in Him who called us, who gave us the light, and who has privileged us to be His little flock; and very shortly will come the time for the fleeing of the enemy. Let us be faithful to our tests -and opportunities, and thus be accounted worthy of a share in the service and the glory that shall follow.

"Count me the swords that have come."

"Lord, thousands on thousands are ready."

"Lo, these are too many, and with them are some

Whose hearts and whose hands are not steady.

He whose soul does not burn,

Let him take up his tent and return."

RUTH'S WISE CHOICE

--APRIL 25-RUTH 1:14-22--

Golden Text.--"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."--Ruth 1:16.

WHILE the book of Ruth is not prophetic, but merely historical, it is valuable to us in various ways. (1) It furnishes an important link in the chronological chain leading down to King David and, hence, a part of the chronological line leading down to the Man Christ Jesus. (2) It gives a glimpse of the habits and customs of the Israelites in general as an agricultural, people. In this respect it is in marked contrast with the Books of judges, Kings and Chronicles, which dealt more particularly with the rulers, generals and wars. (3) The story of Ruth points a very beautiful lesson of fidelity, sympathy and love amongst the people at that time, and inculcates a similar lesson of kindness of disposition amongst the spiritual Israelites, guaranteeing them, along this line, blessings both for the present and for the future.

Somewhere about Gideon's time, when scarcity amounting almost to famine prevailed in Palestine, as a judgment of the Lord upon His people for some measure of coldness or unfaithfulness to Him and to their covenant, Naomi's husband determined to emigrate with his family to the other side of the Dead Sea-to the land of Moab. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, but, nevertheless,, the Lord marked out to His people Israel that they were not to be considered the children of Abraham-that they were not fellow-heirs of the promises made to Abraham, and, therefore, they were not subjects of special dealings,, disciplines, providences, etc., as were the Israelites. Naomi and her two sons went with her husband apparently without regret, to the land of Moab, hoping thereby to better the prospects of the family. It was a mistake, however, as she afterwards realized, to attempt to regulate their own affairs when they were specially under the Lord's protection and guidance.

As Israelites they should have esteemed the Divine promises so highly that they would not have left the land of promise and the people of promise to commingle with those who were strangers to those promises and more or less idolaters. To be on the Lord's side amongst the Lord's people should have been esteemed far more important than earthly prospects. Naomi, however, is not to blame in connection

with this matter; the responsibility rested with her husband, and it is evident that her heart was never fully in sympathy with the move, because about ten years subsequently, when her husband and two sons died, she promptly determined on a return to the Lord's people and to the land which He had given them.

Human nature is much the same everywhere and always. How many there are today who mistakenly seek to map out their plans for the present life in disregard of their highest interests, in disregard of the Lord's promises and the relationship which they have entered into by covenant with Him! How many there are who forget that the Lord's arrangement with all of His covenant people is that He will supervise their affairs and cause all things to work together for good to them! Instead of making temporal interests the chief concern, Naomi's husband should have been making the religious interests of himself and family his chief concern, so that if he had been living in Moab under greater prosperity, he should rather have been willing to go into the land of promise amongst the Lord's people, though such a course would seem to mean a blighting of some of his earthly interests.

SPIRITUAL INTERESTS COME FIRST

The Lord's people of spiritual Israel will do well to bear this thought continually in mind that spiritual inter

ests are to be given the preference always; that temporal affairs are to be managed and controlled from the standpoint of the everlasting welfare—from the standpoint of spiritual growth and development and prosperity—from the standpoint of the best interests and influences upon their children. They should not only hesitate to follow any suggestion that would take themselves and their families into unfavorable, godless surroundings, but they should determine that not under any consideration would they follow such a suggestion—that on the contrary the Lord's people should be their people, even though this meant less of the comforts and luxuries of this present life: it would surely mean greater spiritual blessings and favors for the present time, and persevering would mean the gaining of the glorious reward which our Lord has promised to the faithful who love Him more than they love houses and lands and kindred, etc.

Evidently Naomi's life and example and her faithfulness to the Lord had made an impression amongst those with whom she was specially in contact—her two daughters-in-law, both of whom resolved to go back with her to the land of Canaan. On the journey, however, she reflected that these two young women would be sacrificing much leaving kindred, homes, acquaintances, customs, and good prospects to go with her to a land where they would be considered foreigners and probably be discriminated against. She, therefore, urged them to return to their own people, - to the religious worship, etc., to which they had been accustomed. She feared that their resolution to accompany her would result in disappointment later on. Her disinterested course in this matter reminds us very much of our Lord's words to some who proposed to become His disciples. He advised them first of all to sit down and count the cost; this He did, not because He wished to stumble or to turn back any who had inclinations to follow in His footsteps, but because it is best on general principles that people should not undertake that in which their hearts are not fully and deeply interested; because,

otherwise, they are sure to make a failure. They who sit down and count the cost and then rejoicingly follow in the Lord's footsteps of suffering and trial, glad to be accounted worthy to suffer for His name's sake, and to walk in His footsteps, they alone are the kind who 'will gain the prize. Those who would follow without the spirit of sacrifice would be sure to miss the prize, and all the sacrificing they might do would be burdensome and measurably disappointing.

Naomi's argument appealed to one of her daughters-in-law, who did return to her Moabitish home, concluding that after all it would be too much, of a sacrifice for her to part with her kindred, etc. Ruth, on the contrary, had come to love her mother-in-law so **deeply and to respect** her religion so thoroughly that although it cost a tear to part with home and kindred and to contemplate the trials of poverty in a foreign land, she, nevertheless, fully resolved that such a home amongst those who revered the true God and were heirs of His promises was more to be esteemed than anything she was leaving. Her impassioned words to her mother-in-law are. **noted throughout** the world as being amongst the most beautiful expressions of sympathy, kindness and devotion. **Someone** has arranged them in poetic form thus:

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."--Vs. 16, 17.

ALL MAY PREACH BY THE DAILY LIFE

A good and faithful, God-fearing, God-serving, God honoring mother-in-law, Naomi surely was, to have so deeply interested Ruth in herself and in her God and in His promises to her people. There is a lesson here, not only for mothers-in-law, but for all of the Lord's people. Not all are able to preach and to teach the Word of God publicly or privately, but all can teach through their daily lives and -glorify their Father in heaven in their bodies and spirits which are His, by living a godly life, by telling in the simplest manner of the I hopes and promises which control their own hearts and inspire their own courage and devotion. The Apostle Paul had in mind this same thought of the general influence of life and character when he said, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." Our Lord had the same thought in mind when He, declared, "Ye are the light of the world.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." That Naomi had told her daughters-in-law respecting her God and His promises to His people is evident; but to have told them of this and not to have acted and spoken and lived in accord with this faith and hope, would have been contradictory and, undoubtedly, never would have influenced Ruth to forsake her own people and her father's house and to cast in her lot with her mother-in-law and the Israelites.

Arrived at her home city, Bethlehem, Naomi who had been well known ten years before, and whose friends probably never expected to see her again, was greeted by her name; but, she replied, Call me no longer Naomi (which signifies lovable, pleasant), but call me rather Marah (which signifies bitter). She explained to them that the Lord's providences in respect to her affairs had' been severe afflictions--the Lord had testified against her course--had not prospered herself and family in the course they had taken. No doubt later on she came to see that the Lord's afflictions upon her had really been for her good, bringing her back to the land of promise and to fellowship with her people, so that her last days were probably the best of her life. So at times it may be with some of the Lord's spiritual Israelites; His chastisements and afflictions and disciplines may seem to indicate His displeasure, but really, from the standpoint of faith and knowledge, they may afterward be seen to have been blessings in disguise. However, much -depends upon the way in which the Lord's disciplines are received. Had Naomi suffered herself to become sour and morose and rebellious against the Lord, no blessing would have followed her trying experiences; but the fact that she permitted these to draw her closer to the Lord and to His people formed the channel of her blessings. And this lesson also is easily applied by. us all as spiritual Israelites to our experiences.

The remainder of the lesson gives us an insight into the customs of the time, and incidentally shows us how the Lord rewarded the noble character and faith of Ruth. That she did not come to Bethlehem with great expectations and selfish motives is evidenced by the fact that she set out to earn a living for herself and her mother-in-law. She was young and- strong, and could, after the manner of the times, go into the harvest fields and glean such stray handfuls of the grain as were missed by the men who did the reaping. This was permitted by the Jewish law; the grain growing in the fence corners might be gathered by any of the poor for their own use. Providentially Ruth was guided in her humble efforts to make a living, to the field of a man who was a kinsman to Naomi, and to whom she, (Ruth) was subsequently married and became one of the mothers in Israel, from whom descended King David and ultimately Mary, the mother of Jesus.

HIS PEOPLE SHALL BE OUR PEOPLE

It is well that the Lord's people note even in this little incident something that may be helpful to them. We are to commit our way to the Lord and sincerely and unselfishly determine to follow the path of righteousness; then the Lord shall be our God; then His people shall be our people. Testings will come as to whether, or not we are willing to do our duty in respect to the common affairs of life, laboring with our hands, providing things honest in the sight of all men. As we go forward in the line of duty, the Lord guides our steps and overrules in our affairs and brings us/blessings, but if we fail to take the proper steps and to do with our might what our hands find to do, we miss the blessings.

The fact that these two women could journey from Moab to Bethlehem by themselves and without molestation, and the fact that Ruth, unknown and unprotected, could safely glean in the fields without interference of any kind, speaks to us strongly of the general law and order prevalent amongst the Israelites--the general recognition of the Divine law and the general conformity thereto. We are to remember, too, that at this time the laws were liberally

administered, and that, so far as we are made aware, there was neither army nor police organization to enforce them. The people were comparatively free and evidently in some respects moral, noble and trustworthy. This is illustrated further in the course of Boaz. How few employers of labor today, as they visit their farms, would be in any degree inclined to salute their laborers as Boaz did his; saying, "The Lord be with you!" And how few farm laborers of today would respond as did these of Boaz; "They answered him, The Lord bless thee." Evidently the employers and employees of our day could learn some profitable lessons from the past, notwithstanding the fact that Evolutionists would endeavor to convince us that back in the days of Boaz men must have been much nearer the monkey condition than today. The facts are to the contrary.

Furthermore, we notice the generosity of Boaz, that instead of dealing selfishly and miserly in respect to the gleanings of the woman, he gave directions to his servants that they purposely let fall an occasional handful when binding the grain, that Ruth's gleanings might thus be enlarged. Christian employers and employees need not to go back to the Jewish Law and to the customs of the Jews as illustrated by Boaz and his laborers; for we have a still higher law and much advantage every way over them. If their knowledge of the Lord led them to kindly salutations and kindly actions, much more should the Christian's greater knowledge of the Divine will and his anointing of the Holy Spirit enable him to be kind, considerate and affectionate toward others-doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.

Finally, it is unsafe to neglect to have the Lord for our God, and to neglect to make His people our people. Acceptance of the Lord means ultimately a change in all of life's interests and affairs if we would abide in His love and favor. The sacrifice of earthly things may cost us tears and heartaches at first; but eventually we will be more than compensated-as was Ruth, only in higher, spiritual blessings.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

REARS MASTER'S VOICE AFRESH

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in His Name! . . .

I have before me issue of the HERALD for Feb. 1, 1920, and note concerning motto cards for 1920. ["Be Ye Kind, Tenderhearted, Forgiving Others as God Forgave You."] It is as you state, "a constant reminder of what manner of persons we ought to be," and I think one of the most beautiful texts, implying as it does a great deal at this time especially. There is indeed a wealth 'of meaning behind those words., which involves not only the true characteristics of God, but also the whole Plan of redemption. I trust you have a good stock on hand, as at present I shall not be able to send the necessary amount for one dozen, but expect to be able to next month.

I may say, too, that our little Class here have felt more of that fellowship Divine since hearing our Master's voice afresh exhorting us to come up still higher,

leaving the earth and all its vanities further, and still further behind, as we strive to reach that goal of perfectness, suffering daily with Him that we may eventually hear that sweet "Well Done." Our prayers ascend to Him in gratitude for the way in which He has and is leading us, through varied experiences to that blessed Haven of rest, **and feel sure that** "He will never leave us, nor forsake us," for His mercy endureth forever. "There hath not, failed *one* word of all His good promise."

Let us then, dear brethren, ever seek by word and example -- to ever follow that Which is good, looking unto Jesus the starter and finisher of our faith, that His will may be done in us to His honor and glory. May the good work continue until every grace adorns the Christian character, and every virtue shines out with brilliance upon a dark and saddened world, that we may thus seek to show forth His praises and comfort all who mourn,. May the Lord add His blessing richly upon all His dear saints is the earnest prayer of

Your brother in that blessed Hope, *E. S.--Eng.*

BLESSINGS UPON THE PASTORAL WORK

Dear Brethren:

February 1st ended six months of Pastoral Work in Montreal, since our last report to you.

The sisters appreciate your interest and prayers in their behalf, and desire to say that having made, 3,189 calls, they have found 310 people showing some interest in the Truth, they have made 306 return calls, and have found 6 people who had the volumes. Book loaning has been begun again since the removal of the ban.

There have been 22 Chart Talks given, with a total attendance of 153 strangers, and 41 studies in Vol. I held, with a total attendance of 143 newly interested ones. At present there are three studies in Vol. I held each week regularly, with an average attendance of four newly interested ones at each meeting.

We are indeed thankful to our Heavenly Father that His providences have brought us in contact with some who have hearing ears, and we are finding His promise true that "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The temporary lack of literature was overruled by the Lord so as to bring some under the influence of the Truth who otherwise would not have listened, In one district, four members of one church, whose minister is bitter against the Truth, attended all four Chart Talks. At the second Chart Talk, one of these ladies remarked that it was "so nice to have Bible proof given for everything, as otherwise one might be led into Russellism, Adventism, or some other deception." Before the close of the series of Chart Talks this lady had drunk so deeply of the waters of Truth that when, at the fourth meeting, she learned that the Truth made known at the Chart Talks was what Pastor Russell preached, she could only say, "Well, praise the Lord, he must have been a dear man of God." She had previously been so misinformed with regard to the Truth that she had burned the tracts without reading them. Now her earnestness at the First Volume study is a blessing to all who attend it. She gives every evidence of being the Lord's own.

Any suggestions. that you may have to make, or advice to offer with regard to the Pastoral Work will be appreciated by the sisters here. With Christian greetings,

Your sister by His grace, M. D. R. *P.-Can.*

COMPORTED BY SWEET OLD STORY

Dear Brethren:

We are rejoicing, rejoicing in the blessing the Lord has sent us through our dear Brother's visit. We were very hungry indeed, and we thank the dear Father for the rich spiritual feast we have enjoyed.

We had five meetings in all, the dear Brother giving us two discourses the last afternoon, and talking till train time. We certainly appreciated his self -sacrificing spirit, and we also appreciated his coming to us, not with theories and speculations of his own, but with the sweet old story, comforting, encouraging and strengthening us to stand fast in the Lord and continue in His Word.

We are enclosing a small amount for the Pilgrim work. We wish it were much more, but a great deal of loving interest and appreciation goes with it. We wish-you to know, dear friends, that you have our confidence, our love and our sympathy. We have a growing appreciation of the HERALD and the message it brings to-us. We find the spirit of the Master in the paper, and in the way you are conducting the work. We also appreciate the fact that in thus serving the Lord's people with the Truth, you face the certainty of criticism, calumny and persecution; that you realized your motives would be misunderstood, and your good evil spoken of. We rejoice with you that you are counted worthy to suffer for His sake.

Assuring you again of our love and sympathy and cooperation, and of our continued prayers in your behalf,

Your brethren in the One Hope and patient waiting for the Kingdom,

THE HUTCHINSON ECCLESIA--Kan.

"HE THAT HATH AN EAR TO HEAR"

Gentlemen:

I received a copy of your tract, "WHERE ARE THE DEAD?" I think the subject is handled pretty thoroughly, and I would be pleased to have you' send me at least three copies for friends whom I know will appreciate the same. Also further reading matter respecting the teachings of the Bible. If agreeable to you I am quite sure a number of the girls at my office would be interested in the above subjects were copies placed within their reach. Thanking you kindly,

Yours truly-, V. A. W.--N. Y.

Brethren:

I am very much interested- in one of your papers called THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. I would like to subscribe to it but I have not money to spare. I am a boy sixteen years of' age, and also a Bible student. Am earning ten dollars a week, and have a mother and a little brother to support, so that is why I cannot pay for' the journal. Hoping that you will send me the HERALD, I-am,

Yours in Christ, E. G. A. -- A.-Mass.

Gentlemen:

I write to thank you all for the tract you sent me. I read it- very carefully, as I parted with my very dear wife, and of course I am very much interested in the future state. If it is not too much, to ask, I would like to have the other pamphlet you mention.

Very truly yours, H. A. K.--N. Y.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. APRIL 15, 1920 No. 8

OUTLOOK FROM THE WALLS OF ZION

THE readers of this journal are aware that we have been looking with considerable interest upon what is known as the "Inter-Church World Movement" -- which has been instituted since the close of the late world-war. Our reasons for regarding this movement with unusual interest is that it would appear to be of a character as to be closely associated with, if not indeed to constitute an essential feature of the "Image of the Beast," and thus ultimately materially contribute to the fulfilling of Rev. 13: 14-17.

Believing that our readers would be interested in reading' a clear and concise 'statement as to just what are the purposes and designs of the Inter-Church World Movement,, We are publishing below an editorial which appeared in one of the New York Dailies under the date of March 23, 1920:

"THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD"

"The Inter-Church World Movement which will open its money raising campaign next month, is a new step in religious progress, not so much in its method as in its object. That object is world redemption through world brotherhood, and its purpose is to carry through in the religious field those ideals with which this country entered the world-war, ideals which have so lamentably failed of realizations through political action.

"The magnitude of that Undertaking is staggering, but the machinery created for its prosecution is without precedent. It embodies, indeed, a thoroughness of organization with a breadth of vision which would have been impossible at any time before we had learned how to secure practically complete co-operation to meet war needs. The power of united action, learned during the war, will never be forgotten and from that lesson has sprung this plan to mobilize the greater part of the Christian forces of this country for the rescue of a world rapidly falling to pieces-rescue it, not through political action but by the practice of that brotherhood which the Christian Church was established to bring into the world. Instead of a League of Nations this Inter-Church World Movement seeks to create a League of Peoples, held together not by governmental pledges but by the bonds of mutual good-will.

"How far away we are at present from such a union of spirit was graphically shown on Monday night at the dinner given by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to introduce this movement to the business men of New York and to show them how far they will be expected. to put their shoulders under the wheels of the car of progress, now mired in the morass of national isolation. Figures thrown upon the screen showed that 26,000,000 young -people in our country are growing up without religious instruction, and that 88,000,000 of our 110,000,000 people are without religious privileges, either Christian or Jewish. Those figures seem beyond belief, but they were followed with pictures of areas of dense -city populations without churches and of 'vast rural regions with few weak and scattered churches which supported the staggering totals.

"The first effort of this united movement of more than thirty Protestant denominations will be to reach these unchurched millions through a more even distribution of Church forces, a reduction of denominational rivalries in small communities and an extension of Church activities into dense city populations now almost churchless. The model for that extension is a church in Detroit, which, instead of moving out of an industrial district as the population changed, erected a many-storied building for Church activities and grew to the point where last year it raised \$100,000 for Work outside its parish.

"Ours is the country whose resources, both of man power and of money, were least reduced by the war. In contrast with Europe those resources-were almost un touched and this movement has undertaken to mobilize the greater part of them for the work of relief, of education. and of sanitation of which most of Europe and vast areas of. Asia. and Africa stand in pressing need. The immediate effort to be begun next month is to secure pledges for \$336 000,000 of which \$167,000,000 is to be payable this year and the balance during the next five -years.' That is an enormous sum, but the showing of the needs leaves some doubt of its adequacy to all the work which is waiting. It is a big task, but it is drawing big men to its standard and it will be pushed with both intelligence and energy. Its call to the ordinary church man is to realize his responsibility, not for his own parish, but for the world, whose shipwrecked and suffering have been thrown at his feet by- the mighty tide of war.

"It remains to be seen what the response will be. But there is a firm faith that the American people, who arose so nobly to meet the needs of war, will not prove callous or indifferent when the call to repair the wreckage of that war is pressed upon them."

THE CHURCH'S FUTURE MISSION

It is recognized, of course, that the above stated purposes and objects of the Inter-Church World Movement do not differ especially from those that have long been advanced, and held up before the people. In fact, it has been claimed by the leading ecclesiastical systems of Christendom for centuries that the present mission of the Church is to accomplish the world's uplift, the saving of humanity, and the bringing of the human family-into A state of, harmony with God. The, increase of- misery and suffering occasioned by the war has served to revive this thought and to give new life to the scheme of the world's recovery through 'the efforts of the Church in it's present, state in the flesh. The sum of the teaching in

brief, is, that the Church should consider it her duty to- establish God's Kingdom now and reign upon the. earth, without waiting for the Lord from Heaven to exalt His faithful people and duly empower them to rule over the nations. Ignorant of the Divine Plan and order for the world's recovery, and the instituting of human plans instead, have repeatedly led to great apostasies in the Church, as history clearly reveals. Because, along with the false teaching that the Church must now convert the world and establish God's Kingdom over the nations, the claims have been boldly made that the Church should consider it. her duty, to mix and. affiliate with the civil powers and affairs of state and worldly politics, with a view to gaining control and- rulership of the civil powers, and thus constitute God's. Kingdom reigning over the nations. All familiar with the pages of- history know. something of the sad results that have followed in the wake of this wrong teaching as to the Church's present mission. The attempts to establish, God's. Kingdom and to decide matters of doctrine, faith and practice for the people have- led to the' taking away of Christian liberty, and are responsible for the torture-chamber, the rack and thumb-screw of the Dark Ages.

As well intentioned as the leaders of Christendom to day may be, we ate justified in supposing that the same schemes and philosophy that led many of the good intentioned of the past, to restrain the liberty of the people and to persecute their fellowmen, would if -put into practice again, lead to similar acts, and deeds of violence in opposition to the Golden Rule and the highest precept -taut ght by the Great Founder of Christianity: "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another."

No person in whose heart burns the love of God and the love of, human kind. would for an instant dispute that the desire, and ambition to assist the world out I of its dark night, out of its suffering and misery, back to a state of peace and of life are of a most praiseworthy and laudable kind. In fact, such a mission for the Church of Christ is exactly what the Scriptures propose. But the Word of-the Lord is most explicit in assuring us that the due time to enter upon that mission is not during her earthly pilgrimage, but beyond and in the new dispensation when, following our Lord's return, she shall be duly qualified by the power' of the First Resurrection (Rev. 20:6) to exercise rulership over the nations and to instruct and uplift whosoever will. (Rev. 22:17.) Meantime, the mission of the Church in her present state is to bear testimony to the truth concerning the coming of the Great king and the inauguration of His Kingdom under the whole heaven for the blessing and uplift of humanity; and to labor on in her present pilgrimage, warring a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the adversary, in living the overcoming life, and thus to make herself ready to be united to the Heavenly Bridegroom and share with Him in the work of reclaiming the world and in the restitution of all things.

CELEBRATION OF THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

WE HAVE been gratified indeed- to learn that the celebration of the death of the Antitypical Paschal Lamb, our Lord Jesus, on its anniversary this year the, evening of April 2, was very general, as judged by the reports thus far received." The celebration of the Memorial Suppe' at Brooklyn was amongst the most

solemn and impressive that we have ever enjoyed. The number in, attendance was very good, everything considered--about 135 participating. We learned of some who, by reason of sickness, etc., could not come to this service.

Our meeting convened at 7:30, when we joined in prayer for the Divine blessing upon our gathering and upon all of the Lord's 'people everywhere gathered for similar purpose, riot forgetting, also the solitary ones; entreating the Divine blessing and wisdom, and grace to appreciate the realities symbolized by the "Supper" before us. And as we once more had brought before us the solemn import of our Lord's Supper, our hearts drew near to Him and we realized the appropriateness of renewing out consecration to be faithful to our vow, seven unto death,

The significance of the bread and the fruit of the vine as representatives of our Lord's broken body and shed blood, and of our Lord Himself as the antitype of the Passover Lamb, were considered; it was shown that as the institution of the type, the night previous to Israel's departure from Egypt, affected first the *first-born of* Israel and later all 'Israel delivered from Pharaoh and Egypt so the death 'of' our Lamb (Christ Jesus--"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world") affects first, during the Gospel Age, the "*Church of the first-born*" ones and subsequently, during the Millennium, will affect the deliverance of all who are or who will become God's true servants, delivering them from the slavery of Satan and the present evil world.

The emblems of our Master's broken body and shed blood were sweet to us, and by faith through the emblems we partook of the merits and graces of our Lord and His exceeding great and precious promises vouchsafed for the future. We were sad at the thought of our Lord's sufferings for us; yet glad--so glad--that He paid the great price for us. We noticed, also, the Apostle's suggestion (1 Cor. 10:16, 17) that the bread and wine not only symbolize our Lord's body and flesh broken for us, but that since we are accepted of Him and are reckonedly His flesh and His bones while in the earthly tabernacle, so the bread (*one loaf*) represents our flesh consecrated to death with our Lord, in His service and in the service 'of His people. Likewise we have a communion (common union or fellowship) in the cup--our earthly lives are consecrated to be poured out in death, that we may partake with our Lord also in His new life--"partakers of the Divine nature."--2 Pet. 1:4.

Having celebrated the death of the Antitypical Pass over Lamb, let us now celebrate the antitypical *feast* of Passover, not for a typical seven days, but for the anti typical period--all time,. forever--feeding upon the unleavened bread ad of sincerity and truth," and abstaining from all sin, symbolized under the Law by leaven.

THE SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION

WE DESIRE to call attention again to, the Convention that it is purposed to hold in Springfield, Mass., May 29, 30, 31. This, we believe, will be a most excellent season of the year for the friends to convene in. a general gathering for the enjoyment. of spiritual blessings and fellowship. The dates named will be

convenient too as there will be practically three holidays in succession, the legal holiday this year falling on Monday, May 31st, instead of the 30th, on account of the latter being Sunday., We trust a good number will find it convenient to arrange at least a short vacation covering these dates.

The objects sought at this Convention will not be dissimilar to those that have moved the brethren to come together upon previous occasions-primarily that of building one another up in the most holy faith, and encouraging each other to holiness of heart and to induce the bringing forth. more. abundantly of the fruits of the spirit, in- harmony with the Master's kindly admonition: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John. 15:8) ; thus to assist one another to readiness and preparation for the Kingdom and glory promised to the faithful.

Our experience is that they derive the greatest benefit and blessing from Convention gatherings who endeavor to make preparation beforehand by seeking closeness to the Lord and to have a large measure, of His spirit in their hearts; thus coming in readiness to be a blessing and to impart one to others as well.

It is our desire to have brethren serve on the program at this Convention as far as possible who are of sound doctrine and deeply spiritual-brethren, therefore, who will not preach themselves, nor their own works, neither words of envy and strife; nor will they be expected to preach their own vagaries, theories, speculations or un certain "new light." On the contrary, our hopes are that all the messages given at the Convention will be ,according to "sound doctrine" and in accordance with the example of St. Paul as well as his admonition to Timothy: I "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him, crucified;" "Continue thou: in the things which thou hast learned *and hast been assured of, knowing -of whom thou hast learned them.*"--1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:14.

We are arranging that the program will provide for a special session at this Convention at which the regular annual report of the *Pastoral Bible Institute* will be presented to the friends. Our reason for this is that, -not planning to hold a General Convention this year in connection with the annual business meeting to be held: in New York the first Saturday in June (as it would come so near to the Convention at Springfield), we thought there would be some in attendance at Springfield who would be unable to attend the business meeting at New York the following Saturday; hence the arrangement to give the Convention this report in advance. Additionally, at this special session in Springfield, opportunity will be given for general discussion as to the interests of the 'ministry, and for asking any questions bearing upon the affairs, of the *Pastoral Bible Institute* and the service it is endeavoring to perform. Of course, the regular business meeting of the *Pastoral Bible Institute*, which according to its-charter and by-laws must be held in New York City on Saturday, June 5, this year, will include all the above proceedings outlined for the special session at Springfield, with the added feature of the election of Directors for the ensuing year. Any in attendance at Springfield who find themselves unable to be present at the-New York meeting may cast their votes for Directors at the election on Saturday by proxy, if they desire. Further information concerning this will be announced later.

Finally, we trust we will, be joined by many in asking our Father's rich blessing upon the assembling of the friends at Springfield, that His Holy Name may be honored and the interests of His people advanced.

BEREAN STUDIE'S IN THE REVELATION

SEVEN MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

(Continued)

STUDY IX-MAY 2

(41) What was the message addressed I to the Church at Sardis? and what was the condition of the Church during this period of its history? Rev. 3:1-6.

(42) What is the significance of the statement, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead"? What is the import of the admonition, "Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die"? Z '16-347.

(43) What significance should we attach to, the allusion to and warning concerning Christ's Second Coming: "I will come on thee as a thief"? Z '16-347.

(44) What is the import of the commendation of those in Sardis, "which have not defiled their garments"? and of the remark: "They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy"? In what sense are they, worthy?

(45) What is implied in the promise to the overcomer in this stage of the Church's history: "I will not blot out -his name out of the book of life, but I will confess, his name before my Father, and before His angels." Z '11-341; '14-11; '15-118.

SEVEN MESSAGES-TO THE CHURCHES

(Continued)

STUDY X--MAY 9

(46) What was the message addressed to the Church at Philadelphia? and what were the general conditions prevailing in this period making this message appropriate to this stage of the Church's history? Rev. 3:7-13; Z '16-347.

(47) What is meant in verse 7, "he that hath the key -of David"? and "he that shutteth and no man openeth"? B 24; C 195.

(48), Who are those designated as "of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not"? When will they come and worship before the true Church? Rev. 3:9; Z '99-68.

(49) What is the significance. of the statement: - "Thou hast kept the word of my patience"? and "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all, the world"? When is this hour of temptation? Z '01-115, 205; '11-409; '15-199.

(50) What is the force. of the statement: "Behold, I I come quickly"? and the further admonition,: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"? T127; Z '13-27; '14-268.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES XXX

REAPING THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH

"And I saw, and behold! a white Cloud, and on the Cloud one sitting like a Son of Man, having on his Head a golden Crown, and in his Hand a sharp Sickle; And Another Angel came forth out of the Temple, crying with a Loud Voice to the one sitting on the Cloud, 'Send thy - Sickle, and reap; Because the Hour to reap is come; Because the Harvest of the Earth is dry.' And He who Sat on the Cloud cast his sickle on the Earth, and the Earth was reaped."--Rev. 14:14-16.

AS INTRODUCTORY to the exposition of this portion of the Apocalypse we believe it will be of advantage in grasping its significance and application, to bear clearly in mind that the preceding visions of this chapter all begin to meet their fulfillment at or very soon after Christ's assumption of authority at His Second Advent and continue their fulfillment contemporaneously to the end of the Church's earthly history. All the symbols of this vision indicate that, in this respect, it is like the preceding visions. This vision is designed, however, to represent a different picture of the same period, namely, the Harvest, the end of the Age. The special picture presented is that of a gathering of the ripened crop of a harvest time. There can- be no doubt concerning who is represented by the personage seated on the white cloud in whose hand was the sharp sickle. Nearly all expositors are agreed that the Lord Jesus Christ is here represented. The fact that St. John describes Him to be one[^] "like a Son -of Man", immediately brings to mind the vision that the Apostle saw at the first, recorded in chapter 1. In that instance the person he saw was also one "like a Son of Man." There, however, the symbols that surround, or are associated with Him differ widely from those of this vision. There the Son of Man is, represented as in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). In that instance he was informed that these candlesticks represent the seven Churches, etc., the professing Christian Church, throughout the Age. The One like a Son of Man in the midst of them represents our Lord Jesus, our glorified Master; although in person absent from the Church, yet by His spirit and providences, present. In the words of Pastor Russell:

"We see that our Lora Jesus has been present with, His Church throughout the past eighteen centuries. and more, protecting the interests of His, cause and directing in respect to all His people's affairs, especially inspecting and caring for the Church as a light bearer, a candlestick."--Z'05-168.

Thus He fulfilled His promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the Age." (Matt. 28:20.) The symbols that surround His person in that vision disclose the nature, etc., of the work that He was to perform, in, in overruling in the affairs of the world for the good of His Church throughout the Age. The symbols that surround His person, in the vision under consideration, enable us, as in the other, to see the character of His work in the end of the Age. In this case , it is that of superintending the work of reaping or gathering the ripe fruitage of the Age. That He was to assume the office of Chief Reaper at the Second Advent is plainly taught in several parables in which He is represented as the "Lord of the Harvest," or Chief Reaper. -- Matt. 13:30.

The fact that the vision represents Him as being seated on a "cloud," reminds us of the fact that when He went away, a cloud received Him out of the disciples'

sight (Acts 1:9) ; and also the words of chapter 1 describing the manner of His return: "Behold He cometh with clouds, etc." (Rev. 1:7), That the cloud in this latter instance, as also the one of this vision, is a symbol, is quite generally understood. The peculiar symbolical manner in which the events of all the visions of the Revelation are portrayed proves this. Clouds are quite frequently employed in the Scriptures as symbols. In Isa. 19: 1, Jehovah is represented as riding on "a swift cloud," etc. In this instance it represents the distress and troubles -incidental to the overthrow of the Egyptian government and its idols, etc.; the various agencies ,used being represented as under Jehovah's leadership or providence. (See also Psa. 104:3; 97:2; Joel 2:2.) However, in the vision we are considering it is a *white* cloud. This would seem to indicate a work of judgment, bringing blessing rather than that of judgment troubles--a work that was to be accomplished under the direction of the Son of Man, Christ.

The Sickle is suggestive of Harvest time and work. In this instance it doubtless represents what is generally termed, Harvest Truth. the golden Crown symbolizes His Divine nature and authority as the Kingly Reaper. The general design of the vision is doubtless to describe in a general way the work of gathering the ripe fruitage of the Gospel Age-the saints, who are to be united to Him as His Bride. This is briefly, but very comprehensively described in the symbolic words: "And He who gat on the Cloud cast his sickle on the Earth, and the Earth was reaped."--Rev. 14:16.

Mr. Barnes, commenting on the expression, "Son of Man", in the vision, has said: "It. is probable that there is here a designed reference to the passage in Daniel (7). The -meaning is, that one appeared on the cloud in a human form, whom John at once recognized as He to whom the appellation of 'the Son of Man' peculiarly belonged-the Lord Jesus. The meaning of that term had not been fixed in the time of Daniel (7:13) ; subsequently it was appropriated by the Savior, and was the favorite term by which He chose to speak of Himself. (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:18, 32, 40.)" In regard to the golden Crown on His head, this commentator says that this is "appropriate to Him as King. It was mainly in virtue of His kingly power and office that the work was to be done which John is now about to describe." Commenting on the words of the angel addressing Christ, "For the time is, come for thee to reap," we have these words by this commentator: "That is, 'the harvest which thou art to reap is ripe; the seed which thou hast sown has grown up; the earth which thou hast cultivated has produced this golden grain, and it is fit that thou shouldst now gather it in.' The language [of this fourth angel] is appropriately addressed to flit Son of God, for all the, fruits of righteousness on the earth may be regarded as the result of His culture." Commenting on the words, "For. the harvest of the earth is ripe," Mr. Barnes says: "The 'harvest' in reference to the righteous--the fruit of the good seed sown by the Savior and His Apostles and ministers. The time alluded to here is the end of the world [Age], when the affairs of -earth [for this Age] shall be, about to be wound up. The design is to state that, the, Redeemer will then gather in a great and glorious 'harvest, and by this assurance to sustain the hearts of His people. in times of trial and persecution."

AND THE EARTH WAS REAPED

Regarding the meaning of the expression, "And the earth was reaped," he says: "So far as the righteous are concerned. The end had come; the Church was redeemed; the work contemplated was accomplished; and the results of the work of the Savior Were like a glorious harvest."

The words of another expositor writing in 1846 are very interesting and assist in the elucidation of this vision. Referring to this particular vision as described by a harvest, he says:

"They who are harvested by Him are also human beings, on the earth, and living therefore and mortal, and are doubtless the saints. . . . As crops are harvested for the purpose of preservation and appropriation to the uses for which they are raised; so the reaping of the subjects of this harvest denotes their being. gathered for preservation and appropriation to the ends for which they are sanctified. . . .

"This, beautiful symbol thus foreshows that ere the final destruction of the vassals of anti-Christ, the living saints are to be gathered together for preservation."

Replying to some expositors who regard the reaping of this vision as symbolizing a punishment and destruction of men by judgments, this expositor in the words which follow refutes such an interpretation:

"There is nothing in a harvest or vintage which necessarily implies that when used as symbols, those who are the subjects of them are to be destroyed. They are not necessarily processes of destruction, nor in order to the destruction of what would otherwise continue to subsist unchanged; but rather of collection and preservation in order to appropriation to some subsequent use. Whether, therefore, they are used as symbols of a gathering for, destruction or not is to be determined not by themselves, but by adventitious terms and representations with them. Thus, the vintage (in the vision which follows, Rev. 14:17-20) is shown to be in order to destruction, by the representation that the clusters are thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath. But as no such representation is made in respect to the harvest (the vision under consideration), there is no ground in the symbol itself for the ascription to it of such a meaning. Instead, that omission implies that the end for which the subjects of the harvest are gathered, is different from that, for which those who are symbolized by the grapes are reaped; and that they are saints of God, therefore; and this is corroborated by Christ's representation that He is to send forth His messengers to, gather together His Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."--D. N. *Lord on The Apocalypse*. I

SEPARATING WHEAT FROM TARES

While it is true that Pastor Russell never gave a full unfolding of this vision, enough can be deduced from his frequent references to this and the succeeding vision of this chapter to form a correct conclusion as to his understanding of the vision and its application, as meeting its fulfillment during the last forty and more years. In *Scripture Studies, Vol. I*, page 238, he applies Rev. 14:14 to the Harvest period and to the gathering of the "wheat" class in this period. Contrasting the Harvest of the Jewish Age with that of the present one, he says:

"The truth then due was the sickle and it separated the 'Israelites indeed' from the nominal Jewish Church; and of the true wheat there was but a fragment compared to the professors. So also is the Harvest of this Age. The Harvest of the Gospel

Age, like that of the Jewish Age, is under the supervision of, the Chief Reaper, our Lord Jesus, who must then be present. (Rev. 14-14.) The first Work of our Lord in the Harvest of this Age will be to separate the true from the false.' The nominal Church, because of her mixed condition, the Lord calls 'Babylon'--confusion; and the Harvest 'is the 'time for separating the different classes in, the nominal church, and for ripening and perfecting the wheat class.'" (See Chart of the Ages.)

In *Scripture Studies, Vol. II*, page 150, we have this vision touched upon by him as in process of fulfillment at the time he wrote:

"We have already (Vol. I, p. 237) called attention to the fact, that the recognition of the Harvest work in actual process is proof of the Lord's presence, since He declared that He would be the Chief Reaper and Director of the work, and that this would be His first work--'Behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son, of Man, having -on His head a golden crown,. and in His hand a sharp sickle. . . And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.'--'In the time of Harvest I will say to the reapers, gather' etc."

Pastor Russell pointed out how Christ fulfilled many Scripture types, and he makes mention of how the three offices of Bridegroom, Reaper and King are fulfilled in Him; we have his very interesting and convincing comment on Rev. 14:14-20 in *Scripture Studies, Vol. II*, p. 239:

"Our Lord's presence as Bridegroom and Reaper was recognized during the first three and a half years, from A. D. 1874 to A. D. 1878. Since that time it has been emphatically manifest that the time had come in A. D. 1878 when kingly judgment should begin at the house of God. It is here that Rev. 14:14-20 applies [as beginning], and our Lord is brought to view as the Reaper *crowned*."

In *Scripture Studies, Vol. V, p. 150*, we have another very convincing reference in connection with Pastor Russell's thought on Rev. 14:14. After citing all the Scriptures where the title "Son of Man" is applied to Christ, he proceeds with the words:

"Our Lord identified Himself with this description in His Revelation (14:14), where He represents Himself as one 'like unto the Son of Man, and having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle'--the Reaper of the Harvest of the Gospel Age."

"ANOTHER ANGEL SAYING SEND THY SICKLE AND REAP"

It will be noted that only one feature of the vision is left unexplained by Pastor Russell. This is that contained in verse 15: "And Another Angel came forth out of the Temple, crying with a Loud Voice to the one Sitting on the Cloud, 'Send thy Sickle (Harvest Truth) and reap; Because the Hour to reap is come; Because, the Harvest of the Earth is dry.'"

Some expositors have noted what to them seems a difficulty in interpreting these words. The difficulty is that this angel seems to be represented as giving instruction to the one seated on the white Cloud, that the time had come to reap'; and issuing a command to the same, to begin the work of reaping. The difficulty in' brief is thus: How could -anyone command or give instruction to Christ to reap

or when to reap? Mr. Barnes avoids this seeming difficulty- by interpreting the Temple from which the messenger comes, to represent Heaven, the place of Jehovah's Throne, and the angel who, comes forth and utters the cry, to be a special heavenly, angelic messenger from the court of Jehovah; so also Mr. Elliott. D. N. Lord avoids the seeming difficulty by making the one "like a Son of Man" who sat upon the Cloud to be a symbol, not of Christ, but of human beings who were raised from the dead in glory, -receiving instructions that the time had arrived to reap, and a command to proceed with the work of reaping

However, we believe it is more consistent and harmonious to understand that this angel crying with a loud voice, like those of the three others already referred to in previous expositions, represents another phase of the movements under God's true saints on earth during the period of the Harvest; a movement in which the actors are not, however, instructing or commanding, but, having discovered through the "Sure- word of prophecy" (time prophecies) that the time had come for their Master to reap, began petitioning that He, the Chief Reaper, would send forth laborers to accomplish the Harvest work. In other words, it was the spirit of Christ, the Chief Reaper now present, operating in His true saints on earth, and calling for Christ Himself, recognized by them as present, to lead His people forth to accomplish their last divinely commissioned task of gathering the true wheat. The Temple from which the angel is represented in the vision as coming forth, we would understand to be the nominal Church of the Harvest period. The Temple, as we have doubtless seen, and will observe more fully later, is frequently employed as a symbol of the nominal Church. We thus see that this vision covers the Harvest period and describes the work that has progressed up to the present time, of gathering or separating the Lord's saints' to Himself.

GATHERING THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

"And Another Angel came forth out of That Temple, which is in Heaven; he also having a sharp Sickle. And Another Angel came forth out of the Altar, having Authority over the Fire, and he called with a loud cry to the one Having the Sharp Sickle, saying, 'Send Thy Sharp Sickle, and cut off the Clusters of the Vine of the Earth; Because heir Grapes are fully ripe.' And the Angel cast his Sickle to the Earth, and gathered the fruit of the Vine of the Earth, and cast it unto the Great Wine-Press of the Wrath of God."--Rev. 14:17-19.

It seems clear that we have portrayed in the above language, the gathering together of the various religious and semi-religious institutions and organizations of Christendom, preparatory to their destruction. The last, feature of the destruction itself is described in the symbolism of verse 20. As in the vision just -considered, we have noted the, separation by the Chief Reaper of the "wheat" class, His true followers, from the "tares," mere professors, by the Harvest Sickle of Truth, so in this we have described the gathering together of the nominal Christians, false professors of every kind for symbolic destruction. It is very proper to call the first. the *harvest*, and the second, the *vintage*. In both, we have the same closing events of the Age portrayed, as are described by the Savior in the. parable -of the "wheat and tares," namely, the separating of the true from the false, preparatory, to their- being gathered into the heavenly garner, and the bundling of the "tare!" systems, preparatory to their being cast into the symbolic

"furnace of fire," for destruction. (Matt. 13:40-42.) That this was Pastor Russell's understanding of this matter will be seen from the following citation:

"We are now fast nearing the latter end of the Harvest period, when the burning of the tares and the gathering and treading of the fully ripe clusters of the 'vine of the earth' (the matured fruits of the false vine,--'Babylon') are I due."--Studies Vol. IV, p. 51.

Another comment, by him seems to show that it was his- thought that the gathering of the fully ripe clusters of the "vine'. of the earth," and -the gathering or bundling of the "tare" system-, were identical; also that the treading of the great Wine-press of the wrath of God refers to the very last feature of the Age. We quote:

"The treading of the winepress is the last feature of harvest work. The reaping and gathering is all done. first. So this treading of the Winepress of the Wrath of God into which 'the vine of the earth' (the false vine, which has misappropriated the name Christian and Christ's Kingdom) is cast when its iniquitous clusters are fully ripe (Rev. 14:18-20), represents the last work of this eventful 'harvest' period." -- Studies, Vol. IV. p. 18.

Concerning what is represented by the "vine of the ,earth," Mr. Elliott, in Horae Apocalypticae, seems to have had the correct thought. His comment on this is as follows:

"The vine to be gathered was called 'the vine of the, earth,' and designated. . . . first and chiefly, the ecclesiastical body and church of anti- Christendom; inclusive, however, of its chief secular supporters also. So the Jewish vine signified . . . the Jewish nation as a church with church privileges. (Isa. 5.) Like as of ancient Judah, so of Christendom, it might have been said, 'I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?' For too Every] soon [after the Apostle's day] notwithstanding all its privileges, the Christian Church and people apostatized; 'their vine degenerating into the vine of Sodom, their grapes becoming grapes of gall, their clusters bitter, and their wine the poison of dragons.' (Deut. 32:32.) For a greatly protracted period the longsuffering of God. was foreshown as bearing with it. But now that period was over; its clusters were more than ripe; and its fated time of punishment, like that of the Jewish vine before it, fully come."

It is doubtless true that "the vine of the earth" in its widest significance describes what is commonly misnamed Christendom (professed Christian organizations, national, religious and social). It seems evident, from the fact that the prophecies that picture the closing scenes of the Age are now meeting their fulfillment, that Christendom is getting ready rapidly for the great "winepress" of destruction. How clearly this is seen in the great work of reconstruction now going on! a work made necessary and induced by the devastating effects of the great war, the war itself which caused these conditions being a subject of prophecy. This work is being engaged in by both civil and religious leaders. The nations that were engaged in the great war were nearly all professedly Christian nations. The principle that, with a few notable exceptions, is influencing the great leaders in the work of reconstruction is, 'not Christian, but rather, that of selfishness, individual and national. It seemed during the dark days of the great world-war that

the spirit of national selfishness was to a considerable extent to become eliminated and there would come out of it something of a brotherly feeling among the nations. It is, however, now, very apparent that the lessons of the great trouble will to a considerable extent go unheeded. In this connection the words of Pastor Russell, uttered twenty-five years ago are, at the present time, of deep and solemn significance:

"Selfishness is the controlling principle, not only: with -the major part of, but with nearly all Christendom, and is bearing its own bitter fruit and ripening it now rapidly for the great vintage of Revelation 14:19-20."--*Studies Vol. IV*, p. 311.

Again concerning the same matter, we, read:

"The fruitage (clusters), of Vine of the Earth is selfishness in various forms [national and religious], and will be ultimately gathered into the great winepress of the wrath of God in the great time of trouble with which this Age will close.--John 15:1-6; Rev. 14:19."--*Studies Vol. VI*, p. 207.

THE ANCIENT WINEPRESS AS A SYMBOL

Without understanding something of the construction and use of a literal, ancient winepress, it- will hardly be possible to understand its use and application as a symbol in this vision. The following description will be to, the point:

"From the scanty notices contained in the Bible we gather that the winepresses of the Jews consisted of two receptacles or vats, placed at different elevations, in the upper one of which grapes were trodden, while the lower one received the expressed juice. The two vats are mentioned only in Joel 3:13: 'The press is full; the vats overflow'-the upper vat being full of fruit, the lower one overflowing with the must (wine). The two vats were usually hewn but of the solid rock. (Isa. 5:2, margin; Matt. 21:33.) Ancient winepresses so constructed, are still to be seen in Palestine."--*Bible Dictionary, Peloubet and Adams*.

Another description having associated with it the meaning as a symbol, is very instructive:

"A winepress among the Israelites was like a threshing floor; and therefore we read that Gideon was threshing in one of them. (Judges 6:11.) The form of it seems to have been this: Suppose a bank of earth raised in a convenient circumference, or else a floor sunk below the surface of the ground about it, that the grapes and the juice may be kept in; then on one side a pit was sunk much lower than the floor, to place the vats to receive the new pressed juice falling into them. This floor was the winepress. Hence we may easily understand why our Savior expressed the making of a winepress by digging; as also Isaiah in chapter 5.

"The meaning of the symbol is very easy. The Indian Oneirocritic in ch. 196 explains it of great conquest, and by consequence much slaughter. It is so used in Isa. 63:3: 'I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there were none with me: And I trod them in mine anger, and I trampled upon them in mine indignation, and their life blood was sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all mine apparel.

"And in Lamentation 1:15, the destruction of Judah is represented under this type: Jehovah hath trodden down all my valiant ones in the midst of me: He hath called

du assembly, against me, to crush my young men; Jehovah hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress!

"And the, symbol is extremely proper. The pressure of the grapes till their blood comes out, as their juice is called in Dent. 32:14, aptly representing the great pressure or affliction and effusion of blood."

Commenting on Rev. 14:19, this writer thus elaborates:

"To tread a winepress, as before remarked, is a prophetic description of destruction. The images of this vision are very strong and expressive. The largest winepresses were used to be in some places out of the city. So in [Rev. 14:1 v. 20, 'The winepress was trodden without the city,' and -seems to intimate the great numbers that shall be involved in this general destruction. This judgment seems to be in the future. No past period or event appears exactly applicable to it. It must be, therefore, left to time to more fully explain it."--Symbol *Dictionary*--Thomas Wemyss.

Concerning what the great winepress itself symbolizes, we quote the words of Pastor Russell:

"It pictures to our minds the last features of the great time, of trouble which shall involve all nations, and of which we are so abundantly forewarned in the Scriptures." -*Studies Vol. IV, P. 18.*

Concerning who is to tread the winepress we have this explanation by Pastor Russell:

"The fact that the King of kings' is represented as treading the winepress '*alone*' indicates that the power exerted 'for the overthrow of, the nations will be Divine power, and not mere, human energy. It will be God's power that will punish the nations, and that will eventually 'bring forth judgment (justice, righteousness, truth) unto victory. 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth; and with the breath of His lips [the force and spirit of His Truth] shall He slay, the wicked.' (Isa. 11:4; Rev, 19:15; Psa. 98:1.) To no human generalship can, the honors of the coming victory for truth, and righteousness be ascribed. Wild will be the conflict of the angry nations, and world-wide will be the battlefield and the distress of nations; and no human Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon will be found to bring order out, of the dreadful confusion. But in the end it will be known that the grand victory of justice and truth, and the punishment of iniquity with its just deserts, was brought about by the mighty power of the King of kings and Lord of lords."--*Studies Vol 'IV, pp. 18, 19.*

It will be noticed that in this last citation from Pastor Russell, we have his thought that the great victory over the enemies of God, the great "vine of the earth," will be accompanied by a wonderful outpouring of truth; not alone truth on God's Word, but truth concerning the rights and wrongs of men, both high and low, which will expose or bring to the lime-light the unrighteousness, selfishness, injustice and un-Christlikeness upon which the present so-called Christian civilization is founded, and has been built. And this is in perfect harmony with the-Apostle Paul's description of the overthrow of the "Man of Sin" (the Papal hierarchy), one of the very noted events that will occur seemingly just before this treading of the symbolical winepress. The remarkable diffusion of knowledge which began to come in the opening years of the nineteenth century, the

beginning of the "time of the end," and which has greatly increased since, is doubtless one factor. that has exposed the false claims of the great religious systems and governments of Christendom.

THE SICKLE OF DIVINE TRUTH

However, it is doubtless those unfoldings of the prophecies I , by God's messengers concerning the apostate condition of Christendom that have had; during the Harvest period, and will continue to have in a greater- measure, an effect to expose the claim of these false religious systems to be the representatives of God, that are referred to by the "Sickle" in the hand of the angel of this vision. The truth on. these and many other matters is beginning to reach the lower classes and will finally array class against class in the great Armageddon conflict, the last phase of which seems to be portrayed in this great winepress treading of verse 20.

Concerning the gathering together of the "tare" systems described in Matt. 13, which Pastor Russell understood as describing in a general way the same transactions as the ,gathering of the ripe clusters of the "vine of the earth," we have this explanation by him:

"The Truth now due is the sickle in this Harvest, just as a similar sickle was used in the Jewish Harvest. The reapers, the angels or messengers, now, are the Lord's followers. . . . Not only is this, the time for the gathering of the saints by the Truth (into oneness with their Lord and each other, and out of fellowship with mere professors, tares), but it is also a time for cleaning up the field by consuming the tares, stubble, weeds, etc., preparatory to the new sowing. In one sense the 'wheat' is gathered out from among the tares--because of the greater abundance of tares--as when the Lord says, Come out of her, my people! Yet, in another sense, the separation is properly represented by the tares being gathered from the wheat. Really, the wheat, has. the place by right; it is a Wheat-field, not a tare-field (the world of mankind being counted the ground out of which the wheat and also the tares, grow- or develop); so it is the tares that are out of place. and need to, be removed. The Lord started the wheat-field, and the wheat represents the children of the Kingdom. (Matt. 13:38.) And since the field or world is to be given to these, and already belongs to them by promise, the parable shows that really it is the tares that are gathered out and burned, leaving the field, and All in it, to the wheat. The tares are returned to the ground (world) whence they came, and the first-fruits of the wheat are to be gathered into the garner, so that the earth may bring forth another crop. . . .

"The sickle of truth prepares this class for the freedom wherewith Christ originally made all free, though the same sickle has an opposite influence upon the tares. The spirit of the tares is towards. sectarian greatness and show, rather than toward individual obedience and allegiance to God. Hen present truths [the sickle], the tendency of which -they at once discover to be to condemn all sectarianism, and to test each individual, they reject and strongly. oppose."*--Studies Vol. III, pp. 139, 140, 141.

*We recommend that the context of this quotation be carefully read;

THE SECOND ANGEL WITH THE SICKLE

Let the thought be impressed upon the mind of the reader that the sickle that gathers the wheat is the same sickle that gathers the tares-it is the Truth and not the Angel. From the foregoing we have clearly seen, in harmony with Pastor Russell's understanding, that the events of our Lord's parable are identical with the vision of the gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth, and we have in the same, a basis for the unfolding of this part of this Revelation vision. With the foregoing facts in mind we now proceed to notice some of the particular symbols of the vision under consideration. The first feature of which is contained in the words: "And Another Angel came forth out of That Temple which is in Heaven; he also having a sharp Sickle."--Rev. 14:17.

All of the older expositors, those from whose writings we have frequently quoted, interpret this angel to be a heavenly spirit being, coming out from the Temple in Heaven, the place of God's abode. These make this gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth to be accomplished by heavenly angels. A recent expositor represents this angel to be Pastor Russell, *after ter his death*, beyond the veil, and the Temple in Heaven to be "the Church in glory, on the other side of the veil." This expositor further enlarges, on this matter by saying that Pastor* Russell in glory is, the one having the sharp Sickle and is now "directing the execution upon the nominal Church of the chastisements promised in the Holy Word." This same expositor interprets the angel that comes out from the altar of v.. 18 to be the "corporate body [the business corporation] which Pastor Russell organized to finish his work [it is claimed]." The Winepress is represented by this same expositor to be "the exposition of the prophecies of Ezekiel and the Revelator." It seems most apparent that all of these interpretations are entirely erroneous and unworthy of credence, because the heavenly Temple is not yet complete, nor did the results that were expected to take place in 1918 by the distribution of these expositions, eventuate, nor, any fraction, of them.

We inquire then, Who, or what is represented by this angel? Close attention to the interpretation by Pastor Russell of the parable of the wheat and tares which corresponds to this vision would seem to teach that this angel represented *a* human movement on this side rather than one of the literal angels or glorified saints beyond the **veil and, that noting the identity of the two sickles**, the one in the hand of the "Son of Man," the Chief **Reaper, the other** in the hand of the angel that Came out of "**that Temple which, is in Heaven,**" **we are led, to the conclusion** that the various features of present Truth given by Christ at the beginning of the Harvest, to the special messenger through a study of His Word, and communicated by him to the saints during the Harvest, are *represented by the Sickle in the hands of the angel*. We accordingly interpret this angel to be *the living saints of the Harvest* under the special messenger. "That Temple in Heaven" from which he came out, we would understand to represent the nominal Temple; and the coming out to be the separation of God's saints from the nominal Temple, Babylon. The "Heaven" then in harmony with this interpretation would represent the nominal, symbolical heavens of the Babylonian systems. The Sickle of present Truth was first given by the Son of -Man. to the special messenger who in turn gave it to God's saints in Babylon, and was the agent of their call and coming out, as we read, "Come out of her my people," etc. (Rev. 18:4). In this instance, however, all the truths of whatever character which reveal the apostate

condition of the -fallen systems are doubtless referred to. "It is well to keep in mind as having a very important bearing on the interpretation of succeeding visions that in this one, we have only a supplementary, an outline prefiguration of the gathering and destruction of the false, vine of the earth," the false Christian systems, nations, institutions, etc. In the visions that follow, namely, those in chapters 15 and 16, we have a much fuller, a more detailed description of this great judgment of Christendom. With this in mind at this point, we briefly and carefully examine the more complete unfolding of the occurrences of this vision contained in chapters 15 and 16 to find, if possible, assistance to an understanding of this symbol. Doing this we discover, as supporting the above interpretation of the angel coming out of the Temple which is in Heaven, an interpretation by Pastor Russell to the same effect, which is that of the seven angels coming out of the Temple, having the seven last plagues. (Rev. 15:8.) We quote his words:

"We interpret the 'seven angels' to mean the saints) the living saints, they being the representatives or active agents of the - entire re anointed company as 'the feet of Him,' . . . The Temple [from which they came out] symbolizes the nominal church."--Z June '83, p. 7.

Still another instance in which the Temple is thus applied to the nominal church is found in a comment by Pastor Russell on Rev, 16:1. (Z, June '83.) These Scriptures will be considered in their order.

ANOTHER ANGEL CAME FORTH OUT OF THE ALTAR

Another feature that properly comes under our consideration at this point is that contained in the statement: "And Another Angel came forth out of the Altar having authority over the Fire."--Rev. 14:18.

In our endeavor to discover the significance and application of this vision of the angel coming forth out of the Altar, etc., and its relation to the Angel with the Sickle, we note first , that the symbolism is doubtless suggested or drawn from a particular service that was performed by the Aaronic priesthood. This is recorded in Lev. 6:9-11. This is seen in the fact, that -this angel, like the priest in the above instance, is associated with the altar service, the altar of sacrifice, and has power over the altar fire. We ask the reader to note carefully this Leviticus incident, considering the following matters that seem to be referred to in the vision under consideration:

- (1) The Fire over which this angel has authority doubtless refers to the fire that consumed the daily sacrifice.
- (2) It was the priest's duty to keep this sacred fire burning continually.
- (3) It was also his duty to gather together the ashes that were mixed with the propitiatory offering, as sacred things and lay them beside the altar.
- (4) It was further his duty after their accumulation to change his garments. and carry the ashes as sacred things outside the camp to a clean place.

In our effort to discover the significance of these things, let us not conclude that this Revelation vision is the anti-typical fulfillment of this Levitical transaction; but rather that the particular features mentioned are drawn from this typical

service and are designed to assist to the understanding and application of the same. Still further we notice that the events that will fulfil this Altar symbol we are considering are very evidently associated with those described in Rev. 6:9-11, namely, those of the souls crying under the Altar, and the response.

JUSTICE LONG DEFERRED

In order that we may see that this is so, we quote Pastor Russell's brief explanation of that vision. Referring in a general way to the significance of the cry, "How long, O Sovereign Lord! the Holy one and true! dost thou not judge and take vengeance for our Blood from Those who Dwell on the Earth?" He says:

"This is a symbolical picture of justice long deferred crying for vengeance, representing those [God's saints] who are actually dead, and know not anything, and cannot know anything until the resurrection.. The answer to this query before the seat of Justice is given. We are told that it would be but a little while until others are similarly maltreated, and the intimation is given that *then* [after a little while] the judgment will come which will compensate for the whole."--Z '07-233.

It will be recalled that we interpreted this martyr cry to have had its fulfillment at the close of the 1260 years of Papal ascendancy over the saints, 1799. (H '19, p. 72.) The connection between that vision and the one under consideration is this: In this we are now considering, the time had come to respond to that cry from under the altar of Divine justice to bring vengeance upon the persecuting systems, "the false vine of the earth," We would, therefore, understand, that this Angel who came from out of the altar represented a distinct movement among the Lord's consecrated under Christ, which emphasized these coming judgments, declaring that the time I to respond to this cry of the martyrs was at hand. The feature of the vision described as the gathering together of the cluster of the vine of the earth is now fulfilling before our eyes. The treading of the Winepress is evidently an event of the future. We quote from a noted commentator, in which quotation some of the particular symbols of this Altar Angel are explained:

"As to the Angel that had to announce to the one just mentioned the precise moment for his putting in the Sickle of execution. His description is remarkable both as being the one 'that had authority over the fire' (that is the altar fire), and as appearing to come forth 'from out of the altar.' He answered evidently . . . to those Levitical priests of the Jewish earthly temple, whose office was to keep the sacred fire, ever burning on the altar, in order to the consumption of the daily holocausts and of the voluntary burnt offerings and peace offerings; as well as also to look to the ashes left from the-burning, and take charge of them as sacred things, Thus his bearing part in the prefigured judgment might seem to indicate two things respecting it: (1). It indicated that it was as a sacrifice to the Divine Justice that the vine was to be gathered, and its clusters trod in the winepress; the heaven-derived altar fire being the perpetual visible symbol among the Jews of God's justice. ... (2). It pointed to one special cause of God's wrath against earth's inhabitants, namely, their slaughter of the martyrs; whose [symbolical] ashes, as, of acceptable self devoted holocausts, mixed with those of the propitiatory burnt offering, had long been accumulating (under this angel's charge, it is to be supposed) be side the Apocalyptical [symbolical] altar. Already early in the drama a voice had been heard by St. John from the souls of the witnesses slain for Christ

beneath the altar, 'Lord, how long dost thou not avenge our blood on those who dwell on the 'earth.' . . . Now, however (and perhaps with some last notable act of martyrdom marking the epoch), the cry of this Angel issuing from the interior of or hollow beneath the altar, proclaimed that their number was completed, the asserted power of the two witnesses to bring down fire from heaven against their injurers to consume them, about to be fearfully illustrated before the world; and the earth to disclose her blood and no more cover her slain." -- Elliott, Horae Apocalypticæ.

BALANCING ACCOUNTS OF JUSTICE

The following comment by Pastor Russell, which has special reference to the Great Company's connection (Rev. 7:9-11) with this last "great time of trouble," in which the false "vine of the earth" will be destroyed, is to the point and has an important bearing on this symbolic angel and his cry. It was given in connection with an explanation of the antitypical fulfillment of the words of the Savior to the Jewish nation, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." (Matt. 23:35.) The comment is: "This was the 'wrath to the uttermost' which came upon Jerusalem and that seems to have squared up the account so far as the past was concerned. A new beginning was made-there, just as a new dispensation began. The Antitypical Priesthood and the Antitypical Levites then came- on the scene, and throughout this Gospel Age also the Lord has taken -cognizance of the death of all His consecrated people. If anyone is guilty of the death of one of the Lord's saintly, consecrated ones, he brings himself under a special obligation and--responsibility. There seems to be a special charge of justice against whoever is culpable, or responsible for the death or persecution of His saints. There is a suggestion along this line (Rev. 6:9,10), where the souls of those who. were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the testimony of the Word of God are said to cry out, 'How long! How long! oh Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.' This seems to symbolically picture, not the crying of any individual, for these individuals were dead and had no knowledge, no appreciation of the things at all--the dead know not anything but it was justice that cried, as in Abel's case, after- he was dead. They had nothing to do with the crying of their blood. It was the voice of justice. . . .

"The suffering and death of the Great Company, is, as we have seen, necessary, and the application of this suffering and death in a substitutionary manner for the special transgressions against the 'Body of Christ' seems to be a particular provision on the Lord's part. In this way the 'souls under the altar' and their blood cry for vengeance; and in this way the vengeance will be met. The cry of Justice will be satisfied in connection with the death of these innocent persons of the Great Company class in the time of trouble. The death of Nero's victims will be recompensed, we may suppose, by those who may suffer innocently. The accounts of justice, in this respect, Will be satisfied."--Z '10-235, 236.

This cry of the angel who was seen by St. John coming out of the Altar then, seems to represent the cry of Justice speaking through the unfolding and proclamation of those prophecies that describe the just judgments-of God about to be poured out on Christendom.

THE BOY SAMUEL

--MAY 2-1 SAMUEL 1:24-28; 3:1-21--

Golden Text.--*"My son, give me thy heart; and let thine eyes delight in my ways."*--Prov. 23:26.

SAMUEL, THE PROPHET, is one of the grand, strong characters of Old Testament times. The story of his early devotion to the Lord and his obedience and perseverance in well doing, constitutes a grand lesson, not only for young Christians, but also for those more advanced in years, including parents. As the story of Ruth gives us glimpses of a time of life of the Israelites such as is generally obscured by the records of wars and troubles, so also does the story of Samuel. He was of the tribe of Levi, already consecrated to the Lord, and accepted. An insight into the deep piety of his parents is given in the first chapter of the Book. A child born under such circumstances of prayer and devotion to the Lord, could not, under natural laws, fail to be noble minded and religiously inclined. Would that we could impress this thought upon all Christians who become parents-that their children should be devoted to the Lord from the moment of conception, and daily prayer and effort should be made that prenatal influences might all conduce to the highest mental, moral and physical welfare of the offspring.- "Who can bring a clean thing out of, an un-clean?" asked the Prophet, and he answers, "Not one." Our expectation should not, therefore, be that the children even of the saints would be absolutely perfect; but we are to remember that the Lord accepts the heart, the intention, the will; and that agreeably to His arrangement of nature, the mind, the intention, the will of the parents may be expressed in their child. True, the imperfect mind cannot even grasp or picture perfect things, but it can approximate them, and in that same proportion it can impress that approximation of character upon the offspring.

UNEQUALLY YOKED PARENTS

There is an old adage that "blood will tell"--that is, that culture and good breeding will be marked in the offspring. It is surely a fact that character will tell. Christians, thoroughly devoted to the Lord and seeking day by day to know and to do the Divine will, and who are under the instruction of the Holy Spirit in the School of Christ and somewhat developed in grace and in knowledge of the Truth, whose minds are transformed by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and their affections set upon things above, will surely mark and impress the spiritual qualities of their own hearts upon the natural offspring. Such children, well born and devoted to the Lord from conception, will, of course, in childhood, be trained by the same parents in the ways of the Lord, in the ways of righteousness, of justice, of truth and of love. Thus begotten and thus trained, it seems very improbable that they should afterward depart from the way of the Lord, or that they should permanently remain transgressors, even though temporarily misled through temptation.

While the Lord has directed His children not to be unequally yoked together, with unbelievers, nevertheless, where the yoking or marriage has occurred prior to their covenant with the Lord, He has arranged that the fruit of their marriage, their

children, shall be accounted as the. Lord's- through the consecrated parent; and His blessing *Will* accordingly be with the consecrated child regardless of the fact that one of its parents was an unbeliever. The Apostle clearly states this in I Cor. 7:14.

It is a serious error--and one into which some Christians have fallen--to suppose parentage to be dishonor-able or sinful, some even claiming 'that "original - sin" 'was of this sort. The Scriptures teach quite to the contrary, declaring that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." We are to remember, too, that the Divine- Plan for the propagation of the race was are ranged, and the command to multiply and fill -the earth was given before sin entered the world--before the disobedience in Eden. The Apostle severely reprimands those. forbidding to marry," and distinctly says. in his letter to Timothy, "I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the Adversary to speak reproachfully."-1 TIM. -5:14.

Neither is this in conflict with his declarations in Cor. 7, that "he that marrieth doeth well, but he that marrieth not doeth better." In his letter to Timothy he is speaking of the younger persons of the congregation; whereas in his advice in Corinthians he is address Jug such members of the Church as had made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and were seek ing to run in the race course toward the mark for the prize. And our advice to others on this subject should be strictly along these inspired lines. The advice not to marry will usually be found helpful to those who have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, who will find that they can accomplish more in the Lord's service free, as far as possible, from earthly obligations and division of heart. But for others who are not New Creatures, though moral and well disposed, marriage is the reasonable and proper expectation of life according to Divine arrangement; it should not be hindered, but should be counseled as wisely as possible.

CONSECRATION OF OUR CHILDREN

We are to recognize a difference between the consecrated parents of Samuel and their prayers for a son, and the proper prayers of consecrated people of the -present time. Only since Pentecost have the Lord's people been privileged to be "New Creatures in Christ Jesus," begotten of the Holy Spirit; and such seek and pray for spiritual rather than natural children--by spending their lives as did their Master, seeking to transform children of the first Adam into spiritual children of God. It is in view of this, and when addressing spirit-begotten ones that the Apostle declares, that "he that marrieth not doeth better,"--because he will, generally speaking, find the unmarried condition most favorable to his new ambitions.

Born in response to prayer and consecration, Samuel was, doubtless, a remarkable boy; and his parents showed the sincerity of. their prayer in the fact that he was early brought to the high priest at Shiloh and formally presented to the Lord's service. We read that this was when he was "weaned," but are not to suppose that it was when as an infant he was weaned from the breast; but, father, interpreting the word on a larger scale, we should understand it was when he was weaned from his mother, in the sense of being able to get along without her care: this was probably When he was from ten to twelve years of age..

We are often surprised that Christian parents, be gotten of the Holy Spirit, do not I manifest more of this spirit which.. actuated the parents of Samuel. Many seemingly consecrated people hold back their most precious possessions,, their children, from the Lord, and incline to devote them to, some worldly calling in life -- medicine, law, industry. Whether their course is prompted by too great humility or too, great selfishness, it is not our-province to determine, but Seemingly they either have not the faith to believe that the Lord would accept their offering, or they cherish, perhaps, but half unconsciously, a desire to see their children prosper after the manner of the world, and fear, that their consecration to the Lord might in some manner blight their earthly prospects. What a great mistake! Do not such parents know that it is their privilege to present themselves to the Lord and all they have, including their children? and do they not know, too, that "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it"? (Prov. 10:22.) Can they not realize that it is better to be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness? and that greater happiness would accompany a devoted life, even though spent in poverty,, than could come through. any other course, even though surrounded by every luxury? Have they not learned, these lessons from. their own experiences? and can they not apply them likewise to their own children?

"TRAIN UP A CHILD"

Samuel ministered to Eli in the temple; that is, he served the high priest-who, was specially the Lord's servant and representative-in his dwelling apartments which were close- by the tabernacle--for the temple was not yet built. Samuel's parents, in thus subjecting him early *in* life to the duties of a servant, were really putting him *in* a most excellent school. In *our* opinion it is a mistake to suppose, that the early. years of life -- from ten to eighteen -- should be largely spent in play; not *only* is, the wisdom- of bringing children early into positions of responsibility, and more or less of routine and drudgery, exemplified in the case of Samuel, but it is also exemplified in the cases of many of the prominent people of this- land today. Mr. Carnegie, whose fame is world-wide, entered early upon the drudgery of life as a telegraph messenger. Mr. Edison, whose fame as an electrician is also world-wide, began life's drudgery as a newsboy. And thus it is in perfect accord with the experience's of today in worldly things that we perceive that the consecration of Samuel as a servant of Eli at an early age, had probably, much to do with the firmness and grandeur of his character when, subsequently, he became the Lord's Prophet, and the last and the greatest of Israel's judges.

Our observation is that there is no more common MIS take made by parents than that of supposing their children could not properly understand or appreciate, religious things at an early age--say I twelve years. The experience of Samuel and our own experience and that of many others assure us that some of the deepest religious sentiments may be experienced as early as twelve years of age. This should be watched for -by the parents and should be cultivated-with much more care than the tenderest flowers in their gardens. The flowers of veneration, spirituality, hope, faith, trust, in the child-mind need and should have tenderest care and watering and weeding and assistance., The parent by nature and by Divine direction occupying a responsible position as gardener to these, must appreciate flowers in the hearts of his own family; and if he neglect his

responsibilities he is culpable and will surely suffer, not only disappointment in respect to his children in the future, but stiffer also in that he will be the loser of certain blessings in his own heart; because it is a part of the Divine arrangement that he that watereth others shall himself be watered.

Public responsibilities and duties, and trying to save other people's children, can never excuse any Christian parent from his responsibilities toward his own children, nor can he shift his responsibilities upon Sunday School teachers. His neglect of duty will surely work to his own disadvantage as well as to the disadvantage of his offspring; and if in the past he, has been negligent in this matter he cannot too soon rectify matters, though he will need to pray for and to seek to exercise greater wisdom in order to overcome his past neglect.

Dr. Haslett, in his *Pedagogical Bible School*, submits, the following as the sum of his findings from various statistics :

Out of 8,424 conversions

5,054 occurred between the ages of 12-20 years.

3,183 occurred between the ages of 16-25 years.

187 occurred at 25 years and over.

GOD'S MOUTHPIECE TWELVE YEARS OLD

The story of the Lord's first message to Samuel is beautiful in its simplicity. The boy evidently was accustomed to obeying the calls of Eli for various services, at various times, and to this end had his sleeping apartments near by, Eli being advanced in life, about seventy-eight years. Three times the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, "Here am I," and went to Eli. It was, after the third call that Eli instructed him to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

The record is that for a long time such a message from the Lord had been "Precious," that is, scarce: Eli, although a good man, and sincere and faithful and kind in his dealings with Samuel, had been too lax in his dealings with his own sons, who were priests and had much to do with the services of the tabernacle, and who therefore, in every sense of the word should have been pious and exemplary men. The Lord had already sent Eli a warning message respecting his sons who were profligate and, open transgressors, not only in financial affairs, but also in morals. Eli should have realized his responsibilities and should have checked their wrong course and, if necessary, should have dismissed them, from the service of the tabernacle even though they were his own sons; but in proportion as he had grown weak in mind and body, they had grown strong, self-willed and impious, and the old man seems not to have had the necessary strength of character to deal with them. The Lord's message delivered to Samuel was in respect to Eli's family and the punishment that should come upon them for their sins, which were much more grievous in view of the fact that they were the exemplars and instructors of the people.

JUDGE ELI UNFAITHFUL TO GOD

Judge Eli's weakness as a parent led him, to unfaithfulness to God. His is not a sample of an "overcoming" character: he more nearly represented, the character of the - "Great Company." He had many, good qualities. No vulgar sin is laid at his door. In many respects he placed the honor of God far beyond his personal

interests. We see no manifestation of selfish ambition on his part opposing Samuel's advancement. Indeed to his credit be it noted that he fathered Samuel well. -He disapproved the course of his sons, but, -aged, -he failed of the courage to denounce their course with -proper vigor, as the Lord's words seem to intimate. We are not to forget, either, that, among the twelve directly under our Lord's instruction one exercising his free Will became a traitor. We fear that, however *trained*, those who turn out badly are generally not well endowed in their begetting: though here also we remember Satan as an example of a perfect begetting and perfect training, which were lost before the energy of his ambitions.

THE VOICE, OF THE LORD

In the morning Samuel hesitated to tell his kind master, Eli, the unfavorable message he had received of the Lord in the night; but Eli was anxious to know whatever the Lord had to say, and importuned until Samuel told him all. There is a good lesson here for the Lord's people -'a- lesson of humility and kindness; the lad might have felt puffed up to think that the Lord, who so seldom spoke to any, had now spoken to him; he might have felt himself honored and above Eli, in that the message spoke of the discomfiture of the latter; pride might have made him boastful and inconsiderate of the feelings of his master so that he would have taken delight in telling him of the calamities that would come, and how greatly he had been honored of the Lord. Samuel, on the contrary, exhibited the spirit of meekness, apparently not even considering the honor that had come to him; but, rather, sympathizing with his master, he would have preferred not to burden his heart -with the message of calamity.

The Lord is speaking now to some of his faithful ones through His Word, through His "knock" (Rev. 3:20), which tells us of His presence, through the signs which mark the incoming of the new dispensation: are any 'disposed now to be haughty and proud and boastful because the Lord has permitted them to hear His voice and to know something of His Plan and of the calamities coming upon Babylon? Should they not rather be filled with humility so that self would be lost sight of entirely? Should not all favored of the Lord speak of the trouble coming upon Babylon sympathetically, with a disposition to assist to an escape, rather than a disposition to gloat over and rejoice in coming troubles in which present systems will be completely overthrown?

The Lord speaks in our day in a different, manner from that in which He spoke in olden times: as the Scriptures declare, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.) The Word of the Lord is still precious and scarce in that it is not, at the present time, given to all, but only to a certain class; as it is written, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." The majority of mankind hath no ear to hear at the present time, no eye to see the glorious beauty of God's Plan..As the Apostle explains, "The god of this world hath blinded their minds"--earthly things, earthly ambitions, earthly hopes, earthly calls and voices, distract their attention, fill their capacity; but blessed are our eyes for they see, and our ears for they hear, and blessed shall we be if, like Samuel, when we hear the Lord's message we respond promptly, "Speak, Lord, for, thy servant heareth." Such as thus 'respond shall be taught of God by the Word of His grace -- the words of the Lord Jesus, and the words of His inspired Apostles--instructed and

guided in the understanding of these through the Holy Spirit, through the various helps and channels and agents which the Lord is pleased to use--perhaps a tract, perhaps a book, perhaps a letter, perhaps, a conversation, perhaps a sermon.

He who would continue to be taught of the Lord must continue to listen for His voice, continue to be in the hearing and obeying attitude of heart. The difficulty with some apparently is--that their own wills are not fully extinct, dead--that their consecration is not complete; hence while consecrated enough to wish not to disobey the Lord's voice, they have certain ideas of their own respecting what His voice should say, and they prefer to interpret His message in conformity to their own preferences: they will do more or less their own wills, and will not hear the Lord's voice directing them in accordance with their own wills. This is a most dangerous situation and is generally accompanied by self-conceit and self-assertion and will ultimately lead far from the Christian's goal. Let each of us resolve by the Lord's grace that we will out of honest hearts continually seek to hear the pure Word of God, and that with a desire to obey it as far as we are able.

FACE TO FACE. WITH TROUBLE

"You are face to face with trouble,
And the skies are murk and gray;
You hardly know which way to turn,
You are almost dazed, you say.
And at night 'you wake to wonder
What the next day's news will bring;
Your pillow is brushed by phantom care
With a grim and ghastly wing.

"You are face to face with trouble;
A child has gone astray;
A ship is wrecked on the bitter sea;
There's a note you cannot pay;
Your brave right hand is feeble;
Your sight is growing blind;
Perhaps a friend is cold and stern,
Who was ever warm and kind.

"You are face to face with trouble;
No wonder you cannot sleep-,
But stay, and think of the promise,
The Lord will safely keep,
And lead you out of the thicket,
And into the pasture land;
You have only to walk straight onward,
Holding the dear Lord's hand.

"You are face to face with trouble;
And did you forget to look,
As the good old father taught you,

For help to the dear old Book?
You have heard the Tempter whisper,
And you've had no heart to pray,
And God has dropped from your scheme of life,
For--oh, many a weary day!

"Then face to face with trouble;
It is thus He, calls you back
From the land of dearth and famine
To the land that has no lack.
You would not hear in the sunshine;
You hear in the midnight gloom,
Behold, His Tapers kindle
Like stars in the quiet room.

"Oh! face to face with trouble,
Friend, I have often stood,
To learn that pain has sweetness,
To know that God is good.
Arise and meet the daylight;
Be strong and do your best!
With an honest heart, and a **childlike faith**
That God will do the rest."

ELI AND HIS SONS

--MAY 9-1 SAMUEL 2:12-17; 4:1-18--

Go!den Text. --"The wages of sin is death; I but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."--Rom. 6:23.

THIS LESSON is the -greatest contrast to the last. In that lesson we studied the training of a good son of good parents; in this we have the sad subject of the bad sons of a good father, and the ruin wrought by their misdeeds. The warnings of this lesson may be as effective as the inspiration of the last lesson.

The sons of Eli (Hophni and Phinehas) were base men!, "sons of Belial," that is, of worthlessness, for Belial in the Old Testament is not a proper name. They knew not Jehovah. They, knew Him with the head, for they were instructed by Eli and were officiating priests; but they did not know Him with the heart. They understood the law, but did not obey it. They had faith, it may be, but their faith was dead without works.--Jas. 2:17.

Eli's experience with his wayward sons, however, calls for our sympathy, even though he brought his difficulties upon himself by reason of his neglect of the early training of them in the ways of the Lord., in the ways of His righteousness. Doubtless he often looked ,at the faithful lad who ministered to him so patiently and industriously, and wished that his sons had been of similar disposition; but the time so to wish advantageously and- profitably was long gone by; they should have been begotten in the spirit of consecration, and trained in conformity therewith, and the Lord's Word for it is that when they were, old they would not

have departed from it. There is a lesson for parents here, too; the fact that the Lord's service is to be considered of primary importance and is to be defended even at the expense of their own flesh and blood.

A KIND AND INDULGENT PARENT

There are two kinds of unfaithful parents:

(1) The harsh, cruel, wicked, who not only inbreed an evil disposition, but inculcate the same by precept and example. If both parents be of this stripe the child's condition is almost a hopeless one for the present life. The restitution conditions of the Millennium will be needed to eradicate the taint. Yet where one parent belongs to God, the result may under Divine providence be the reverse-the child may not only be better born, but discerning the evil of his, parent's course may thereby be repelled and prepared to take the opposite course.

(2) Some "kind, and indulgent parents" are very unfaithful to their trust. With our children partakers of the general weaknesses of the race, a kindness arid an, Indulgence which allow noxious weeds to develop in their characters is gross unkindness, very reprehensible in the sight of God and those in accord with His Word. Indeed, it is possible that this term, "kind and indulgent parent," is frequently used very- inappropriately. In many instances it would be more truthful if less polite to say, "A weak and incompetent parent."

Surely all proper parents from the. Divine viewpoint will be kind to their children, and all such should be .glad to be indulgent also, to the extent' that the best interests of the child will permit--and not one inch further. But while the correcting rod must not be spared when necessary nor used. when unnecessary, nor too severely-yet the best rule -where possible, where the disposition of the child will permit, *is the rule of love*. Beginning early, the parents' love combined with firmness should so mould the child's mind that it would have absolute confidence in the parents' love and in their loyalty to God's 'regulations in all of life's interests. To such a child the look of sadness and regret or the tear of sorrow on I the parents' face will be more efficacious than many blows and much violent language.

GOD'S ARK IN WICKED HANDS

Some twenty years after God's prediction of the calamities that would befall Eli and his family, the tragedy related in this lesson occurred. In all those twenty years, apparently no reformations had, taken place--the aged Eli, now ninety-eight years old, had not purged the servants or the service of the Lord. He had allowed matters to continue in the hands of his -sons, notwithstanding their continual dishonesty in the, things of God, and their immorality and- pernicious example. Samuel, apparently, may have been absent at the time of this lesson, and perhaps for years before. Wherever he was, we may be sure he was a true servant of God, and more and more recognized of the people as such.

We are not to overestimate the moral and religious conditions of the people during those twenty years; but we may assume that the evil example of the priests, the sons of Eli, whom he had associated with him in the priestly office, had an injurious effect upon the people -- a demoralizing effect. According to God's covenant with the nation, He was bound to reprove them, punish them. A fresh

invasion of the Philistines took place. The Israelites went out to meet them in battle and were defeated. In their chagrin, and groping after some help, they looked to God, just as all the nations of Europe have been looking to God for help and praying in vain;

The usual customs under such conditions today are the same as then; namely, an attempt to bring God into war, an attempt to invoke the assistance of religious symbols, etc. And, indeed, the Israelites had more ground for so doing than have the warring kingdoms of today; for God had declared Himself to be the Keeper of Israel, and that they were His special nation, His ward, and that He would protect them as long as they would be loyal to Him. On the other hand, the kingdoms of this world have no such Divine promise, have no ground for such expectations of Divine aid. They are falsely styling themselves 'Christian kingdoms,' 'Christendom,' whereas they have neither part nor lot with the Lord. He recognizes no nations except Natural Israel of the past and Spiritual Israel of the present. "Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, a Royal Priesthood, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."--1 Peter 2:9.

The Israelites doubtless had read how the Ark went before them in the Wilderness journey, how it was in the midst of the River Jordan when the people crossed over dry-shod, and how it was in the procession that marched around Jericho when the walls fell. And so they determined to bring up the Ark of the Lord and put it in the battle with the people of Israel; and thus they thought they would insure victory. Their reasoning, apparently, was that God would not permit the Ark of the Covenant to be injured or to be captured; and hence they would be safe, and victory would be, bound to come to Israel.

With our mental eye we see the pageant:.. Here come the Levites, bearing the holy Ark of God, and the two sons of Eli,- arrayed as the priests of the Most High, the representatives of God's Holiness; and the people, enthused with the thought of -victory through the Ark of God, shouted' their usual battle-hymn, "Rise' up, Lord, and bet Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee- flee before Thee."--Num. 10: 35.

The people forgot that they had been living irreligiously, in violation. of their Covenant with God; and that that Covenant called for punishment upon, them at the hand of their enemies. They forgot that, the two representative priests by no means represented God and His Righteousness--that they were thieves and robbers, garbed As the priests of God; that they were immoral, impure, posing as the representatives of the Divine Holiness. They forgot that God's blessing was 'not to be expected under such conditions.

A PRESENT-DAY PARALLEL

And alas! Although we are many centuries removed from their time, we see much of this same principle today much shame. much - pretense, much misrepresentation of God on the part of those who profess to be His representatives. 'For- instance, we beheld the late world war, with the Kaiser of Germany at the head of the Lutheran Church; with Emperor Francis Joseph of Austrian Hungary, the chief Son of the Papacy; with King George at the head 'of the Church of England; with the Czar, the "little father" of Russia, the chief representative - of the Greek-

Catholic Church-all these marched out to battle, each rallying his soldiers with the thought - of God, each treading the precious Name of the Prince of Peace into the dust, each bent on the use of the sword for, the selfish purpose of promoting the greatness of his empire and its commercial prosperity, and, incidentally, upholding the traditions of the past respecting his' authority to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth,.

Today, as in the days of Eli's sons, the people give a shout as they couple the Cause of God with their national projects, Again they forget that the two are, entirely separate; that God's Cause is under Divine direction; and that His Cause will prosper best by the permission of a great defeat to all these systems of men, preparing incidentally for the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, after the Armageddon of the Bible shall have humbled the world and made them ready to acclaim the new King Immanuel and His Kingdom "the desire of all nations.'

Calling upon the Name of the Lord, and having the Ark of God in the battle did not help the Israelites, even as the carrying of the icons by the Russian soldiers did not give them the victory, nor the wearing of the name of God upon their belts, give the victory to the Germans, nor carrying of the Cross of St. George give victory to the armies of the British.

There was a- great slaughter and a scattering of the forces of the Israelites. The two sons of Eli were slain. The Ark of God was captured. A swift runner from the army brought the sad intelligence to Shiloh, where Eli as judge sat upon his high, seat in the gate, anxiously wondering' fearfully remembering the twenty-year-before prediction of disaster. The runner reported, to Eli that the battle had gone against the Israelites, that his two sons-were slain, and concluded by telling that the Ark of the Lord had also been captured by the Phillistines.

ISRAEL DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NATIONS

Eli heard all with equanimity until the last sentence. When he learned that his precious treasure, for which he was the guardian by Divine appointment, had been taken by the Philistines, the poor man fell over in- a faint, his chair toppled, his neck was broken. Although faithful at heart until death at ninety-eight, he nevertheless is not without reproof in that he neglected his family and neglected -to see that the work entrusted to him was not interfered with by those of his own house hold. His loyalty to God was not sufficiently great to hinder him from shirking his responsibility. In his character was too much of the spirit of "peace at any price," not enough of that courage which is prepared to die for righteousness sake.

The lesson taught to God's Covenant people, Israel, the Lord next sent chastisements upon the Philistines, so that they were glad to return the Ark to -the people of God. Some are inclined to make light of the declaration that the Philistines were plagued with mice and with hemorrhoids so long as they had the Ark with them; and that when the Ark had been restored to the Israelites, these plagues were removed. We have no .reason, however, to doubt that the Philistines had cause for the realization that these were special plagues, and the Scriptures seem to uphold the thought that they were of the Lord.

This does not authorize us in supposing that, every kind of plague today is of the Lord -- that pestilence, etc., ate special punishments of God. We must remember, when considering this matter, that the. nation of. Israel, and everything apper-

taining to it, was in a special covenant relationship with God and under Divine supervision . Whoever touched Israel or any of the things pertaining to the typical system was to that extent adverse to the Lord, His Cause, His interests, and this could be done only by the Lord's permission; and when the Lord wished to bring back the Ark, or deliver His people from such circumstances, it was for Him to bring to pass conditions necessary to that end.

There is no such condition of things prevailing today The nation of Israel is temporarily cut off from the Divine protection which was with them--until the full number from the Gentiles shall have been brought into spiritual Israel. Then all Israel will be recovered from their blindness and their alienation from God, as it' is written: "This is My covenant with them when I shall take a-way their sins."--Rom. 11:26-32.

The only people or nation now in covenant relationship ship -with God, according to, the Bible, is spiritual Israel, "a :holy nation, a Peculiar people." And, as respects spiritual Israel,' their interests are spiritual; and the Divine promises do not guarantee them earthly blessings and protection, but rather the reverse--persecution and opposition. God's guarantee to spiritual Israel however, is that all the adversities 'of the present life which He permits to- come to them will work out to their eternal spiritual welfare, if they are rightly exercised thereby.

Soldiers, of, Christ arise,
And, put your armor on.
Strong in the strength. which God supplies
Through His eternal, Son;
Strong in the Lord of. host.
And in. His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.