

# The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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## OUTLOOK FROM THE WALLS OF ZION

### MORE ABOUT THE INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT

WHILE, as our readers know, we are not lending support to any of the movements amongst men to accomplish human uplift, nor encouraging consecrated followers of Christ to do so, yet neither is our attitude one of unkind criticism of any of these philanthropic movements. Our attitude rather is that of deep sympathy with every effort to have truth and right prevail, as we believe that every child of God should be of this frame of mind.

The history of the human family down to our day presents many good and noble deeds and efforts On the part of our race, looking in the direction of the uplift and betterment of the state of human kind. For all such noble deeds and endeavors every Christian must have high respect and heartfelt sympathy, even though he knows that human plans and schemes are destined to fail so far as recovering our race is concerned, even as it is not in harmony with the Divine Plan and the predictions of Holy Writ that righteousness and truth should obtain the, ascendancy during the dispensation of the reign of evil, as during this time God is permitting the world to, gain an experience with sorrow and evil that it may learn the lesson of sin and its consequences.

The Interchurch World Movement to which reference has frequently been made in these columns is more and more being seen to be but another human-attempt on the part of well-intentioned men and women to put down the forces of sin, to conquer the gigantic evils of the world and to convert men to righteousness. We speak of it as *human*, inasmuch as it is directed by human energy, human philosophy and wisdom and not inspired by the spirit and counsel of God. Hence, this movement, like all those that have preceded it, will fail of the accomplishment of its avowed purposes. Already the daily press is recording the statements of prominent and public men whose foresight and mature judgment enable them to recognize that this movement has already demonstrated itself to be a failure. Our readers will be interested in the following clipped from the leading Brooklyn paper under date of June 7, as pointing out the reasons why the Interchurch World Movement is not a success:

### **"FLAYS INTERCHURCH CAMPAIGN: BAPTISTS URGED TO WITHDRAW**

**"DR. CURTIS LEE LAWS CALLS MOVEMENT  
'A SPENDTHRIFT OF GOLD' \$6,000,000 DEBT**

"That the Interchurch World Movement has failed in what it set out to accomplish and that the Baptist Church should give notice of withdrawal, were the salient facts brought out by the Rev. Dr. Curtis Lee Laws in his Sunday evening address last night at the Bedford Heights Baptist Church, Rogers Avenue and Bergen

Street. 'A perfectly well-intentioned movement, like so many of our plans, it has failed to accomplish what it started out to accomplish,' he declared. 'A gigantic flying machine that won't fly; a cotton-picking machine that won't pick cotton. Many a machine of admirable promise has been sent to the scrap pile because it wouldn't work.'

"In answer to the question whether the Baptists should follow the example of the Presbyterians in withdrawing from the movement, Dr. Laws said: 'Certainly we must not leave our partners in the lurch. We must fulfil any financial obligations of the past, and if our officials have involved us for the future we must stand by their agreement. Further than that it will be perilous for us to go. Our co-operation has already divided our denomination and this division ought not to go further.'

"Reviewing the origin and history of the movement and summing up its strong and weak points, Dr. Laws said in part:

" 'Certain of our leaders said: "If all the great denominations are going in for this enlarged work, why can not they get together on some kind of platform and have one big campaign. It will cost less than 30 separate campaigns; it- will prove to the world that the Christian denominations are really one at heart and it will give men outside the Church the chance to contribute to the cause of Christ as a whole." Thus was born the Interchurch World Movement.

### **"PRESENT DEBT IS \$6,000,000**

What does the history of the year's work show? There has been research, surveys, publications, literature, banquets, conferences, conventions, newspaper publicity. The result: the co-operating denominations have raised about 50 per cent of what they started out to raise. Where they expected to raise \$40,000,000 they raised \$3,000,000. They expended \$9,000,000 and the present debt is \$6,000,000.

"I feel that the leaders of the Interchurch World Movement are worthy of our confidence. They are men of noble character actuated by the highest motives. I think the movement has inaugurated a new era of interdenominational goodwill because we have all come to know one another more intimately. I am grateful that the survey experts have given to us a vast and valuable literature dealing with the world's need and the Church's opportunity and obligation. There is a widespread testimony to the fact that the conferences and conventions have proved a blessing to thousands of Christian leaders of all denominations.

" 'On the other hand, it has failed in so many things it set out to do. It has demonstrated so clearly the irresponsibility of so loose an organization, it has proceeded so definitely along worldly instead of spiritual lines, it has proved so clearly that its unity of Christian effort is based on compromise, it has been such a 'spendthrift of gold contributed by the poor and humble, it has failed so lamentably in helping the cooperating denominations to raise their budgets, and it has made such a hopeless mess of its own affairs that it stands before the world today as a discredited organization.

"In going over the weak points of the Interchurch Movement I am not criticizing other denominations. I am criticizing a huge co-partnership of which the Baptists have been the chief partner. Certainly we have a right to speak of our own. The Interchurch Movement has emasculated Christianity by eliminating all doctrinal

emphasis from its pronouncements and appeals. It has injured Christianity by refusing to use the appeal of Christ and His Apostles and by replacing it with the modern appeal for world betterment and Christian civilization.

" It has injured Christianity by asking the world to help establish Christianity in the world. It has proved to be a gigantic spender and has accumulated in a single year a debt of \$6,000,000 which must be made up by the co-operating denominations or raised in some other Way.

"If we are to have-union, let it be upon the basis of a common belief in the fundamentals of our holy religion, but God save us from a union which comes from a desire to get two churches together to save coal bills next winter! I do not charge the Interchurch Movement with promoting the doctrine of organic union, but I do declare it to be an irresponsible employer of irresponsible men."

We are in special sympathy with the last paragraph of the foregoing,' and are glad to note that this writer makes an urgent appeal to Christians to recognize that the only real Christian union is that based upon a oneness of faith -Ica common belief in the fundamentals of our holy religion." This: being true, the first consideration for. followers of Christ is not that of uniting their physical and financial forces, but rather that of seeing to it that they arrive at a harmonious and Scriptural conclusion respecting the one Lord, the, one faith, and the one baptism, and with regard to fellowship with Christ in His sufferings; that ascertaining the Divine will as to the mission of the Church of Christ in this Age all such should unite their powers in working out that purpose and mission. This will not mean the immediate uplift of humanity, but it will mean that a work of the spirit, a work of sanctification, a work of grace and of character-building in the school of Christ will progress among all those who bear the cross after their Master in full consecration to God, the number of whom our Lord designated as a ."Little Flock." All such will assist one another in the Christian way in holiness of life, and they will do good unto "all men as they have opportunity." While fulfilling their humble mission at the present time, they have joy in looking forward hopefully to their share in the blessed First Resurrection, whence, as the qualified rulers and teachers of that Age, they will enter upon their glorious and exalted mission as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in the restitution of all things-the restoring of paradise, and in assisting fallen humanity to regain the lost perfection of manhood, and everlasting life, even as the Great Teacher taught us to pray: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

### **GREAT AND RAPID CHANGES**

Truly we are living in a time of great and rapid changes. The circumstances of the past century and particularly the last fifty 'Years-the advance in education, the increase of knowledge along all lines, and the increase of travel, "running to and fro"--these conditions have indeed contributed to the World's dissatisfaction and unrest in modern times and are amongst the influences that are at work stirring up humanity to research and investigate perhaps as never before. Everywhere are found men and women seeking something-new and different to satisfy their longings. So anxious 'are many for a change and something different from what they have that frequently they are found running after that which is less desirable,. farther away from the truth and farther into error. As an example of the way that

present influences are affecting large masses of humanity, and of the way public sentiment seems to change within comparatively a few days, we -have been impressed with the following which recently appeared in the public press:

**"WAVE OF RELIGIOUS MYSTICISM SWEEPS OVER  
ALL OF RUSSIA**

**"MENACES MATERIALISTIC SOVIET RULE  
MORE THAN DO THE POLISH VICTORIES**

"Geneva, June 12.--A wave of religious mysticism is sweeping over Russia menacing the materialistic Soviet system. The Bolshevist dictators are powerless to check it, according to first hand documentary information which has come into your correspondent's possession. Always deeply religious and prone to primitive superstitions, the Russian people are passionately seeking oblivion of their miserable, existence under red tyranny in mystical elevations of the spirit.

"The mystical revival which alarms the red rulers even more than do the Polish victories has now reached an emotional climax in the adoration of 'The Holy Virgin of Woskresensk, Queen of the World.' The image of the Virgin of Woskresensk is a fifteenth century fresco painting on the wall of the chapel of the monastery of Woskresensk, near Moscow. It was discovered--so the story goes that is implicitly believed throughout the length and breadth of Russia--by a peasant woman to whom the Holy Virgin appeared in a dream. The Virgin told the woman she was coming to rule over Russia and to deliver the people from the Bolshevists and commanded her to make a pilgrimage to the monastery of Woskresensk, where she would find her royal image as a sign of the Divine nature of her vision.

"The peasant woman traveled many days before she reached the monastery, but no image of the Virgin existed in the chapel. However, she insisted that the monks make a careful search, and finally after whitewash had been removed from the walls a fresco painting was found representing the Holy Virgin with the Savior in her arms, holding in one hand the terrestrial globe as a symbol of domination.

"Since then thousands of pilgrims have come daily to worship at the shrine of Woskresensk, and all Russia is ringing with reports of the miracles performed by 'The Virgin Queen of the World.'

"The Bolshevist authorities sent a commission to investigate the matter. When, it is said, the chief of the commission tried to scrape the painting off the wall he was stricken with a disease which so impressed his comrades that they left the sanctuary without touching the Virgin's image.

"In any case it is a fact that the Bolshevists do not dare to interfere. The local red commissary, although a Jew, protects the image because, the people say his wife was cured -of a chronic disease through the Virgin's intervention.

"Millions of picture postcards in artistically printed colors, representing the Virgin, are being circulated throughout Russia. Nobody knows where they are printed and the Soviet authorities are unable to find out. They bear the laconic inscription, '*In hoc signo vinces,*' predicting the victory of the Virgin over red tyranny."

If under the dominion of Satan and evil the forces and influences of unrighteousness make progress and prosper so marvelously, what may the student of Holy Prophecy look forward to in the Day of Christ-the Day of 'His complete revealing to humanity and the Day of the reign of His Kingdom upon earth, when all the powerful influences of righteousness and truth are let loose for the enlightenment and blessing of humanity. - Surely when Satan is bound that he should deceive the nations no longer, and the bright-shining of the morning has driven the darkness away, all shall know the Lord fully, and the desire of all nations shall come, and of the increase of His., Kingdom there. shall be no end.-Rev. 20:2, 3; Jer. 31:34; Hag. 2:7; Isa. 9:7.

### **CHRISTENDOM WEIGHED IN THE. BALANCES**

Those who are familiar with the expositions of Pastor Russell will readily recall that one of the strong evidences presented by him that we are living in the transition period of this Age is the fact that Christendom is now seen to be standing before the tribunal of public opinion and judgment-is being weighed in the balances and found wanting. In *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* we have the situation in modern times vividly presented to our attention from the standpoint of sacred prophecy and current events. None can dispute that never before has there been a time such as this. when the torchlight of reason and investigation is turned on the words and acts especially of those who profess to represent the Almighty God in preaching His Message among men. Thus Pastor Russell wrote:

"The object of this trial [of Christendom] is not to convince the great judge of the actual standing of these powers; for already we are forewarned of their doom by His 'sure word of prophecy;' and already men can read upon the walls of their banqueting halls the writing of the mysterious, but fateful, hand, 'Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin!' The present trial, involving the discussion of rights and wrongs, of doctrines, authorities, etc.. is to manifest to all men the real character of Babylon, so that, though men have long been deceived by her vain pretensions, they may eventually, through this process of judgment, fully realize the justice of God in her final overthrow. In this trial, her claims of superior sanctity and of Divine authority and appointment to rule the world, as well as her many monstrous and contradictory doctrinal claims, are all being called in question.

"With evident shame and confusion of face before such a throng of witnesses, the civil and ecclesiastical powers, through their representatives, the rulers and the clergy, endeavor to, render up their accounts. Never, in all the annals of history, has there been such a' condition of things. Never before were ecclesiastics, statesmen and civil rulers examined, cross-questioned and criticized as now at the bar of public judgment. through which the heart-searching spirit of the Lord is operating upon them to their great confusion. Notwithstanding their determination and effort to avoid the examination and crossquestioning of the spirit of these times, they are obliged to endure it, and the trial proceeds."--*Studies Vol. IV, 76.*

The following taken from the *LITERARY DIGEST* Of June 19, bears along the same line and shows the continued drift of our times:

## **"WHY PREACHING IS 'FOOLISHNESS'**

"To the first great preacher of the Christian Church we owe the phrase, 'foolishness of preaching.' The sermons of St. Paul established Christianity throughout the Roman Empire and have been the pattern for all Christian preachers ever since. Yet every once in a while some one tells us that the sermon has become mere folly, a tradition, 'signifying nothing.' Mr. John Spargo, a Socialist writer of note, puts this view-point with extraordinary frankness in an article in *The Christian Century* (Chicago). He acknowledges the mission and permanence of Christianity, but believes that the pulpit is 'the weak spot in the church of today--its Achilles tendon.' 'It is very doubtful,' he continues, 'whether all the preaching that will be done in America during the next twelve months will add as much to the well-being of America as the work of one honest efficient farmer or as that of a humble school-teacher in some "little red schoolhouse."' In the viewpoint of this writer and thinker, preaching is a 'futility' and the pulpit 'an anachronism! He believes that on important matters the opinions of' preachers 'are held in less esteem than. those of any other body of men in the land.' For one thing, we are told

"Preaching is not a man-sized job. The pulpit is an anachronism in the modern world. Preaching comes down to us from a past age, when few possessed Bibles and fewer still could read them for themselves. It was necessary then when the believers assembled together to have some one read and explain the Word to them. Today when almost every person can read for himself, when Bibles can be purchased for a few cents, there is no need for such a service. The average man in the pew is quite as capable of reading the Bible and interpreting any passage which interests him as the average minister. That is probably the reason why the old-fashioned expository sermon and the sermon on doctrinal subjects are rarely heard in our cities nowadays. A modern reference Bible, with maps, concordance, topical index, and explanatory notes, will enable any man or woman of ordinary intelligence to understand the vital portions of the Bible much better than the old-fashioned sermon so laboriously compiled as a Friday morning's task with the aid of "Barnes Notes on the New Testament," "Elliott's Commentary," and the "sermon-outlines" in some homiletic review.'

"The fact that the old-fashioned sermon has so largely given way to fifteen-minute 'snappy talks' on timely topics means, we are told, that 'the old time "Lyceum lecture" has supplanted the sermon.' This, it is held, would not be so bad if the the preacher were a specialist like the lecturer who confines himself to two or three carefully prepared addresses delivered over and over again. But the average minister 'is practically under contract to have a new message to deliver every Sunday for ten or eleven months in a year.' Not even the ablest men in the country could successfully perform such a task, for 'given an intelligent congregation, there is no earthly reason for supposing that any man can possibly have anything of importance to say to it, week after week, year in and year out.' The average minister, according to Mr. Spargo, is a poor guide in matters sociological, and

" Even the moral and spiritual problems of the educated and enlightened man of today are largely beyond the grasp of the minister of the church he attends. The ministerial training, environment, habits of life, and generally, temperament, unite to produce this result. The minister does not know from experience-, except in very rare cases-anything of the problems which baffle and perplex the man of business, the public 'official, the professional man. Theological seminaries can not give this knowledge; it can not be learned from books or otherwise acquired secondhand. It can only come from personal experience--from life. Men who have not thus known the problems which beset men, their temptations and their perplexities, can give very little help to others. When we remember these things it is easy to understand why the pulpit of today possesses so little influence., 11

We believe that some allowance should be made for the, fact that Mr. John Spargo, the Socialist writer who is quoted in the above article, is perhaps of an agnostic turn of mind, as our observation is that the majority of Socialists are disposed to be indifferent toward the Bible and religious things. Nevertheless, there is much -truth in this writer's statements as to the general results from the pulpit. We think this gentleman, however, does not fully understand just why the results are not satisfactory. He, himself, does not know what a wonderful message of grace and truth the Bible contains, of vital import to all humanity, and that if the ministry of Christendom measured up to its profession today the blasphemous .errors and misrepresentations of the Divine character contained in the creeds of the professional Churches of Christ, together with many inconsistencies, which are responsible for much of the decline of faith, won Id all be discarded, and the pure message of Heavenly love, the "good word of the Kingdom" would, as the angels proclaimed, indeed prove "Glad Tidings of great joy for all people." This, we are instructed, will be the outcome.in the near future, we trust.

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **SERIES XXXV**

#### **THE VISION OF THE FIFTH PLAGUE**

*"And the Fifth poured out his Bowl on the Throne of the Beast; and his Kingdom was darkened; and they bit their Tongues because of the Pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven on account of their Pains and their Ulcers; and they reformed -not from their Works."--Rev. 16:10, 11.*

HE symbols employed in this vision of the- fifth Plague which we now examine are, the Throne of the Beast which the Plague is especially to affect; and the effects produced by the Plague. These effects are, (1) the Beast's kingdom becoming darkened; (2) the biting of the Tongues because of the pain produced by the evil or Plague; (3) the blaspheming of the name of God because of the pain; (4) the failure of the Plague to produce reform.

There is quite a general agreement among expositors who lived before the middle of the nineteenth century and since the French Revolution, to apply this vision to

a judgment falling upon the Papacy; the Papacy being understood by these expositors to be symbolized by the Beast, and the ruling, authority by the Beast's Throne. These see in it simply a loss of temporal authority and influence; the biting of the tongue because of the pain is interpreted by these expositors to picture the humiliating feelings of the pope and his retainers at this loss of power. It is generally applied by these to the events connected with Napoleon's humiliation of the Papacy in the closing years of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth century. This was certainly the greatest blow the Papacy had, ever received up to that time. However, understanding that these seven last Plagues do not begin their fulfillment until the Image of the Beast (Rev. 13) is formed, which occurred, as we understand, in 1846, this would be too early a date for the vision to meet its fulfillment. And still further on this point it will be found that a careful study of the symbols describing the effects produced on Papacy at that time do not meet the requirements of the vision, as we shall endeavor to show. We note, however, that it seems quite evident that Papacy is the power that is to be affected by this Plague. One of the symbols, that of tongue biting, describing these effects, seems to point out one special result, that of being compelled to suffer the humiliation of yielding or renouncing its boastful, blasphemous claims. In the humiliation under Napoleon, while the Beast lost to a large extent its power and influence, it relinquished none of its claims., Further more, it was not until 1870 that infallibility, its most blasphemous claim, was fully decided to be centered in the pope, the "Throne" power. The symbol seems to describe particularly its humiliation in the sense of its changing or reversing these decrees, etc. We give a definition of the Papal claim to infallibility, and note at what time this blasphemous claim became centered in the Papal "Throne":

"Infallibility in controversial theology means the immunity from error, in all that regards faith and morals which is claimed by the Roman Catholic Church [as represented in its head, the pope]. . . Infallibility, as put forward by the. Roman Church, which involves not alone an actual historical immunity from error,- but also such a positive and 'abiding assistance of the spirit of God as will at all times both protect against the possibility of error, and guide and direct in the faithful teaching of all necessary truth. The infallibility claimed by the Roman Church is thus of two kinds, passive and active-the first (Matt. 16:18), in virtue of which the Church never can receive or embrace any erroneous doctrine, no matter by whom proposed; the second, in virtue of which she is charged 'with the function (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Eph. 4:11-16) of permanent teaching to the world the essential truths of' God, of actively resisting every access of error, and of authoritatively deciding every controversy by which the oneness of belief among the faithful may be endangered. Catholics. regard this gift as a natural and necessary accompaniment of the authority in matters of faith with which they, believe the Church to be invested, and which if not guided in its exercise by such infallible assistance would be a false light, and an attractive but dangerous instrument of delusion."--*International Cyclopaedia*.

Up to the year 1870 this infallibility was supposed to be centered in the decisions of the great general councils .presided over by the pope. At that time (1870) the .decision was made in the general Ecumenical Council convened at Rome that this power and authority was centered in the pope. In regard to this matter we quote further from this authority:



"Two very important and practical questions, however, arise regarding it, both of which have been occasions of much controversy even among Catholics themselves, viz.-. as to the subject, that is the seat or the organ of this infallibility, and as to the object, that is, the matters to which it extends. . . . By the decree of the Vatican Council, 1870, this controversy has been decided; and it is now agreed that the doctrinal decrees of the pope teaching ex-cathedra are to be accepted as possessing the same infallibility which attaches to the teaching of the Church."

### **AND THEY BIT THEIR TONGUES**

It is our thought that the symbolic expression of "biting their tongues," etc., refers to Papacy's being compelled to take back some, of their former claims, thus proving these claims to be false. Already has this feature begun to have a fulfillment; indeed, had begun its fulfillment in 1883, according to Pastor Russell's interpretation of this vision. That it 'Was his thought that the vision applied to Papacy will be seen from the following quotation from his -exposition of the fifth of ,the seven last Plagues, written in 1883:

"This pictures to us trouble coming upon Papacy (the Beast); not so much upon the masses of Romanists as upon those in authority, its rulers -- the Throne power -- their clergy. Papacy's walls are higher, its claims are stronger, and its claims to Divine authority and infallibility of longer standing than those of the Protestant system -- her daughters; therefore she the longer escapes the increasing light of this 'Day of the Lord,' and hence the longer escapes the troubles consequent to her errors. But she shall not escape the trouble."--Z July '83-7.

Papacy's kingdom being darkened by this Plague seems to refer to a time when there would be a lack of unity and harmony among her leaders. Pastor Russell explains it this way, as we read:

"It [the trouble] comes on the Throne or ruling class, and their kingdom is filled with darkness--uncertainty--absence of former unity and harmony, and in their trouble the pain will be increased by tongue-biting."--Z July '83-7.

This symbol of tongue-biting is a very peculiar one and evidently has a deeper significance than that attached to it by most all expositors. The general idea has been that this expression refers simply to the effects on Papacy because of the troubles that come to her on account of her loss of power and influence by Napoleon. We believe', however, that it refers to matters that have occurred since 1870 and will in the near future in a deeper sense meet fulfillment. Pastor Russell thus explains this peculiar symbol:

"The tongues of Papacy are its decrees and utterances, past and future. To bite, then, in pain implies contradiction and denial of. former utterances. Whether this signifies a contradiction and reversal of previous utterances of the Papal hierarchy, or whether it means controversy and differences between the living rulers of the Church, we may not decide, but it will probably include both of these difficulties,. and in their attempt to justify their contradictory teachings, God's character will be further dishonored, misrepresented, or blasphemed."--Z July '83-7.

Concerning this peculiar symbol Pastor Russell cited an illustration of its fulfillment as having already taken place at the time he gave the forecast in 1883. We quote this illustration, especially calling attention to the fact that it has had a more complete fulfillment in the events that have transpired since that time, thus confirming this application:

'As an illustration of this symbol, 'biting their tongues,' we note Papacy's present [1883] humiliating concessions and contradiction of her former teachings, in her present recognition of the Protestant governments of Europe, which Papacy not only did not create, but actually cursed, and encouraged her faithful to use every means to destroy. This biting is occasioned by the pain and humbled condition in which Papacy finds herself. She has lost all temporal power, and to maintain long her spiritual influence, feels that she must not antagonize the governments which she can no longer claim the right to control." -Z July '83-7.

### **POPE RENOUNCES FORMER DECREES**

As further showing the fulfillment of this tongue-biting symbolism, we quote a very recent decision of the Pope, rescinding a former decree which forbade Catholic rulers to visit the king of Italy at Rome on account of the present Italian dynasty taking the dominion of Rome away from the pope in 1870 and making it its capital. This decree is in the form of an encyclical letter. We quote concerning this from a secular journal of June 1, 1920:

"Pope Benedict has issued an encyclical letter announcing that while he maintains the claims of the Holy See to temporal power, he rescinds the order forbidding Catholic rulers to visit the king of Italy in Rome. It is understood that the first monarch to visit Rome under the new conditions will be King Alphonso of Spain. . . Continuing, the pontiff renews the protests made by his predecessors for the purpose of protecting the rights and dignities of the Holy See and asks that, once peace being re-established, the abnormal conditions affecting the head of the Church shall also be brought to an end, as, he says, they are prejudicial to the tranquility of the peoples.

"His Holiness urges the nations to join together fraternally to reduce if not to eliminate the military expenditures which are weighing heavily upon the finances of the -various States. . . . The pontiff declares that the Church will not fail to co-operate with this association of peoples with an efficiency to which history [?] bears witness."

Of course, students of prophecy know well that the object of all this is to attain on Papacy's part its former influence and control in human affairs. To appreciate in its fullest sense how humiliating it must be for Papacy to make these concessions, etc., it will be necessary to keep in mind that the whole line of popes are, in the Scriptures, portrayed under the symbolism of *one* man, the "Man of Sin;" and also to have in mind the boastful, blasphemous claims made by this power in the past, although on account of the bright shining of truth, its claims, until quite recently, have not been of so public a nature. Among these claims, as bearing on this particular symbol of this vision, are the following: It claims to be the only true Church. It claims that it is essential to salvation to be subject to the Roman pontiff. It claims both temporal and spiritual dominion over all kings and kingdoms; that it is infallible in its teachings and decrees. It claims, and has

exercised in the, past, the right to turn over heretics to the civil power to be punished. In regard to this matter we have the following words from Pastor Russell in closing his exposition of this fifth Plague:

"When we remember -that it was the same Papal system which in its prosperity had 'a mouth speaking great things' (Dan. 7:8-25; Rev. 13:5), making boastful claims, it should not surprise us that God should ordain as part of its reward that it should eat its own words."--Z July '83-7.

### **CONSUMED BY THE SPIRIT OF HIS MOUTH**

It is well to keep in mind the fact that it is the spread of Bible Truth that has compelled Papacy to take back , to disannul many of her former decrees. It is especially worthy of note that the Bible has been the means used to gradually consume the false doctrines of Papacy. This is the means particularly specified by St. Paul that was to do this, as his words show: "Whom the Lord shall consume by the spirit of His mouth," that is, by His Word. As a noted expositor has said:

"Holy Scripture is of course the form in which the word or spirit of the Lord's mouth retains a sensible existence and influences human society. 'The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.'"

"Does not the extreme jealousy with which the Papacy has always endeavored to bury the Bible in an unknown tongue, or to undo its teachings by false interpretations, betray 'its inveterate antagonism. to the power destined to consume it? 'There is an instinct of apprehension, a consciousness, which, antecedent to experience, divines danger; it seems discernible in the alarm with which Romanism recoils from Holy Scripture.'\*

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\* *"The Apostasy"--Sullivan.*

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"The Creed of Pius IV-that creed, a belief in which is, according to Papal declaration, essential to salvation--expressly states that the Bible is not for the people. 'Whosoever will be saved' must renounce it. It is a forbidden book. Bible Societies are 'Satanic contrivances.' Bible burnings are most Catholic demonstrations. All this' dread of Scripture, all this violent opposition to its circulation, is a plain proof that the Papacy recognizes in the Word of God its worst antagonist. Experience shows it is right.

"Wherever the Word of God has free course, the power of Papacy is at an end. The Reformation sprang from a recovered Bible; and wherever, as in Scotland, the popular mind is imbued with Scripture, Romanism has no chance. It is the absence of Bible knowledge that enables the Papacy to retain its sway in Spain and other European countries, in Mexico, in Brazil, and in parts of Ire-, land. . . .

"Pius IX in his Encyclical Letter in 1850 speaks of Bible study as 'poisonous reading,' and urges all his venerable brethren with vigilance and solicitude to put a stop to it. A clergyman lost his wife in Rome and wished to put a text on her tombstone. The pope refused permission, not only on the ground that it was unlawful to express a hope of immortality as to a 'heretic,' but because it was

'contrary to law, to publish in the sight of the people any portion of the Word of God'! . . .

"After the day of Christianity had dawned, she was able to cover Europe with darkness; and by the exclusion of the Bible to perpetuate that darkness from age to age. The enormity of this wickedness cannot be known on earth. But she cannot conceal from herself that, despite her anathemas, , her *indices expurgatorii*, her tyrannical edicts, by which she still attempts to wall around her territory of darkness, the Bible is destined to overcome in the conflict. Hence her implacable hostility-hostility founded to a large extent on fear. . . . To popery a single Bible is more dreadful than an army ten thousand strong. When she meets the Bible in her path, she is startled and exclaims with terror, 'I know thee who thou art! Art thou come to torment me before the time?'"\*\*

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\*\* "*Wylie's Papacy.*"

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"For the last three hundred years, ever since the Reformation, the Papacy has been in process of consumption by the spirit of the Lord's mouth. It will ere long [when the seventh Plague is poured out] be 'destroyed by the brightness of His coming.'"  
"-H. *Grattan Guinness.*

### **OTHER CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDE OF ROME**

As still I further proving the correctness of this interpretation and application of this 'very significant symbol we call attention to a letter written by Pius X in which there are utterances which are in direct conflict with these decrees and anathemas of Pius IX against the Bible. The letter was written in 1905. Supplementing the letter we quote a comment on the same by Pastor Russell written in 1905, in an article entitled "The Pope on the Bible":

"It betokens a marked change in the attitude of the Church of Rome toward the Bible for the laity, when the Pope [Pius X] gives his blessing to an association engaged in sending it forth in the language of the people. The St. Jerome Association is engaged in this for Italy, and when requested to bestow his blessing on the new work and the spread of the Gospel, the Pope answered:

"Gladly do I. give my blessing and that with both hands and with full heart, for I do not doubt that this work will produce the richest fruit and is already blessed by God. The more we read the Gospel the stronger our faith becomes. The Gospels are writings that are valuable for everybody and under all circumstances. I have lived among the common people and know what they want and what pleases them. Tell them the simplest Bible stories and you will have attentive listeners and effect blessed results.

"Your purpose. is to spread the Gospels. You are doing a noble -work. Some people think [Piux IX , for one] that the peasants, with their plain, every (lay way of thinking, would not profit by the reading of the Scriptures. This is incorrect. The average peasant is a shrewder thinker than we may suspect, and knows how to draw the correct lessons from the Scriptures, often even better than many, of

the preachers. But it is not only the common people and, the lower classes who will profit by the reading of the Scriptures.

"No matter how many prayer books and books of devotion there may be for the priest, none is better than the Gospels. This is an unsurpassed book of devotion, the true bread of life. I grant an especial apostolic blessing on all those who preach the Gospel, who hear and read it, whether on a Sunday or a week day. I bestow my blessing on all members of the St. Jerome Society and all who co-operate in the sacred work of spreading the Gospel."--Z '05-323.

This certainly is a contradiction and reversal of previous utterances of the Papal hierarchy, and produced at the time, controversies and differences between the living rulers of the Church. As further illustrating this pope's attempts at reform, which the reader will note is a direct reversal of the decrees and anathemas of Pius IX, and thus establishes more fully this interpretation of this feature of the vision, we quote from an article by "*The Bulwark*" published in 1905 WATCH TOWER, pages 309, 310:

"'Back to the Gospels!' comes the cry from the Vatican, sounding the knell of Catholicism. After centuries of crafty misrepresentation of the Scriptural teachings, the Church of Rome has been forced to acknowledge the error of its ways and at last a man has been found honest enough and of sufficient boldness of heart to say, 'We have sinned,, let us return to the truth.' A reformer in the Vatican! It is a difficult role to play. Will Pius X be able to carry it through effectively?

"Five centuries ago John Huss made the first attempt, in Germany, to bring about a reformation in the Catholic Church, but the time was not yet, and the priests were too strong for him. Despite the fact that he carried a safe-conduct under the seal and hand of the German Emperor himself, for his journey to Constance, he was seized, condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. A century later saw the rise of three mighty champions for Truth -- Luther, Calvin and Zwingli -- who successfully drew from the otherwise rotten body of the Almighty Church of the Middle Ages, the only healthy elements therein, wherewith to build up the real Church of Christ. The rich priests and tyrannical nobles, however assisted by the cunning and unscrupulous Jesuits, tightened their hold upon the ignorant masses and wrapped the cloak of ignorance more closely around them. These brought a rich income to their worthy masters, who repaid them with adulterations of Christ's teachings suited to their vile purposes. The truths of the Gospels became hidden or utterly unrecognizable under the accumulated dogmas of centuries of Popery. . . .

"From the many official booklets which have been published of late [ 1905], and which have been directly inspired by the present Pope [Pius X], it is easy to see that he, along with many of his high-placed followers, has come to the conclusion that some measure of reformation has become an urgent necessity within the Roman Catholic Church, otherwise the mighty edifice may totter to a fall."

This article goes on to enumerate some of the reforms at which Pius X aims, and which are indeed interesting. We will, however, confine ourself to a general statement as showing the way these proposed reforms were received by some of the noted officials and official organizations of the Papacy.

"Reform literature has been particularly in evidence throughout Italy of late 11905 1. and the publication of pamphlets goes on continually., Bishop Bonnemelli, of Cremona, for instance, has published a pastoral letter in book form and with the full permission of the pope, which may be taken as a typical example. Referring to the worship of the Virgin Mary, he says: 'It shocks Christian feeling and common sense to see the Virgin Mary and many saints placed upon the same level as bur Lord Jesus Christ.' The Bishop then goes on to criticize the superstitious worship of St. Antonius of Padua and the financial exploitation connected therewith. 'Not only are there people who believe in Him.' he says, 'but there are those who turn Him to good business account. and also others who afford permission for the conduct of such transactions.'"

The article goes on to show that doubtless through the advice of influential leaders in the Romish Church these commendable efforts. of the pope were checked; and the fact that we hear nothing about these reforms. continuing in the Papal dominions is evidence that they have failed. We quote further:

"Since the above article was written, a Rome correspondent informs us that Pius X has appointed a committee consisting of several Cardinals and Doctors of Catholic Divinity, to consider and decide upon the measures of reform to be adopted. The Intransigents and Jesuits, continues the correspondent, are highly indignant at the lines of the policy taken up by the pope, as they can see only too well that should the meditated reforms be carried out the knell of the priesthood's power is sounded, and their hitherto uncurbed license at an end. These latter views find strong confirmation in the fact that outside of Italy the Catholic priests are careful not to breathe a word of the movements, pregnant with meaning, which are going on in Papal circles. since they fear, and with I good cause. that as soon as the Vatican announces that the dogmas hitherto propagated by them as Gospel truths are entirely wrong and merely the results of former abuses on the part of the clergy, people will immediately come to the -conclusion that where so much is false it is useless to look for aught, that savors of the truth, and will, in their disgust at the manner in which they have been misled, turn their thoughts towards the true faith and so swell the ranks of the Protestant believers."

### **DISINTEGRATION THROUGH ENLIGHTENMENT**

While this reform movement has evidently ceased, we have illustrated in the above quotation one of the ways in which the- Roman Catholic laity over the world may become enlightened, that is, through defections in its own priesthood, for it is plain that the Scriptures teach that it will be by such an enlightenment concerning Papacy's false claims that the system will finally be destroyed. However, the expectation on the part of the writer of the above article that there will be a flocking to Protestantism at the time of this exposure is without any Scripture warrant. Protestantism, to a very large extent, has discarded the Scriptures as a divinely inspired writing., At the time Pastor Russell wrote this exposition of the fifth Plague the fulfillment had in a small measure begun. In proof of this we quote:

"A hint in this direction is furnished in the history of the past month [June, 1883]. Though the rulership of Great Britain is not of Papacy's appointment, and in fact was created in violation of her [Papacy's] laws and claims, yet the pope has issued

a 'bull' or edict to its faithful in Ireland commanding both priests and people to desist from hostility toward the laws and government of England. Not to speak of the merits of the question, this action is certainly contrary to the previous claims and theories of this Church; and from their words it is evident that some of the Irish people are not slow to see this. At a public meeting held to consider the pope's edict, a famous orator among them (Charles O'Brien) said, 'The Irish people will neither be ruled by Rome nor Westminster.' (The Protestant Irish are mostly Presbyterian, ruled by the principles of the 'Westminster Confession of Faith.') And among the masses it was freely proposed to 'Boycott the pope,' by refusing to pay 'Peter's pence' (a regular collection among Romanists, the world over, for the support of the pope)."--Z July '83-7.

We are enabled to see further that Pastor Russell's forecast of the future development of this feature of the fifth Plague founded upon his understanding of the vision at that time has become more and more confirmed as the years have passed. Mr. Barnes, commenting upon this fifth Plague, applies it as follows:

"Here, there was a direct blow aimed at that power, yet not such as to secure its *final* overthrow, for that is reserved to the pouring out of the last vial, vs. 17-21. All that is represented here is a heavy judgment which was merely *Preliminary* to that final overthrow, but which affected *the very seat of the beast*. The phrase, 'the seat of the Beast' means the *seat* or *throne* which the representative of that power occupied; the central point of the anti-Christian dominion. . . . I understand this as referring to the very seat of the Papal power--Rome--the Vatican."

Commenting on the expression, "And his Kingdom was full of darkness," Mr. Barnes gives as the meaning. of this, "confusion; disorder; distress; for darkness is often the emblem of calamity.--Jer. 13:16; Isa. 59:9, 10; Ezek. 30:18; 32:7, 8; 34:12; Joel 2:2."

In concluding our examination of this fifth Plague vision it will be to the point as bearing on the fact of its having had only a partial fulfillment up to the present time, to quote again from Pastor Russell's exposition of the second vial:

"But we should remember that the full results of this evil or Plague will not be felt for many years; it has its beginning only, now., It is well also to remember that one Plague or evil goes on increasingly, after a second and third, etc., are added, until in the end the entire seven forms of evil will be operating simultaneously."--Z June '83-7, 8.

It *Will* thus be seen that when the seventh Plague is meeting its fulfillment each of the others will also be operating, and together will work to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose, the overthrow of every form of evil and wrong, producing genuine repentance, reformation on the part of those who live through that judgment period.

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

STUDY XIX-JULY 11

**THE SECOND SEAL OPENED**

(91) What followed the opening of the second Seal? and what is suggested by the great sword given to the rider upon the red horse? Rev. 6:3, 4; H '19-56.

(92) In what respect is this second horseman like the first and what are the dissimilarities, and what is the lesson thus indicated? H '19-56.

(93) From what phase of life is this symbol drawn, and how do the facts of history regarding the military and political life of the Roman Empire harmonize with this symbolic picture? How was peace taken from the earth? H '19-56.

(94) What agencies in the religious world were symbolized by this horseman, and about what time in history was this fulfilled? H '19-56.

(95) What do we find in the records of the historian with regard to the religious world showing the fulfillment of this symbolic prophecy? What is the significance of the horse changing from white to red? H '19-56.

#### STUDY XX--JULY 18

### **THE THIRD SEAL OPENED**

(96) What followed the opening of the third seal and how does the third horseman differ from the first two? Rev. 6:5, 6; H '19-57.

(97) What is the import of the symbol of the black horse? H '19-57.

(99) What do we find in the civil world fulfilling the symbol of the scales, and the special message from the midst of the four living ones? 11 '19-57.

(99) What in the religious world shows the fulfillment of this symbolic horseman, and where do we look for these events in history? H '19-57.

(100) What is the relationship between the opening of the second and third Seals, and what were the general results so far as the true Church was concerned? H'19-57.

#### STUDY XXI--JULY 25

### **THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED**

(101) What followed the opening of the fourth Seal? and how does the fourth horseman differ from the other three? What brief statement do we have from Pastor Russell bearing upon this symbol? Rev. 6:7, 8; E 378, 379.

(102) What situation in the political and religious world marks the fulfillment of this symbol of the fourth horseman, and about what time in history do we find these events? H '19-57.

(103) In what way is the anti-Christ here shown, and how did this system fulfil the picture of killing with the sword and with famine and with death and by the wild beasts of the earth? H '19-57.

(104) In what way did the persecutions under Papal Rome differ from those under Pagan Rome? H '19-58.

(105) What was the great error that so largely contributed to the power of the pope, and which so inspired civil rulers to co-operate in the persecution of the saints during the fourth horseman period? H '19-58.



## THE DIFFERENT STEPS IN JUSTIFICATION

[Reprint from our Pastor, 19131

EVEN BEFORE Christ came into the world, God had dealings to a certain extent with some of the human race. He dealt with Adam, telling him of the penalty for sin and promising that the Seed of the woman should some day bruise the serpent's head. He dealt also with Enoch, with Noah, with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others, centuries before Jesus was born. God-did not, however, deal with these men in the particular and special sense in which He has dealt with the Gospel Church, who are privileged to be called "the sons of God."--John 1:12.

The Scriptures state that Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6.) God must have had some dealings with Abraham before he believed or there would have been *nothing for Abraham to believe*. Evidently God had had some communication with him before faith and trust could have brought him into even a *tacitly* justified condition.

Abraham sought to be as nearly perfect in conduct as possible, and to do those things which are pleasing to God. After he had manifested his desire to be obedient, God said, If you will prove your faith by leaving your native land and risking the loss of your present earthly comforts and of the- home of your childhood, I will make a Covenant with you. Abraham believed God.

As soon as opportunity was afforded, Abraham left Chaldea and journeyed to Haran. Later, God made him certain promises on condition that he would go into the land of Canaan. After he had entered Canaan, God said, "All the land which thou canst see will I give unto thee and to thy seed after thee." (Gen. 13:15.) Abraham was called "The Friend of God." (James 2:23.) St. Paul tells us that God preached the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." -Galatians 3:8; Genesis 12:3.

### FAITH IN GOD THE ESSENCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

So we see that there was a kind of dealing with the Ancient Worthies before Christ came-before there was any *actual* justification to *life*. None could be thus justified until a life had been given as a corresponding price for Adam's forfeited life. Hence the promise of God, so far as these were concerned, was only a *hope*. They understood that in some way He intended to do something for their relief, but did not know how God, who had once condemned them to death, could give them everlasting life. Nevertheless, they had *faith in the promise*, and this God *counted* for righteousness; for faith in God is the essence of all righteousness. By this faith they were justified to *fellowship* with God.

When Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets manifested their faith toward God, they proved their heart-loyalty, so that long after their death He could say, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." They believed that some day they would be raised from the dead. If there were no resurrection, God could not have spoken of them as He did; "For He is not a God of the *dead*, but of the *living*." (Luke 20:37, 38.) This is the argument with which Jesus offset the teachings of the Sadducees that there will be no resurrection of the dead; but it

was not given as a proof that the patriarchs were *in heaven* at the time, for Jesus distinctly tells us that at the time in which He was speaking *no man* had ever ascended into Heaven.--John 3:13.

We see, then, that Abraham had a measure of relationship with God, but not until he had manifested his faith.

God had dealt with him, however, *before* this manifestation of heart-loyalty, and that dealing consisted in giving him knowledge of how to become the Friend of God.

In due time God will indicate to the members of the human family that He is willing to accept them on terms by which He will be their God and they shall be His people, but that they must prove their faith by walking before Him to the best of their ability. This is the most that God does for any one--simply to give him knowledge of the steps which he must take in order to have complete justification. He says, "My son, give Me thine heart." (Prov. 23:26.) On this principle God spoke to the Lord Jesus Christ and continues to speak to all who would come unto the Father by Him.

### **TENTATIVE JUSTIFICATION NOT CONSECRATION**

Manifestly, things are somewhat different now from what they were in Abraham's time. Abraham did not become a *son* of God; for he lived before the opening up of the way to life, and that which God *counted* a justifying faith could not bring him redemption. Our Lord had not yet opened up that *living* way. Notwithstanding the fact that the redemption had not taken place, Abraham had God's promise that *in due time* he and his Seed should bless the world.

The Message that *now* goes forth is that God is willing to receive again those who were once His sons, but who lost their sonship through the disobedience of Adam. Therefore, *the very knowledge* of God's Plan is *an offer of salvation* to whosoever may hear of that Plan. God says, in substance, If you wish to become My son, this is the way. "My son, give Me thine heart." After you have made a full consecration, I will reveal to you the deep things of My Word.

We should make a clear distinction between what God *has done* and what He *intends to do*. God considered Abraham and all the faithful of past ages as the *servant* class. (Heb. 3:5.) But with the faithful of the Gospel Age it is different. St. John tells us that "To as many as received Him, to them gave He privilege to become the sons of God." (John 1:12.) Only since Pentecost has opportunity been given for any to become sons. Hence, before that time none **could** become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"--heirs of the Abrahamic Promise.--Rom. 8:17.

To those who have come into Christ since Pentecost the assurance is given that they shall be made joint'-heirs with the Lord if they continue faithful to the *end*, that if they *suffer* with Him, they shall also be glorified together with Him. (Rom. 8:17.) The only ones who have full relationship with God are the consecrated, who have received the full life-justification possessed by none others in the world.

Just as God dealt in the past with those who dealt with Him, and as He gave them encouragement and directed them by His Voice, so now He gives those who deal with Him particular information respecting His will through the Son and through

faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus. Whoever thus starts out *now is* beginning to come into a justified condition; and every step of progress that he takes brings him nearer to consecration.

### **FROM KNOWLEDGE TO TENTATIVE JUSTIFICATION**

The first step leading to justification is the gaining of a little knowledge; for *no man can be justified in ignorance. This knowledge* leads to a step of *faith*. With each advance in faith based upon that knowledge comes greater opportunity for increase of knowledge and faith. Thus we learn to walk by faith rather than by sight.

All of these steps, however, lead up to a full and perfect justification. First we come to a faith in God, believing that there is a Great Creator, that we are His creatures, and that He has merciful intentions toward us. Then other steps lead us to see that God has made arrangements for receiving us back into fellowship with Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of grace. We see that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15 :3.) This is a step of greater knowledge and leads to another step of *obedience*. Thus we draw nearer to God. As St. James says, "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8.) Each step enables us to see that we are getting nearer to the blessing.

After seeing that the Lord Jesus has prepared the way for the forgiveness of sin, we learn that there are *certain terms* upon which *our sins will* be forgiven. This is another step of knowledge. Then we are brought to the point where the Lord tells us by His own Word and the words of the Apostles that this forgiveness is based upon faith in Him and full acceptance of His finished work, that the only way by which we may become sharers in that work is by the consecration of ourselves and all that we have to the Father, and that we take up our cross and follow Jesus. We also learn that unless we take this step we cannot reach full justification.

### **TENTATIVE JUSTIFICATION DEFINED**

When one has been drawn to the Father through His Word and His providences, and has accepted the blood of Jesus Christ as his only means of salvation, he comes to the place where he must decide whether he will present himself to God or whether he will wait for the Millennial blessings of Restitution. What he will do is uncertain. He is *tentatively* (that is *temporarily*) justified for a purpose-that of considering which step he will take. He is still on the *human plane--a natural man*. Tentative justification, then, is for the purpose of giving a standing with God, from which a believer in our Lord's Ransom-sacrifice as his only hope of salvation may ascertain whether he has that spirit of sacrifice which will lead him to full consecration. The believer is at liberty to choose which course he will take. He may offer himself in consecration or he may decide not to do so. But should he decide to wait for Restitution, he thereby proves that he has not appreciated God's offer.

The object in preaching the Gospel during this Gospel Age -- or at all -- is to give an opportunity to whosoever will hear to attain to the privilege of spirit nature. Whoever hears the call and neglects to take advantage -of it has evidently received the grace of God in vain. He suffers the loss of whatever he might have profited by accepting the offer. If for the doing of a certain piece of work a reward

is promised, the one who fails to perform the work loses the reward, the honor, the money, or whatever was promised for doing the work.

God does not intend to inflict punishment on those who decide not to make the sacrifice of their humanity. But this class cannot gain the prize offered to those who do so. Only those who use their opportunity to be dead with Christ shall live with Him-become participators in the glorious things that are His. Those who take this step constitute the Church at the present time.

For the others, however, we trust that they will have opportunities in the future, in the Millennial Age. Under the favorable conditions of that time we hope that they will do better than they have done in this Age., Yet our thought is that the person who has come to a knowledge of God's grace and has had a measure of light respecting it, but has *rejected* it, will be in a worse position than those who have never heard of it.

Nevertheless, we do not wish to discourage any one who experiences faith in Restitution, in a future life, in ,good works., We would not discourage any one who hopes for earthly life, Restitution blessings. We believe that there are a great many people who are living noble lives, but who have neither faith nor light regarding the high calling. They are not on that account to suffer forever, except in the sense that they will have lost the opportunity of attaining the *Kingdom blessing*.

### **VITALIZED JUSTIFICATION**

The Lord says that one should take the step of consecration only after *counting the cost*. (Luke 14:27-33.) After one has decided to take this step, he presents himself to the Lord. If his consecration is accepted, the Lord imputes enough of His merit to make the sacrifice perfect; 'for nothing imperfect can be presented to Jehovah. At the very moment of his acceptance as perfect through the imputed merit of Christ, he is reckoned alive in the full sense of the word; he has received *actual* justification in a *legal* sense. His justification is said to be *vitalized*. In other words, as soon as our Lord Jesus becomes his Advocate, God is reconciled to that sinner and treats him as one actually perfect. Full *justification* means full *making right* in the sight of Jehovah.

Let us be sure that we clearly understand this important point. justification is said to be vitalized when, by the imputation of the merit of Christ, one who has made ,a full consecration receives by faith *his share* of the redemptive work of Christ. Those who have. received *vitalized* justification can have no *part in Restitution*. .Since that which is vitalized is *made alive*, justification that is vitalized is said to be *unto life*, for one's future ,existence depends upon his *retaining* that justification 11 after our Lord's merit has been imputed. Abraham's justification, on the contrary, was *not* unto life, but only to fellowship with God. Christ had not died in Abraham's day and, therefore, merit could not have been imputed to any one.

By means of the various steps by which God has led us to Himself we reach the fullness and completeness of justification. That justification is vitalized by Jesus, who imputes to us a sufficiency of His merit to cover our deficiency. At the same moment God accepts that sacrifice which has already been offered to Him through the Advocate. This acceptance is indicated by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.

The one thus covered with the imputed merit of Christ and begotten of the Holy Spirit is thenceforth a New Creature. (2 Cor. 5 :17.) If he continues faithful to his consecration vow, he will ultimately be presented to the Father as a member of the Bride class. Those who fail to keep their vow will be put through severe trials, great tribulation, which will eventually prepare them for a lesser place than they 'Would have had if they had kept their robes unspotted.

During this Gospel Age only those who have presented their bodies as living sacrifices are given the Holy Spirit. This power operates in their lives for their development as New Creatures, to bring them into harmony with God and to prepare them for membership in the Body of Christ.

### **SANCTIFICATION A GRADUAL PROCESS**

In the early stages of the Church there were "gifts of the Spirit," necessary to the inauguration of the Church..These *gifts* of the Spirit ceased, however, as soon as the Church had been established and the New Testament had. been completed. We no longer have the gift of healing, of speaking with tongues, etc., but we have something more valuable than are gifts. These were for the infantile condition of the Church. Instead, we have today the *fruits* of the Holy Spirit, which are developed and matured gradually as the result of labor.

In some characters the period of maturing fruit of good size and flavor is longer than in others. Nevertheless, as surely as we receive the Holy Spirit into good and honest hearts. and are submissive to the prunings of the Great Husbandman, so surely shall we bear large, luscious fruit in *due time*. The fruits of the Spirit, the Apostle says, are manifest; that is, they can be seen in our lives. They are meekness, self-control, faith, goodness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love.

At the beginning of our existence as New Creatures the fruits of the Holy Spirit germinate within us, but these must grow to maturity. We must bear fruit. The Lord says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away"--cuts it off--"and every branch that heareth fruit He pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2.) There is more or less pain in the prunings and testings of loyalty and obedience, but every manifestation of obedience helps to prepare us for membership in the Bride Class.

The work of actual justification and of actual sanctification and growth in grace-is gradual. Completeness will be attained only in the First Resurrection, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 15:50.) Those who will constitute the First Resurrection are the blessed ones-the holy ones, who have cultivated the fruits and graces of the Spirit. As St. Peter tells us, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness love. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [idle] nor' unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."--2 Peter 1:5-8.

### **SECRET PRAYER**

Secret prayer has the sanction of lofty examples. Isaac went out into the fields to meditate at eventide. In his chamber, Daniel knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before the Lord His God. Jesus saw the devotion of Nathaniel under the figtree. Peter was at prayer on the housetop when he received his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Jesus withdrew from the multitude and from the presence of the disciples, and retired to the mountains, or to the desert to pray. Sometimes He spent the whole night in prayer. How often did Olivet witness the devotions of the Man of Sorrows! The last rays of the setting sun, as they fell upon the mountain, revealed Jesus on its summit, kneeling, and when the morning dawned He was still there, His locks wet with the dews of the night.

Secret prayer is a test of sincerity. Public worship may be attended from various motives, good or bad. But private devotion, secret prayer--what can induce it but the motives pure and lofty, the desire heaven-inspired and heaven aspiring, the thirst after righteousness, the love of God! Who that loves not God or desires not to love Him, can have any business with Him in private or will seek a private interview? The hypocrite may pray in public, and he may pray in his family. Here others see him. But he will not pray in secret. If he attempts it, he will soon abandon it, for he expects from it neither profit nor pleasure. There is hope for a man as long as he is mindful of his secret devotions. He may have left his love, and the things which remain may be ready to die. But the fact that he still feels after God in secret places, if haply he may find Him, is evidence, first of his own sincerity; secondly, that the spirit of Divine grace is with him, and drawing him to the fountain of life.

The closet removes all the external -restraints to devotion. The sentiments of the public service are suited to the general sympathy; and this measure of emotion is not transcended, except in cases of overwhelming power and overflowing feeling, when the impetuous tide breaks through all restraints. But there are no restraints whatever in the closet. There, no feeling need be suppressed. The tear may flow. The passion of penitence may be indulged. The agony of prayer may be exercised. There are none to be annoyed, none to pass the harsh judgment, none to ascribe your feeling to weakness or hypocrisy. In that lone place there is no ear but God's to hear. And are there not confessions to be made which no ear but His should hear? In that lone place there is no eye but God's to see. And who but God can understand and sympathize with your secret sorrows? He is Thy Father, Thy Father in Heaven. "Cast all your care upon Him; for he careth for you." And this is the promise of Jesus: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

The closet is favorable to devotion. It not only removes hindrances, but it furnishes helps. It shuts out things visible. We leave the dusty and crowded thoroughfare of the world, and turn aside to rest a little in the sweet shade of the tree of life-to drink of the spring that gushes from the rock-to commune with God and think of heaven. The world is not there, pride is not there, passion is not there. Eternity is there, God is there, Jesus is there, the Holy Spirit is there, angels are there. We feel as Jacob felt as he lay down to sleep on the rocky knoll, and awoke in the midst of hovering angels. And he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Secret prayer prepares for all public services. The Christian comes forth from his closet refreshed with grace, filled with the spirit, his face shining, like the face of Moses when he came down from the mount of communion; active to labor, patient to suffer, ready to serve his generation, and prepared to finish his course with joy.

"The Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." His blessing shall rest manifestly upon you. It will appear in your experience, and in the daily walks of life. - It will be manifest to yourself, and visible to others. The Spirit of Jesus shall be with you and in you. It will appear in your voice, in your very looks, and in all your conversation. God will give you the necks of your enemies -- the world, the flesh, and the devil. You shall run and not weary, walk and not faint, and mount up with wings like an *eagle*. -- *Selected*.

## **DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE**

-JULY 18-1 SAM. 26-

*Golden Text.--"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."--Luke 6:27.*

THIS lesson concerns the seven years of David's experiences as a fugitive from the envy and hatred of King Saul. The latter, though still the nominal representative of the Lord upon the throne of Israel, had lost the Divine blessing and power which, in considerable measure, had been transferred to David after his anointing to be Saul's successor. The lesson brings before our minds in sharp contrast the king, whose better judgment was overcome by evil impulses, and David, the "man after God's own heart," who, although far from perfect, strove successfully for mastery over himself, and overcame promptings of evil under the guidance of principles of righteousness. We are not to think of David as perfect. Neither are we to be blind to his faults and sins, nor to excuse them nor to copy them. David was not one of the "saints" in the New Testament sense. He lived at too early a date to share in the High Calling, nor could he follow in the footsteps of Jesus, since the Captain of our salvation and our Forerunner in the Narrow Way had not yet come. David was a man after God's own heart, in the sense that he was full of faith in God and aimed aright. At heart he desired to do the Lord's will, and wherever he failed of this it caused him grief and led him to repentance. He lived before the 'time of God's revelation of His own character and plan and perfect will concerning His people. All things considered, David's attainments in faith and obedience were quite remarkable, so that although as a whole he was not to be considered as a model or pattern by the Church of the Gospel Age, nevertheless many beautiful illustrations of proper faith and obedience may be drawn from his career, and some of them are noted in the lesson before us.

### **SEVEN YEARS A FUGITIVE**

The seven years from the time David fled from the wrath of Saul until Saul died must have seemed to David a peculiarly long period of trial of faith and patience. His own course had been a noble and true one. He had served his king and his nation most loyally, yet he suffered as a reward. He was for a time an exile in a foreign land, and his father's family was obliged to remove to Moab for

protection. It must have seemed peculiar to David that the Lord should permit him, anointed to succeed King Saul, to be thus delayed from coming into his kingdom, and instead to be hunted and persecuted as an outlaw. This, however, was a valuable test of his faith, and doubtless helped to strengthen its roots, and thus to make his character stronger and his trust in the Lord firmer. But besides this, we may readily see that those seven years were valuable to David as a preparation for his kingly office. They made him intimately acquainted with the people and their usual manner of life and general sentiments--acquainted also with the, neighboring peoples. Above all, he became intimately acquainted with the Lord, and, we may be sure, learned to trust His providences even where he could not trace them. Several of the Psalms were either written during this period and describe David's experiences on the spot, or written subsequently describing the lessons learned from those experiences. Amongst these Psalms may be mentioned numbers 34, 52, 56, 57, 63.

Spiritual Israelites who have already received the adoption and anointing of the Lord to future service as kings and priests, who shall reign on the earth with our blessed Lord and Head, to bless all the families of the earth, can easily trace valuable lessons in-the trying experiences of David at the time of this lesson. The Prince of this world is our enemy, not because we have done evil, but because he realizes that he has but a short time, and because he has a spirit that is opposed to the Lord's spirit in us. We, too, at times, may wonder why the Lord-having anointed us and assured us of the glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom-permits us to have such trying experiences and such severe conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. The reason becomes evident as we learn the way of -the Lord more particularly-as we learn that the present "afflictions which are but for a moment [comparatively] are working out for us [fitting us for] a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We have need of patience, and that can only be gained by trials. We have need of faith, and that can only be developed by necessities. We have need of experience for our future work, which can be gained only by such experiences, which permit us to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities and difficulties and trials of those about us, to whom we shall be ministers and representatives when we reach the throne. For us then, as for David, the lesson of present experiences is to resist evil, and not with evil but with good.



## **PROFITING BY LESSONS OF THE PAST**

In considering the story of David and other Bible heroes we are impressed with the candor of the narratives -that the evil things of their conduct are told with the same frankness as their good deeds. This is one of the peculiarities of the Bible and one of the internal evidences of its truthfulness. How easy it would have been to have -glossed the history of David so as to have avoided everything that would be to his discredit; and how surely this would have been done, especially in the case of a king, had the preparation of the Bible not been under Divine supervision. Some, we are sure, incline to, the thought that the Bible would have been much better reading had some of the faults of its prominent persons been omitted; we, however, are not sure of this. The story of the trials and failures and repentances of some of these noble characters have been no less blessings than the records of their noble deeds and sentiments. As some of the Lord's people have realized their own weaknesses in the flesh, having at times come short of their ideals in the battle against sin, .they have found encouragement in the experiences of others related in the Scriptures-not to delve further into sin, but to realize that "there is forgiveness with the Lord that He might be feared." As such have noted the failures of David on various occasions and his repentance, contrition and restoration to the Lord's favor, it has given them courage to similarly repent and to similarly trust in God's mercy and in their own forgiveness, and similarly to be encouraged to arise from their dejection and sin and start afresh in the battle for righteousness, truth, purity, etc.

Our lesson deals with one of David's experiences when pursued by Saul. The erratic course of King Saul under the control of an evil spirit doubtless led him to deal unjustly with other men, as he did with David-with some for one cause, with some for another. Such people as incurred Saul's enmity, and those who were forced to become fugitives and to be ranked with outlaws, sought out David and put themselves under his superior control.

These numbered at one time 400 and later on 600.(1 Sam. 22:2; 25:13; 27:2.) These men, hindered from engaging in the ordinary pursuits of life by reason of the, king's erratic course, moved about from place to place, and since they must eat, their presence was doubtless an affliction upon the farmers wherever they went. Their foragings may have been carried on in harmony with the Jewish law, which provided that any hungry persons might enter any farm, orchard or vineyard and eat to his satisfaction without molestation.

Doubtless it was because the people of the village of Ziph desired to curry the king's favor, and also because they feared the foragings of so many men, that they sent word to King Saul that David and his company could be found in their vicinity., The king hurriedly gathered a troop of 3,000 and went to the place, probably anxious to capture David and his followers. The latter, however, were not so easily caught; indeed they were much better used to scouting than the regular army would be. They readily ascertained all about the king and his army, while the king knew little or nothing of them.

## **TOUCH NOT THE LORD'S ANOINTED**

The story shows how David with one trusty companion went into Saul's camp. King Saul and the whole army were sleeping without tents, clothed in their outer robes, as is frequently the custom in Palestine even yet. The king lay not in a "trench," but in a space or corral formed by the army wagons; and at his head, to distinguish him from the rest of the army, his spear was erected near his head-rest, as is still the custom among the chiefs of the Bedouins of that country. Secure in the thought that David and his handful of followers would be afraid of the king and his army and would not think of coming nigh them, no provision had been made for pickets or watchmen, so that David and his companion readily found the king, and could have murdered him in his sleep and escaped without detection had they chosen so to do.. It was not that David was so obtuse that he could not see the advantage that would come to him that he refrained from killing the king, but because of his respect for God and his loyalty to Him. David recognized fully that God was the King of Israel, and that God, had set Saul in the position he occupied and anointed him as king; and that it was the duty of the people to honor the king as God's representative. (Kings among the Gentiles are not thus divinely set.) He did not have so weak a conscience as would have permitted him to reason that as God had anointed him to be Saul's successor He had now providentially put Saul's life in his power. On the contrary, he reasoned properly that God was still King and that He had all the power necessary to dethrone Saul and to bring him to the throne in His own way; and that the Almighty needed not the assistance of murder on his part for the accomplishment of His plan.

To make the test still stronger, David's companion suggested all this, and proposed to carry it out; so that the entire matter might have been done without David saying a word or lifting a finger. To a weaker mind this would have been an extremely strong temptation-he would have argued with himself that the crime would not be his that by merely keeping silent and refusing to interfere, the whole matter might be accomplished by another. But David knew that his companion would not act without his consent, either formal or implied. He recognized that the responsibility still would be his, whoever might be the tool in the murder. He decided that he would not meet Saul's envy, malice, hatred and murderous spirit with the same spirit-returning evil for evil-but, instead, he would requite his evil and murderous intentions with mercy. This was not merely a matter of policy, but evidently David never had in his heart any murderous spirit towards Saul, for this was now the second time he had him in his power and might have destroyed him. We are not to suppose that David loved Saul with an affectionate love any more than he would have loved any other person of such a character. He loved him in the sense-referred to in our Golden Text-with the kin; of love it is proper to feel toward our enemies-the love of sympathy and compassion which, however it might disapprove the character, etc., of the enemy, would neither do him injury nor encourage others to do so, but would spare his life and be ready in any manner to do him a kindness.

## **MERCY AND COMPASSION FOR MALICE AND INJURY**

There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites. We are to recognize the Lord's appointments and permissions, not in respect only to earthly governments,

but also, and particularly, in respect to those whom God has set in the Church. Even though such should become enemies of righteousness, it is not for us to accomplish their destruction. The Lord, who called us to the Kingdom and who has promised to give it to us in His own due time, declares it His will that in the present time we should live peaceably, and to exercise patience, moderation and kindness even toward our enemies -- toward those who would destroy us or who are pursuing us with the intention of assassinating our characters, or what not. We are not to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, nor slander for slander; but contrariwise, are to speak as kindly of our enemies as we can, and to think as generously of them as possible-in no sense of the word either physically or with our tongues or otherwise may we retaliate or manifest their spirit, but return good for evil, mercy and compassion for malice and injury.

After David and his companion had reached a position of safety, and when the proper time had come, they hailed the king and his chief general, and called their attention to the fact that the king's life had been in jeopardy, but had been spared; and as proofs they showed the spear and water bottle and informed the king that these would be returned to a messenger whom he might send for them. It was not improper that David should let all know the spirit of magnanimity which had controlled his conduct in this matter. The king at once recognized the situation, and had manhood enough to confess it promptly and to apologize for his own contrary course. David's procedure conquered him.

The results of well-doing are not always so apparent as in this case, because some evil-doers have less character and principle than had Saul-unappreciative, envious and malicious as he was. But even if our rendering of good for evil fail to bring the acknowledgment of the evil-doer it nevertheless is right and becomes a blessing to us. It is the evil-doer who loses by his failure to be conquered by our kindness. Although Saul evidently repented, David knew better than to trust himself to his power; and there is a lesson in this for us also, viz., that while generous toward our enemies, returning them good for their evil, *we should not be too readily convinced of reformation on their part*, but should realize, as David did in Saul's case, that he was tinder control of an evil spirit, and that therefore any acknowledgment of wrong or profession of reformation should be esteemed a passing emotion rather than a change of disposition *until reasonable time should be given for a demonstration of a change of heart*.

### **DELIVERANCE IS OF THE LORD**

David's answer to Saul, under all the circumstances, was a model of truthfulness and forbearance. He neither affirmed nor denied Saul's guilt, nor did he solicit the king's favor and mercy. On the other hand, he declared his confidence in God-that -he would deal with every man according to his righteousness and mercy-and showed that it was his respect for God and His standards that spared the king's life. He declared that as he had shown mercy toward the king, he was trusting in the Lord to show mercy toward him, and that in the Lord-not in the king-he trusted for compassion and help, to deliver him from all tribulations. To what extent David appreciated the high standard of his own expression we do not know. Being a prophet, he frequently typified the Christ, Head and Body. His words are certainly more appropriate for the Church than they were for him personally. David was still under the Law and must therefore be judged by the

Law, which, as the Apostle declares, proves that there is none righteous, no not one. In our day, however, we may be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, so that "the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Our heart intentions for righteousness are acceptable to the Lord under the merits of Christ's sacrifice. Our desires and endeavors to be faithful to Him and to His Word are accepted instead of perfect works, and hence we may expect that in due time the Lord will accept us in the Beloved, to the glory of His Kingdom. Again David's sentiments are ours, and his principles those which appeal to us when he declares that God would have mercy upon him as he had mercy upon Saul. This is the very essence of our Master's teaching-"If ye forgive not men their trespasses against you, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses" -- he who shows no mercy shall obtain no mercy.

As Saul recognized the spirit that was in David as being more righteous than his own, and declared that ultimately David would be prospered greatly, so do the enemies of spiritual Israelites realize the difference between their conduct and that of those who are guided by the Lord's Spirit-although they do not often candidly acknowledge the matter as did Saul. The class represented by Saul is a numerous one. It discerns and acknowledges righteousness, but follows unrighteousness: it discerns the good, but opposes it with evil. Let us, in respect to faith in God and-desire to please Him, be like David, whose name signifies Beloved, and who, as already intimated, in many respects was a type of the Beloved-Christ, Head and Body.

## **THE WATERED LILIES**

The Master stood in His garden,  
Among the lilies fair,  
Which His own right hand had planted,  
And trained with tend'rest care;

He looked at their snowy blossoms,  
And marked with observant eye  
That the flowers were sadly drooping,  
For their leaves were parched and dry.

"My lilies need to be watered,"  
The Heavenly Master, said;  
"Wherein shall I draw it for them,  
And raise each drooping head!"

Close to His feet on the pathway,  
Empty, and frail, and small,  
An earthen vessel was lying,  
Which seemed no use at all;

But the Master saw, and raised it  
From the dust in which it lay,  
And smiled, as He gently whispered,  
"This shall do My work today:

"It is but an **earthen** vessel,  
But it lay so close to Me;  
It is small, but it is empty,  
That is all it needs to be."

So to the fountain He took it,  
And filled it full to the brim;  
How glad was the earthen vessel  
To be of some use to Him!

He poured forth the living water  
Over His lilies fair,  
Until the vessel was empty,  
And again He filled it there.

He watered the drooping lilies  
Until they revived again;  
And the Master saw with pleasure  
That His labor had not been vain.

His own hand had drawn the water  
Which refreshed the thirsty flowers;  
But He used the earthen vessel  
To convey the living showers.

And to itself it whispered,  
As He laid it aside once more,  
"Still will I lie in His pathway,  
Just where I did before.

"Close would I keep to the Master,  
Empty would I remain,  
And perhaps some day He may use me  
To water His-flowers again."

## **DAVID SUCCEEDS SAUL AS KING**

-JULY 25-2 Sam. 2:1-7; 5:1-5- -

*Golden Text.*---"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding."--Prov. 3:5.

Ye have need of patience," writes the Apostle. "In your patience possess ye your souls," instructs our Lord. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," the Apostle explains. Very evidently patience, therefore, includes other graces of character-implies their possession to a certain extent. Amongst the Lord's people patience surely must be preceded by faith, and the degree of patience very generally measures the amount of the faith. The Christian who finds himself impatient and restless evidently is lacking in faith toward the Lord; for other wise he would be able to rest in the Lord's gracious promises, and wait for their fulfillment. After using reasonable diligence and energy he should be content to leave the results and the times and seasons with the Lord.

Our lesson deals with David's attainment to the kingdom to which he was anointed, while a shepherd boy, by the Prophet Samuel. His patient trust in the Lord, and waiting for His time and way to give him the kingdom are worthy of note, and constitute the most striking feature of this lesson. As a youth he exercised patience until the Lord's providence brought him the opportunity of meeting Goliath, and being advanced to the position of a captain in the army and made King Saul's son-in-law. Then came the check in his career, when, for seven years he was, treated as an outlaw by the king, and more or less so regarded -by his fellow-countrymen. We have seen his patience under these trying circumstances, and noted his unwillingness to hasten the Lord's arrangements, in which he fully trusted, his unwillingness to raise' his hand, against the king, or to sanction his death at the hands of. another. This lesson shows us that. even after .the death of Saul, David still waited patiently on the, Lord to give him, in His own way, the honors and powers promised.

### **INQUIRING OF THE LORD THE RIGHT WAY**

For some time before Saul's death David and his six hundred followers had been living in the country of the Philistines, and been treated by them as allies; and when the Philistines went to war. with Israel-to fight against King Saul, who had been the enemy of David and his -companions it would have appeared strange had the latter refused to join in the war. In the Lord's providence-they were very graciously spared from either fighting against their -brethren or seeming unappreciative of their hosts, the Philistines, by the, decision of the latter that they would prefer not to have David and his, company go with them. After the defeat of Saul and his army the Philistines took possession of a considerable portion of the land of Israel, and it became a question for David as to what should be his proper course-how would the Lord give to him the throne of Israel, as promised? That David's heart I was loyal I to the Lord, as the needle to the pole, is evidenced by the fact that he did not conclude for himself what his-course should be, but made inquiry of the Lord. This was probably done through the medium of the High Priest Abiathar. He got the Lord's answer and followed it to the letter, locating, with his companions and their families, at Hebron and the adjacent towns. David was of the tribe of Judah, and thus settling in a central city of that tribe, where he and his family were well known, he was safe amongst friends-besides, the Philistines were his friends. It was not long before the people of his own tribe chose him for their king, and anointed him accordingly--thus falling into line with the Lord's choice and anointing, already expressed. years before.

This was seemingly a good start toward the fulfillment of the Lord's promise of the kingdom, but again the matter was deferred for another seven years, during which time David patiently, saw Ishbosheth, Saul's surviving son, anointed to be king over one province after another of Israel, and, with his general, Abner, gaining victory after victory over the Philistines-seemingly establishing him self firmly in the power of the kingdom which David had certainly supposed was to come to him at the death of Saul. The experiences of these seven years surely were as strong tests of David's faith and patience as any in his career. To a man of his courageous temperament and energy, the disposition must have been to assert the dominance of Judah over the other tribes, and to have declared them to be in

rebellion, and to have attempted their conquest in the name of the Lord, with the assertion that he was the Lord's choice, anointed by Samuel, etc.

David's course during this time shows forth distinctly -the true character 'of the man. He trusted that the Lord, who had been -with him as a boy, and had delivered him from the lion and the bear, and had used him as Israel's champion in the battle with Goliath, and had guided him thus far, would continue to-guide and direct, if he would continue to be submissive, and to act only along the lines of the Lord's direction. The wisdom of this course is manifest from the narrative. David showed, not only in his dealings with the men of Jabesh Gilead, but on other occasions, that he entertained no animosity toward those who were Saul's-friends, and the friends of' his .family. A man of smaller heart. would have done very differently, but would not have been a "man after God's own heart." David's course was defensive. The tribe of Judah he knew, was acting in accord with the Divine program, and hence, when Ishbosheth and his army attempted to coerce the people of Judah and. compel them to recognize Ishbosheth, David and his supporters I resisted this intrusion, though we have no evidence. that, David attempted to extend his authority over-the other tribes -- except as they might voluntarily choose to accept him as their king. This they finally did, at the end of seven and a half years, and a grand coronation made him king over all Israel. His patient waiting for the, Lord's time and the Lord's way evidently was very much better than any other course he could have pursued. The Lord's wisdom is always -superior; though- in the midst of their trials, His people, being unable to see the end from the beginning, may have too much confidence in their own schemes and methods and too little faith in the Lord.

### **LESSONS OF OBEDIENCE AND PATIENT WAITING**

The Lord's people of today should take well to he this lesson of faith, obedience and patient waiting on the Lord. We, too, -are waiting for a kingdom, and for the peace and blessing which the Lord has promised. shall come therewith.. We, too, see Philistines in the way, and rival brethren, I who, though really the Lord's, do not see so clearly as we the Lord's program for the establishment of His Kingdom., If is for us to wait patiently on the Lord, while he uses the wrath of man to praise Him, and to make straight the way of the Lord, and to usher in eventually His Kingdom under more favorable conditions than would be possible if- we were to attempt to act for ourselves, or, in any -manner or I sense to hasten His arrangements.

The Golden Text is an excellent one, and applied to this lesson we see it illustrated in David's course. Although he was a man of war, courageous and aggressive, he had learned the true source of his strength -- Jehovah. Misunderstood and persecuted by his brethren for a time, David finally was appreciated and proclaimed king of all Israel, with the result that all the brethren, thus united by his wise counsel and conduct, did dwell together in unity, and Israel -- had peace and prosperity, whereas by a different course on David's part, a fierce and long lasting civil war might readily have been enkindled.

We are reminded, too, of the fact that it was the Lord's own brethren who persecuted Him, but that, as the Apostle explains, "in ignorance they did it." We rejoice, to know that when the Lord shall have fully established His Kingdom 'all

who ate the Lord's people, all desirous of being on the side of righteousness, will hail Him gladly as their King; and hail the unity and peace and blessing of that glorious Millennial Age will far exceed as for our tongues express, anything that our minds can grasp Like our Lord, let us seek to be peacemakers, and to dwell together with all the brethren in the unity of the spirit, in the bonds of peace. Let our activities, our combativeness, etc., be engaged against 'the great enemy and all the works of sin, including, those in our members, our own fallen flesh. We, and all the brethren, will thus find sufficient engagement for every combative element of our nature, in ways well pleasing to the Lord, and employment for every lovable and helpful quality we possess, in building one another up, and doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially, to the household of faith.

## **The Herald of Christ's Kingdom**

VOL. III JULY 15, 1920 No. 14

### **OUTLOOK FROM THE WALLS OF ZION**

#### **HUMANITY'S COURSE DOWNWARD**

THOSE who advocate that the world is growing better and arising gradually out of sin and degradation must find their expectations meeting with considerable discouragement in these days as they read the daily press accounts of the uncovering of gigantic evil and moral corruption in New York City and vicinity. The *Literary Digest* of June 26 gives a brief review of the matter in the light of the investigation and disclosures of New York City's underworld recently made by the Dr. John Roach Straton, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of New York:

#### **THE SINFULNESS OF THE CITY**

"As Jonah and Savonarola denounced Nineveh and Florence for their exceeding sinfulness, and held up the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah as a warning, so preachers today find the concentration of evil in great cities a theme for vivid discourse. Dr. John Roach Straton, who recently helped to expose vice conditions in New York's 'White Light' district, following the example Dr. Parkhurst set some, years ago, has published a number of his strongest sermons in book form. We are now, he says in his book, 'The Menace of Immorality in Church and State' (Doran), witnessing the widest wave of immorality in the history of the world. And preachers who bestir themselves only 'with defending denominational redoubts, spinning theological theories, propounding pious platitudes, and reeling off rhetorical bouquets, when the very fires of hell are raging right at them in the slums, the palaces and the amusement centers of the city, and when multitudes of young men and women are being swept away to eternal destruction-preachers who do that haven't caught the first glimmer of their real mission as prophets of God and "good soldiers of Jesus Christ." ' Dr. Straton, who is Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, New York, finds in his city 'every fad and heresy under heaven,' while 'the churches, often unwarned and unrebuked, are either "sitting at ease in Zion," or stampeding after the world,' In militant spirit he declares that some people are so pampered that they wish to hear 'what is palatable rather than



what is profitable,' and the 'dear brethren' who are preaching to these moral philanderers are giving them only 'a milk-and-water theology, when they have any theology at all. They are trying to heal the awful cancer of human sin with soothing-syrup. They are sprinkling Cologne water. upon the putrid iniquities of a rebellious race!' The preacher strongly inveighs against the practice of 'ragtime religion.' Believing that 'these new church methods are a shameless surrender to the worst tendencies of the time,' he asks:

" 'What are all of these jazz bands and banjo-players and whistlers but an open catering to the prurient curiosity of the thoughtless crowd? What are they but a surrender to the consuming thirst for novelty, sensation, something to stare at, the craving for "entertainment," which the degenerate taste of the times demands? . . . And the next stage – what shall it be ? . . . Does the Church of the living God need to be propped up with theatres and brass bands?' Does it need bolstering with vaudeville stars and side-show stunts? God forbid!

"The question that confronts us today is: Shall we surrender the power of the Gospel for the sake of gathering a gaping crowd, or shall we trust God's methods, slow though they be, and proclaim the truth, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" ?'

"The 'flippant, pleasure-loving, Mammon-worshipping, Sabbath-breaking, sinful city of New York-like the other cities of the world'--is warned by Dr. Straton to awaken to its spiritual peril, lest some fate like that of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, fall upon it. We have not taken much to heart God's warnings given us through the Great War. 'We got off too lightly from the war here in America, and if we don't mend our ways some other judgment will fall upon us.'"

The experience and observation of the thoughtful confirm the teaching of the Bible that the tendency of sin is downward toward deeper and greater degradation and departure from the ways of the Lord. This was distinctly true concerning the first dispensation of human experiences the world that was. The same has been true of the long dispensation since the flood--known in the Bible as the present evil world in which we are now living. Fore knowing the predominance of evil, the Lord in His Word has foretold the prosperity of sin, that "evil doers shall I wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3:13) *until* the due **time should come, until that dispensation set in the Divine** Plan for Messiah's Kingdom shall be inaugurated. Only the powers of the world (dispensation) to come shall be sufficient to grapple with and suppress the powers of evil so long entrenched in the earth. And thus it is written, He shall rule the nations "with a rod of iron" (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27) and then His kingdom will become "the desire of all nations."--Hag. 2:7.

### **CHURCH UNITY POSTPONED**

In an Editorial in Brooklyn's leading newspaper, under date of June 25, 1920, several interesting and we believe sensible observations are made as to the failure of the Interchurch World Movement to accomplish its purposes. Surely it is a confession, however, that the spirit and power of the Christ are sadly lacking in the great institutions of Christendom that bear that Holy Name. May it not be indeed that we are nearing the time of the fulfillment of Rev. 18:23--"the voice of the Bridegroom and of the Bride shall be heard no more at all in thee". Babylon, Christendom, and that consequently we have quite positive proof that the Divine

Plan has never as signed to Christendom the task of saving the world, that mission having been committed to Jesus and His glorified Bride in the next dispensation. (Rev. 22:17.) The Editorial above mentioned follows:

"The withdrawal of the Northern Baptists from the Interchurch organization was accompanied with the 'decent obsequies' for which Dr. Woelfkin pleaded. The resolution adopted by the convention at Buffalo declares: 'Our grateful belief that the movement has accomplished some very desirable and far-reaching results under great difficulties and handicaps.' But nevertheless the Baptists are out. Following the recent defection of the Presbyterians, that leaves the Interchurch movement shorn of its chief supporters and restricted to insignificance in its scope.

"This failure of the dream of an immediate millennium is due chiefly to two causes. One was the mistake of the Interchurch movement in placing too much reliance upon an unprecedented campaign fund, upon a big business organization to do spiritual work and to produce quick results by business methods. The other is the unwillingness of denominational leaders to subordinate points of doctrine for the increase of church attendance and the creation of a pervasive ethical spirit. Probably the world would become godly much more rapidly if churches could sink their doctrinal differences and unite all their energies in reaching those now outside their influence. But so long as men differ on countless other important matters it is not to be expected that they will unite upon matters which involve such deep feeling-as forms of worship and belief. The Interchurch movement launched a great ideal, but before that ideal can be realized the people inside the churches must be educated both in fellowship with other forms of Christian faith and in the duty of the large sacrifices which must be made if the Church is to realize the ideal of the popular hymn:

"We are not divided,  
All one body we;  
One in faith and doctrine.  
One in charity.

"If that aspiration is ever realized, then Christians every where can sing 'Like a mighty army moves the Church of God.' Until that time the hymn will continue to voice an aspiration rather than a reality."

### **WHAT IS TRUTH?**

In the same newspaper containing the above, another Editorial remarks favorably concerning the agitation that has been going on in recent years amongst the religious bodies of Christendom including Jews, looking in the direction of "an agreement under which fundamental religion might be taught in the schools as a necessary element of education!"

### **RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

"For some years leading Protestants, Catholics and Jews have been talking about the possibility of securing an agreement under which fundamental religion might be taught in the public schools as a necessary element of education. They have not been able to devise a form of instruction which would be acceptable to all faiths, but an interdenominational committee has been created, with Bishop Burch at its

head, which has agreed upon a plan for dismissing all children from the public schools for one hour on Wednesday afternoon, an hour to be devoted to religious teaching by instructors of the parent's choice outside the school buildings. The plan proposes that these religious instructors shall mark the children on their progress in religious knowledge and that these marks shall be taken into account in fixing the child's school standing.

"The committee has urged this plan upon the Board of Education and that Board has appointed a committee to consider and report upon it. The idea that the churches will be ready and able to provide religious instruction for the children of their faith is in itself an evidence that the need of religious training is felt more deeply than it has been in the past, but it is by no means certain that the churches would do the work. The Catholics, who have well-organized parochial schools, welcome the chance to teach children who attend public schools, but members of the committee admit that it would take some time for the Protestant denominations to organize an adequate teaching force to do the work. Superintendent Ettinger of the schools objects to the plan because the schools would have no way of knowing that the pupils whom they dismissed would spend the hour receiving religious teaching and no way, of disciplining those who dodged the church schools. There are many obstacles to be overcome, but the fact that leaders of diverse faiths have united in trying to find a way in which such teaching can be given is a recognition of the need of religion for character building. Such recognition marks an awakening to a need which has been too long ignored in our scheme of education. It is more important that children should know that there is a God and a moral law which punishes wrongdoing and rewards virtue than that they should be taught grammar and geography."

No doubt the thought and motive are good on the part of those who would institute a system of religious training in the public schools. It would seem, however, that they would encounter insurmountable difficulties in the undertaking, in view of the sad lack of harmony that exists amongst the various religious branches in the so-called Christian world as to what constitutes essential Truth on the subject of religion. Surely there must be an abandonment of many creeds and much that has been taught and is still being advocated by professional Christian leaders before it would be safe to recommend the teaching of theology in the public schools.

### **IN THE DAY OF HIS PREPARATION**

The following will be interesting to our readers as showing the continued progress in the scientific world in this day of the Lord's preparation for the incoming of His glorious Kingdom, the mission of which will be to comfort and bless the human race. This extract was taken from the *Boston Herald* of July 3rd:

### **MUSIC BY WIRE**

"News of the wireless telephone concert which Mine. Melba gave 'to nearly all Europe' records the latest achievement in the wizardry of science. When wireless first became a fact nobody suspected -that it would come to be used for the transmission of the human voice. . . I "Experiments in the transmission of instrumental music and song began early this year from a station at Chelmsford, Sussex, in England, and a maximum range of 1400 miles was soon reached. The

strains sent out, as played or sung into the transmitting apparatus, were heard in many parts of the British Isles and far out to sea. A fortnight ago arrangements were made to have Melba sing for audiences at least 1000 miles distant from Chelmsford, the vibrations used being what is technically known as 2800-metre length. Complete success seems to have crowned the demonstration. In London the unique I concert' was 'heard with extraordinary clearness,' and wherever the wireless receiving instruments had been properly tuned-in capitals as widely separated as Paris, Rome, Warsaw, Madrid, Berlin and Stockholm--there the singer's 'Home" Sweet Home,' fell on delighted ears. No encores could be called for, but the famous vocalist rendered them unnecessary by repeating the choicest selections from her repertoire in their original English, French. or Italian. And as befitted the time and place, she gave-good-by to her far-scattered audience by rendering the first verse of the national anthem."

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

SERIES XXXVI

### **THE VISION OF THE SIXTH PLAGUE**

*"And the Sixth poured out his Bowl on the Great River, the Euphrates; and its Water was dried up, so that the Way of Those Kings who are from the Sun-rising might be prepared."--Rev. 16:12.*

NO symbol employed in the visions of the Revelation is fraught with more significance, and none easier of explanation than the one here brought to our attention in the vision of the sixth Plague -- that of the drying up of the great River Euphrates. Expositors of the nineteenth century are, however, divided in their application of the symbol; some applying it to the Mohammedan Empire; others to the Papacy. Pastor Russell's application of it is to Roman Catholicism and the systems that have come from the Papacy, the daughter sects of Protestantism. He frequently referred to it in his later ex positions as being in process of fulfillment for many years past. We quote first from his remarkable forecast of this symbolical feature of the vision written in 1883.

### **SIXTH VIAL Poured ON MYSTIC BABYLON**

"Literal Babylon was built upon the river Euphrates. Its wealth, supplies and sustenance came largely from this source. It had immense walls and strong gates over the river. Within the city, in bondage, were Israelites, God's covenant people, and to overthrow Babylon and deliver these God appointed Cyrus the Median General. (Isa. 45:1-5; Dan. 5:30, 31.) He, coming to this strong city, did not attack it directly, but, by digging another channel for the waters of the river, he dried up the old channel, through which he marched his army under the gates and captured the city.

"That this historic fact is used as the basis of a symbol in Revelation, none can question. Babylon and her fall are frequently mentioned, and here the drying up of the Euphrates adds to the correspondence. While 'Babylon' is used as a general name for the entire nominal Church, it is used and is Specially applicable to that portion of it called 'the Mother of Harlots.'

"This sixth Plague, or form of evil, is upon Babylon, the Mother, and while other systems have channels, or rivers, her system is built upon the 'Great River.' 'And in her forehead was the name written, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.'" (Rev. 17:5.) Following the literal, and applying it to the symbol, we reason that the waters of this great river represent the people who, by their influence and money, support Papacy-from which Babylon\* the \*Great draws her revenues. And to this agrees the explanation by the Angel: 'The waters which thou sawest where the harlot sitteth are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.'--Rev. 17:15.

"The millions of Papacy's subjects are of every tongue and clime, and this symbol shows that a disaffection is to spring up between the subjects and the Church authorities which will turn aside her support and 'dry up' her revenues, and thus speedily lead to Babylon's complete destruction. 'The drying up' will probably require years for its accomplishment."-- Z July '83-7.

Later years when Vol. II Of SCRIPTURE STUDIES was written he still held to this interpretation, as we read:

"Literal Babylon being built upon the river Euphrates, which materially contributed to its wealth and resources, its overthrow was accomplished by the turning aside of those waters. So mystic Babylon sits upon, is supported by, many waters (peoples, nations), and its fall is predicted, through the turning aside of its supporters and sustainers, the people.--Rev. 16:12."--Studies Vol. II, p. 209.

### **WATERS OF EUPHRATES DRYING UP**

Still later, in 1910, Pastor Russell seemed to have come to an understanding that this symbol had a much wider significance, and applied to all the nominal Church systems. We quote his words to this effect:

"In Revelation we read of the drying up of the Euphrates River, that the way of the Kings of the East may be prepared. (Rev. 16:12.) This is symbolical, of course. It calls our attention back to the typical Babylon and her fall before Cyrus. Babylon was built upon the River Euphrates, which ran through the midst of the city. Her wall was impregnable, but Cyrus' army turned aside the river into a new channel, leaving the old channel dry and enabling him to march his army under the Babylonian gates, which otherwise served as the city's defense.

"We are to expect a parallel to this in connection with mystical Babylon-Christendom. In the symbolical language of Revelation, waters symbolize people; hence the turning aside of the 'waters' would represent the alienation of the people, and the alienation of the people would be indicated by their withholding of financial support.

"Gifts of money to ecclesiastical institutions represent love or fear. The increasing light of modern times has not only decreased love for the creeds of the 'dark ages,' but it has also decreased fear for their threatenings. As a result neither love nor fear is operating as strongly today as once it did in the minds of the masses. What wonder if the result would be the drying up of the Euphrates and the ultimate collapse of mystic Babylon! The matter is under the control of the antitypical Cyrus, of whom it is written, 'Thus saith the Lord to His anointed (typical), to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will

loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.'--Isa. 45:1-3.

"Thus saith Jehovah, 'that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.' (Isa. 44:27, 28.) As the typical Cyrus encouraged and gave liberty to the Jews to return from Babylonian captivity, so the antitypical, our present Lord, will see to the drying up of the Euphrates and also to Israel's opportunity and encouragement to return to the land of Abraham."--Z '10-326.

In an article under the heading of "Waters of Euphrates Drying Up," we have another reference to this vision, showing that at this time according to Pastor Russell's understanding, this sixth Plague was making rapid strides in its fulfillment. We quote a few brief extracts from this article:

"Germany is being overwhelmed with a deluge of infidelity, unparalleled in its entire history. The Monist Federation is endeavoring to draw together the cultured strata of the people into a solid phalanx against Christianity. The Social Democrats are pushing the general masses into a fanatical hatred of Church and State and in the oul)its a Liberalism is spreading, which is almost utterly devoid of the spirit of the Gospel.

"While in believing circles earnest efforts are being put forth for individual salvation, and Mission Work is being done amongst the people, to stem the destructive tide, it becomes more evident every day, that 'the State Church is doomed in her struggle with Infidelity.'

"General strike against the Church is the latest slogan. The 'No-Creeders' (Monists) in league with the Socialists, convened mass meetings in Berlin, Brunswick and Saxony, in which every means of incitation. was employed in an appeal toward a secession from the State Church. At these meetings over 1,300 persons signed a declaration announcing their intention to secede from the Church. Four thousand more followed, and according to judicial court-records received towards the end of December, 17,000 secessions took place in December up to the 23rd, and the day after Christmas, 8000 more announced their intention. These are alarming figures!

"To the Socialists the Church Boycott is a political campaign issue. They aim at depriving the Church of her revenues and thus result in her overburdening the State." -Z '14-133.

### **PREPARING WAY OF KINGS OF THE EAST**

In the exposition of 1883, Pastor Russell's thought was that this withdrawal of the support of the people from the Papacy would be caused by her success in conciliating all the kingdoms, "both those which she appointed and those appointed and sanctioned by other daughter [Protestant] Churches. In this she is arraying herself directly on the side of these kingdoms, and in opposition to the increasing desire and effort of the people for liberty." He continues:

"Therefore, when present tendencies have produced a closer affiliation of religion and State than has existed for some time. it will result in leading, the masses to throw off the yoke of the Church as well as the State, since both will be leagued against their cherished ideas of liberty and equality. The support of the people-the waters of the Euphrates-being thus withdrawn, the Babylon Church organization will become weak and helpless, by reason of the drying up of the waters from its channel."--Z July '83-7.

The correctness of the foregoing application of this symbol in the light of history unveiling prophecy can hardly be questioned. All the signs of our times bearing on this particular matter point to a near completion of this Plague. Indeed, when considered in connection with the fulfillment of the four previous plagues the evidence is indisputable.

The great object to be accomplished in this drying up of the river Euphrates is stated in the vision to be, to prepare the way of the Kings from the Sun-rising. Who are represented by these Kings from the Sun-rising? The expositors, Barnes, Elliott, Lord and others, because of their application of these six vials to events of the French Revolution and other occurrences associated therewith, all apply this symbol of the Kings from the Sunrising to peoples dwelling in Eastern countries becoming converted to Christianity. Those who see that the fulfillment of these Plagues must occur in connection with the very closing events of the Age and portray the final judgments on Christendom have no difficulty in identifying these Kings from the Sun-rising as the glorified Kings and Priests who are to reign with Christ in the great work of blessing all nations-all the peoples of the earth. Pastor Russell's thought was that they represented these, as we read:

"The drying up' is 'to prepare the way of the Kings from the Sun-rising.' - These Kings we understand to be the saints-those who, with Christ, will be 'Kings and Priests' to reign over the earth. (Rev. 5:10.) They come, not to the Sun-rising, but from the Sun-rising. They come bringing light with them. This is a beautiful symbol of how 'the righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.' They bring with them light, liberty and joy to the groaning creation, for 'the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings [beams].' The object of all these changes is to prepare mankind for the rule of righteousness--the Kingdom really of God's appointment which is to take the place of these which anti-Christ has attempted to authorize."--Z July '83-7.

### **THREE IMPURE SPIRITS AS FROGS**

"And I saw out of the Mouth of the Dragon, and out of the Mouth of the Beast, and out of the Mouth of the False Prophet, three impure Spirits, as Frogs."--Rev. 16:13.

The "Beast" and the "Dragon" are not new symbols. We have frequently met them in our previous expositions of the Revelation. (H '20-21.). We have noted that when speaking of the "Beast" as applied to anti-Christ, we refer to that stage or state of the old Roman Empire and the kingdoms that at the present time occupy its territory, after it came under the control of anti-Christ or Papacy. The Papacy, itself, as a combination of a civil and religious government, and as once a head or ruling power over these kingdoms is represented by the Beast. While it has lost its civil authority, it still claims it and is acknowledged and recognized by Roman

Catholics as still possessing it by Divine right. Pastor Russell in July, 1883, in his exposition of the sixth Plague thus briefly explains it: "The Beast still, and always means Papacy." In the Foreword of Vol. IV, SCRIPTURE STUDIES, he gives a more complete explanation of this symbol which is in agreement with the earlier exposition, and reads:

"The Beast of Rev. 16:13 is the same that is mentioned in Rev. 13:2, where it is described as resembling a leopard -spotted. Protestant interpreters of the Revelation agree that this symbol refers to the Papal system-not to the Pope, not to Catholic congregations, not, to individual Catholics, but to the system as a whole, which has existed for centuries.

"In His Word, God has been pleased to recognize the Papacy as a system,, as a government."--Foreword, Studies, Vol. IV.

In our exposition in the HERALD on Jan' 15, 1920, we noted that the term "Dragon" is used in three senses in the Revelation: (1) The Pagan Roman civil government which ended in the early part of the fourth century (Rev. 12) ; (2) the civil power as distinguished from the ecclesiastical (Rev. 16:13) ; (3) the Adversary of man, Satan himself. (Rev, **20:2.**) **The Dragon** as used in the sixth Plague is thus explained by Pastor Russell:

"The Dragon, as before explained, symbolizes civil government (especially that which once constituted civil Rome)."--Z July '83-7.

The third symbol used in this feature of the sixth Plague vision-that of the "false prophet," while a new symbol, seems to represent the same as that referred to in chapter 13 as the "Image of the Beast,"--organized Protestantism. Pastor Russell thus explains it:

### **FALSE PROPHET IMAGE OF THE BEAST**

"The third symbol, the False Prophet, remains to be interpreted. This, we, believe. is another name for the system elsewhere called 'the Image of the Beast.' (Rev. 13:14.) According to the Scriptures, this Image is a very exact representation of the Beast. The False Prophet, or Image of the Beast. we understand to mean the Protestant Federation of Churches.

"The question now arises, Why should the Scriptures picture Protestantism as an Image of the Beast? When and how did this come about? From the time of the Reformation, Protestants had been striving individually to get out of the darkness of the past and thus had formulated many creeds and had organized many denominations. But about the middle of the last century the leaders began to see that if every one continued to study the Bible individually the time would come when each one would have an individual creed. To prevent what seemed to them a loss of power, they planned a union of Protestants in a system called the Evangelical Alliance.

"The Evangelical Alliance, an organization of the different Protestant denominations, was formed in 1846 for the very purpose of doing in their own way the same thing that Catholicism would do in its own way. Seeing the great power that Roman Catholics would exercise because of a united system, Protestants said, 'We are divided. We have. no power. We will organize. Then and there, according to the Scriptures, they made an Image of the Beast.



"The Bible says, however, that before the Image can do any particular harm it must receive life from the two-horned Beast. (Rev. 13:15.) This two-horned Beast, with horns like a lamb, but a voice like a dragon, we believe represents the Church of England, which is not a party to the Evangelical Alliance. The Church of England makes the claim which the Church of Rome makes--that she is the true Church; that all others are wrong; that she has the original apostolic succession; and that no one is commissioned to preach unless he has had Divine, apostolic hands laid upon him. That has been the contention of the Church of England for centuries, and constitutes the difference between that Church and all other Protestant denominations.

"Although the Evangelical Alliance was organized in 1846, it has not been able to accomplish its purpose, because it did not know how to operate. The denominations in the Alliance were united only in name, and hence have worked against each other. Denominations outside of the Alliance were declared to be unauthorized; and they, in turn, challenged the Evangelical Churches to show where they got authority to preach. As a result the Image had no power to act; it was trodden upon; and to get vitality--life--it would need apostolic succession; it must have something as a basis for operation.

"The Scriptures indicate that the Church of England will become intimate with the Evangelic Alliance and will give it apostolic authority to preach. Because of this union the Alliance will be able to say, 'We have apostolic authority to preach. Let no one speak unless he has our sanction.' This action on their part is described in Rev. 13:17. None will be allowed to buy or sell spiritual things in the spiritual market unless he has either the Mark of the Beast or the Mark of the Image.

"In Rev. 16:13 we find mention of the False Prophet, another representation of the Image--the vitalized product of the Evangelical Alliance, which has taken the form of Church Federation, and has today a great deal of vitality. Whether we can expect it to have more remains to be seen. The Scriptures clearly indicate that the Image of the Beast is to get so great power that it will do the same thing that the Roman Catholic Church did in the past; and that the two systems, Catholic and Protestant, will rule the civilized world with a high hand through the civil power--the Dragon."--Foreword, Studies, Vol. IV.

### **VITALIZED PROTESTANT FEDERATION**

We thus have described the appropriateness of the symbol of "False Prophet" being applied to the vitalized Protestant Federation. We have also learned what will be the direct cause of this triple alliance--the union of the two great divisions of the professed Christian systems with the civil power, as portrayed in this vision.

We next inquire, what is represented by the symbol of the three impure spirits like frogs coming out of the mouths of these three systems or organizations? This symbol has been variously applied by expositors, but a most reasonable explanation is the one by Pastor Russell, which we give:

"These three classes will all give forth owe kind of teaching, called symbolically unclean spirits (impure, erroneous teaching), like frogs.

"This harmonious teaching in which these can all unite, we believe to be the dogmas of 'the divine right of kings,' the 'authority of the clergy,' and the claim that mankind is bound to submit to these and be controlled by them. Many of these-kings and clergy-and many of those who will recognize their claims, will doubtless be honest, but will be thus in opposition to God, because they know not that they are in the hour of His judgment and that the

time for the displacement of these anti-Christ's and the governments of their appointing has come. It is a blessed fact that these beastly governments will eventually give place to the Kingdom of God; that the times of the Gentiles will end by being full-filled; and while this is now due to be understood and appreciated by the saints -- those entirely consecrated to God's Word and will-yet 'none of the wicked shall understand;' hence they will be found fighting against God and His arrangements."--Z July '83-7.

A recent expositor applies these three impure spirits as follows: that coming out of the mouth of the Dragon as Patriotism,\* and as having had its fulfillment in the great war. However, the great war was not the Battle of Armageddon and therefore this application must have been a wrong one. The unclean spirit from the mouth of the Beast and False Prophet are represented by this recent expositor as the Divine right of the clergy and human immortality. We believe Pastor Russell's interpretation to be the reasonable one, and the three unclean doctrines he mentions will be the means used to bring to pass the great battle of Armageddon which will be class against class.

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\*A revised edition of this expositor's view says that the impure spirit from the mouth of the dragon is race hatred.

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### **PASTOR RUSSELL'S EXPOSITION OF THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS ESTABLISHED BY FACTS**

In a later exposition of this symbolic vision, written a brief time before his death, Pastor Russell thus explained this feature of the vision which will be found to be in perfect harmony with this earlier one:

"The Scriptures tell us that this result is to be brought about by the utterances of the combined power of Church and State. Three unclean spirits like frogs came out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet! In this passage, the spirit is a doctrine -- an unclean doctrine, a false doctrine. Each of these systems will utter the same things. and these utterances will have the effect of gathering the kingdoms of earth together to the great Battle of Armageddon.

"The symbolism of Scripture, rightly understood, is very forceful, and there is always a close resemblance between the symbol itself and the thing symbolized. When the Holy Spirit uses a frog to represent certain doctrines or teachings, we may be sure that the application will fit well. While a frog is a small creature, yet it puffs itself up until it almost bursts with the effort to be somebody. A frog has a very wise look, even though it does not know very much. Then a frog croaks whenever it utters a sound.

"The three most prominent characteristics of a frog, then, are pomposity, an air of superior wisdom and knowledge, and a continual croaking. Applying these characteristics to the picture given. in the Divine Word, we learn that from the civil power, from the Catholic Church, and from the Federation of Protestant Churches will go forth the same teachings. The spirit of all will be boastful; an air of superior knowledge and wisdom will be assumed; all will foretell dire results to follow any failure to obey their counsels. However conflicting the creeds, the differences will be ignored in the 'general proposition that nothing ancient must be disturbed, or investigated, or repudiated.

"The Divine authority of the Church, and the Divine right of kings, aside from the Church will not be allowed to conflict; for both will be endorsed. Any persons or teachings in conflict with these boastful, unscriptural claims will be branded as everything vile, at the mouths of the frogs, croaking from pulpits and platforms, and through the religious and secular press. The nobler sentiments of some will be strangled by the philosophy of the same evil spirit which spoke through Caiaphas, the high priest, respecting our Lord Jesus. As Caiaphas declared it expedient to commit a crime in violation of justice', both human and Divine, to be rid of Jesus and His teachings, so this frog-like spirit will approve of any and every violation of principle necessary to self-protection.

"Every true Christian is ashamed to look back upon the pages of history and see what terrible deeds were done in the name of God and justice, and in the name of our Lord Jesus. We are not to think for a moment that these frog spirits, or doctrines, are all bad, but rather that they are doctrines of bombast and pomposity, representing themselves to be very wise and great, and having the backing of centuries. Out of the mouth of the Dragon comes the doctrine of the Divine right of kings: 'Do not look back of the curtain of history to see where the kings got that right. Accept the doctrine; for if you do not, and if men look into the matter, there will be a terrible revolution and everything will go down!'

"The Beast and the False Prophet have similar croakings. The Catholic Church says, 'Do not look behind! Do not question anything about the Church!' Protestantism says, also, 'We are great. we are wise, we know a great deal. Keep quiet! No one will then know that you know nothing.' All say (croaking), 'We tell you that if you say anything against present arrangements, terrible things will come to pass.'

"Political parties are figuring in this. All declare, 'If any change should come, it will mean terrible disaster!' Some have the backbone and some have the civil power behind them, but unitedly they croak to the people that if any change is made, it will mean ruin to the present order. In the language of our day, 'Stand pat!' is the order in Church and in State; but the people are being moved by fear. It is this croaking of the Beast, the Dragon and the False Prophet that will arouse the kings of earth and gather them together to the Armageddon Battle and destruction.

### **COME TOGETHER TO ARMAGEDDON**

"The ecclesiastical kings and princes, with their retinue of clergy and faithful adherents, will be gathered in solid phalanx-Protestant and Catholic. The political kings and princes, senators, and all in high places, with their henchmen and retainers, will follow in line on the same side. The financial kings and merchant

princes, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever yet exercised in the world, will join the same side, according to this prophecy. They do not realize, however, that they are coming to Armageddon; yet strange to say, this is a part of their very cry, 'Come together to Armageddon!'

"Speaking of our day, our Lord declared, 'Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.' (Luke 21:26.) The kings of Europe know not what to do. All sectarianism is being shaken. Many people of God are in perplexity.

"The croaking of the frog spirits, or doctrines, will gather the kings and princes, financial, political, religious and industrial into one great army. The spirit of fear, inspired by the croaking, will scourge the passions of otherwise good and reasonable men to fury--desperation. In their following of these evil spirits, evil doctrines, they will be ready to sacrifice life and everything on what they mistakenly suppose is the altar of justice, Truth and Righteousness under a Divine arrangement.

"Many noble people in this great army will assume an attitude quite contrary to their preference. For a time the wheels of liberty and progress will be turned backward, and mediaeval restraints will be considered necessary for self-preservation--for the maintenance of the present order of things and for the prevention of the new order which God has decreed, the due time for which is at hand. Even those who may be God's People do not stop to consider whether it is His will - that things should continue as they have been for the past six thousand years. The Bible says that such is not God's will, but that there is to be a great overturning, that a new order is coming in.

"For a brief time, as we understand the Scriptures, these combined forces of Armageddon will triumph. Free speech, free mails, and other liberties which have come to be the very breath of the masses in our day, will be ruthlessly shut off on the plea of necessity, the glory of God, the commands of the Church, etc. The safety-valve will be sat upon, and thus will cease to annoy earth's kings with the sound of escaping steam; and all will seem to be serene-until the great social explosion described in the Revelation as an earthquake will take place. In symbolic language an earthquake signifies social revolution, and the Scriptural declaration is that none like it ever before occurred. (Rev. 16:18, 19.) See our Lord's reference to it in Matt. 24:21."--Foreword, Studies, Vol. IV.

## **VERY NEAR GREAT CRISIS IN HUMAN AFFAIRS**

The exposition of this part of the sixth Plague as given by Pastor Russell is most remarkable and shows that he had a clear understanding even in 1883 of this vision. Events that have occurred since and especially those transpiring in the world at the present time, all show that this forecast was correct, and causes us to have a strong conviction that we are very near the great crisis in human affairs, the great battle of Armageddon that will complete this vision. We quote again from the 1883 exposition:

"In brief, this indicates that when these systems give forth these unclean spirits or doctrines of the Divine right of kings and clergy and submission of the people as to God, it will be with boastfulness, an attempt to overawe with dignity, superior wisdom and ability, and with continual allusion to the disasters which must attend any change of present arrangements. This croaking, already beginning, as this darkness of trouble draws on will increase with it. It will be heard from every mouthpiece, large and small, religious and political, officers and press. In fear they will be uttering warnings and threats, and few will be the independents to plead the cause of right, or to show that the time for the reign of righteousness has come, and hence the conflict.

"These are the 'spirits of demons, working signs,' i.e., doctrines of devils--the devil's theory relative to present evil governments, indirectly of Satan's appointment, through his agencies. These doctrines show signs in proof of their authority. They will give evidences and seemingly plausible reasons for the rights of kings and clergy; chief among these will doubtless be God's appointment of kings and priests over fleshly Israel--which, however, was typical of the Church and not of worldly systems.--1 Pet. 2:9.

"These unclean spirits, erroneous doctrines 'go forth to the kings of the whole habitable earth to gather them together for the war [conflict between right and wrong] of the great day of the Omnipotent God! (verse 14.) The kings of the whole world may properly be supposed, in symbol, to include not only kings but princes, generals also, also those termed financial kings and merchant princes, and the great ones among religious teachers. These classes influence and encourage each other with this impure doctrine of Satan--hence they gather or unite them all together on the one side of the conflict already drawing nigh. Were it not for this harmony and unity inspired by this teaching, each of these classes of kings and rulers would have felt the weakness and erroneousness of their claims, and truth might have prevailed more easily against them; but in their union 'they find 'strength and hope for success in retaining their hold upon the people.

" 'And they gathered them together into that place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon.' (verse 16.) 'Armageddon means mount of destruction; and this describes what will be the result of this doctrine. It will unite all these systems in one cause as against the masses of the people and their liberties, and the result will be the total destruction of all those erroneous systems of Church and State. They shall fall.

"The fifteenth verse is abruptly thrown in as a parenthesis. It reads literally thus: 'Lo, I come as a thief! Blessed the one watching and keeping the garments of himself; so, that not naked he may walk, and they see the shame of him.' This is

very significant. It declares that at the time when this evil doctrine will be apparently uniting all upon the side of law and order-upon the side of kings and clergy-our Lord will then be present, but secretly and unknown except to the watching ones. Only those who are truly His and watching in the light of His Word will, not be deceived by this impure teaching, but will realize His presence and the necessity of the foretold fall of all these things, because the rightful king is present to remove these out of the way of His Kingdom.

"The position of this declaration thrown in disconnectedly is significant. It teaches that our Lord will be present before the impure teaching begins to- gather them to their destruction." -- Z July '83-7, 8.

### **PROPER ATTITUDE OF THE LORD'S CONSECRATED**

In concluding this most remarkable exposition of Pastor Russell's it will be profitable to the Lord's consecrated ones to know what his thought was, concerning the attitude or position they should assume when this great battle is fully introduced. We quote a few of his last words:

"The Lord's saints are not to be in this battle at all. God's consecrated people, longing at heart for Messiah's Kingdom and the glorious, Year of jubilee and Restitution which it will inaugurate, will patiently abide the Lord's time, and wait uncomplainingly for it. Their lamps trimmed and burning, they will not be in darkness respecting the momentous events of the impending battle; but they will be of good courage, knowing the outcome portrayed in the 'more sure word of prophecy,' to which they have done well to 'take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn.'--2 Pet. 1:19. . . .

"The attitude of the people of God should be that of great thankfulness to the Giver of every good. They should make provision for the great storm that is coming and keep very quiet, not unduly interested in the side of either rich or poor. We know in advance that the Lord is on the side of the people. He it is that will fight the Armageddon Battle, and His agency will be that peculiar army-all classes. When this great 'earthquake' of social revolution comes, it will not be a mere handful of anarchists, but an uprising of the people to throw off the great power that is strangling them. Selfishness is at the bottom of the whole matter."--Foreword, Studies, Vol. IV.

## **DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM**

--AUGUST 1-2 SAM. 6:11-19; PSA. 24:7-10--

*Golden Text.--"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."--Psa. 100:4.*

AFTER David had been voluntarily chosen, king of all the tribes of Israel, not as a result of his conquest, but as a result of his patient waiting for the Lord's time to put him into the position of king, he took possession of Jerusalem and made it the capital city of the kingdom. Then followed wars with the Philistines, who again sought to invade the land of Israel. In these wars, under the Lord's blessing, the Israelites were successful. It was after seven years had passed under such conditions after the kingdom of Israel had become quite settled, and was not

likely to be molested by enemies-that the scene of this lesson opens. King David, at this time about forty-four years of age, recognized the fact that religious matters had been at a low ebb in the nation for many years, and that the Lord having now blessed them by reuniting them and giving them peace, an appropriate time had come to do what he could in the way of reviving the religious sentiments of the people. His own heart ever loyal to the Lord, he desired that others should more fully appreciate the Lord as their light and their salvation. So it is with all who truly reverence the Lord and trust in Him; they are desirous of telling their joys abroad, and helping others into the same condition of peace and rest in the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant, it will be remembered, was the chief article of furniture in the Tabernacle service which the Lord instituted at the hand of Moses in the wilderness. We have no-certain knowledge of the regularity of the Tabernacle worship during the period from Joshua to date. Quite probably the services were maintained -with more or less regularity. It is possible that since the Ark was the chief center of interest in connection with that service, its movements, etc., may have included the movement of the other articles of furniture of the Tabernacle, its boards, curtains, lamp, table, altars, etc.

Shortly after Israel entered Palestine Joshua located the Ark at Shiloh, twenty miles north of Jerusalem. (josh. 18:1.) That it was still there at the close of the period of the judges, and while Samuel lived with Eli, is shown by 1 Sam. 1:3. The sons of Eli took the Ark with them into battle against the Philistines, thus evidencing their faith in the Divine institutions, although their lives were corrupt; but as a result of this misuse of the Ark, the Lord permitted it-to be captured by the Philistines. However, while they possessed it a curse seemed to accompany it. in the temple of their god, Dagon, his image fell down before the Ark, and the people. of the cities in which it was located were afflicted with plagues. The Philistines were glad to get rid of the Ark, and loading it upon a cart started the oxen in the direction of the Israelites. From the time of its return the Ark was in the custody of Abinadab, the priest, and his sons, one of whom was Uzzah. The Ark had thus been with the house of Abinadab in the hill Gibeah and Kirjath-jearim, otherwise called Baale, seventy years.

### **CHRIST OUR MERCY SEAT**

Any religious movement amongst the Jews must necessarily center in and about the Ark of the Covenant, for it was the symbol of the Lord's presence and of His mercy and grace toward them as a people. We remember that when in its place in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle a bright light, called the Shekinah glory, represented the Lord's presence between the two Cherubim of its golden lid, which lid was called the Mercy Seat, because upon it the blood of atonement was sprinkled each year, which covered the sins of that people for a year, and was repeated year by year continually, as a foreshadowing type of the blood of Christ, by which the real atonement is made. In the box under this lid or Mercy Seat was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the two tables of the Law, symbolizing the gracious arrangements and promises of the Almighty to His people. Spiritual Israel, thank God, has inherited the realities which were thus typified. Christ is the Ark of the Covenant. In Him the Law has full satisfaction. In Him is vested the priestly office, represented by Aaron's rod, and in Him is provided the heavenly manna. All these things are made ours by the Mercy Seat,

and we have access to and are accepted before the Mercy Seat as members of the High Priest's Body, by virtue of the blood of atonement shed by our Redeemer as a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

King David realized that the Ark of the Lord, representing His presence, should be in the capital city of the nation, making it the city of the great King, and directing the minds of Israel, not only to their earthly king and his laws and regulations, but through him to the heavenly King whom he represented. To have this event notable to arouse the religious sentiments of the whole people the king realized that they must all to some extent participate in the movement, and hence he gathered from all quarters thirty thousand of the chief men of the nation not only its military representatives, but the heads of the tribes. There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites who have any prominence in the carrying forward of religious work. It is not sufficient that a leader, a representative, shall attempt some prominent service for the Lord and for the Truth. It is wiser, better every way, that all of the Lord's people be invited to join directly or representatively in any prominent matter connected with the Lord's service. Even in the affairs of a small congregation it will be found disadvantageous to have one person do all the speaking, all the leading, all the serving. Far better, far wiser is it, far more in harmony with the Scriptural direction, that each should endeavor to take a part in the service, and be encouraged so to do along the lines of his natural talents and in proportion as he shall be found humble, faithful and helpful,

### **"STEADYING THE ARK"**

The holy joy and rejoicing of the journey with the Ark from Kirjath-jearim toward Jerusalem was suddenly interrupted by the jolting of the cart, which Uzzah, who had it in charge, feared would overthrow it. When he put forth his hand to steady the Ark he was smitten dead for his error. Consternation took the place of rejoicing. The thirty thousand who had come together specially to honor the Lord, and David himself also, were alarmed. Fear fell upon all, and David at once determined that this was either a mark of Divine disfavor concerning the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem, or that increasingly disastrous experiences might come to him and to the city by reason of the presence of the Ark. All were in fear, and the question now was, what to do with the holy oracle. A courageous man of the tribe of Levi, Obed-edom, was willing to receive the emblem of the Lord Jehovah's presence into his, premises-probably the Ark was set up with the Tabernacle, etc., in his yard or court or appropriate place,

"David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah"--not displeased with the Lord, we may be sure, from what we know of the man, for David's reverence for the Lord and his confidence in His righteous dealings are clearly manifest in all of his writings. We may properly understand this to mean, then, that David was displeased with his former determination-to take the Ark to Jerusalem; displeased that his good intentions respecting the revival of religion and the honoring of the Lord-had thus gone astray through a lack of particularity on his own part and on the part of the priests who had charge of the movement, in that they did not obey the direct and explicit instructions of the Lord concerning the manner in which this sacred emblem of His presence should be moved. -See Num. 4:15; 7:9, where it is specified that the Ark was to be carried upon the



shoulders of the Levites by poles running through certain rings arranged for the purpose. That this was David's attitude of mind is evident upon the reading of the ninth verse: "David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?" We can imagine the disappointment and chagrin, not only of David, but also of the thirty thousand representative Israelites, when they scattered to their homes, disappointed respecting their good intentions, which apparently had not been fully approved by the Lord.

The statement that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah" is not to be understood to signify violent passion on the Lord's part, but evidently is an accommodated expression to bring down to human comprehension the fact that the Lord was displeased with the action of Uzzah, and thought proper to punish him for his neglect. Quite possibly long association with the Ark had bred in Uzzah a familiarity and loss of respect for it as representative of God; and his open violation of the Divine regulation on the highway, and in the sight of the representatives of all Israel, would have brought the Divine commands and threatenings respecting the Ark and the various holy things of the Tabernacle into disrespect. The Lord resented this in the interest of His people, and incidentally took the opportunity to teach all Israel, through their representatives there assembled, a great lesson on the propriety of reverence for the Lord and for the particularities of His commands.

### **IMPORTANCE OF REVERENCE FOR HOLY THINGS**

The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Whoever has not learned this primary lesson in reverence has not made a proper start in his worship and service. Unless he learns this lesson he is not likely to accomplish anything that will be pleasing to the Lord--he is apt to be a stumbling block, rather than an assistance in the Lord's service. Indeed, those who are the Lord's consecrated people, and who have been privileged to handle holy things, and to enter into the Most Holy by the blood of Jesus, approaching the Throne of the Heavenly Grace in prayer, have continual need to remember the appropriateness of reverence as they approach the Lord or engage in any service for Him. All such should learn from this lesson how they touch holy things, and to do so according to the Divine direction and not otherwise. The poet has noticed this tendency of some to "rush in Where angels fear to tread." Such irreverence some times manifests itself conspicuously in prayer, where the one who should be a worshiper, overflowing with thanks giving for mercies received, undertakes to give direction to the great King of kings, concerning the management of His work far and near and in all particulars, The Lord does not smite down such today, and make public examples of them for their irreverence, but we may be sure that, as the Apostle says, such petitions will receive no consideration of the Lord. (James 1:7.) A lesson in this matter to us is that obedience is better than sacrifice. The carrying of the Ark upon the shoulders of the four Levites might not have been as majestic a procedure as the one attempted with the cart; it would nevertheless have been more pleasing to the Lord, because it was according to His directions. Let us apply this lesson carefully, and see to it that we not only desire to do the Lord's will, but that we so desire to do it in His way that we will give close attention thereto, hearkening to the statements of His Word, or, as the Prophet expresses it, let us be amongst those who tremble at His Word who are extremely careful to note and particularly

follow the Word of the Lord in every matter. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels."

To those who discern the Scriptural teaching that death is the cessation of life, and not an entrance 'into life more abundant, there will be no need to explain that Uzzah's conduct not only justified the Lord in making him an example before the nation, instructing the whole people in reverence, but also that no injury was done to Uzzah's eternal future. He lived before the redemption price had been paid, and before any door to eternal life had been opened. He was one member of the human family for which Christ Jesus-our Lord gave His life a ransom. As a consequence, he will be one member of the human family who shall ultimately hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth from the sleep of death to have it testified to him, in that His "due time," that God has been gracious to our entire race, -and has redeemed us with the precious blood. (1 Tim. 2:4-6.) It is to those who have gotten the mistaken idea which ignores the resurrection and claims that there are no dead to be resurrected, but that the dead are more alive than they ever were before, and who, therefore, think of Uzzah as being dropped immediately into the hands of devils for eternal torture-it is to these 'that this narrative seems perplexing and unjustly severe. Thank God for the clearer light now shining upon His character and plan!

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE LESSON**

During the three months that the Ark was at the home of Obed-edom the Lord's blessing was specially with the family, to such a degree that their neighbors took knowledge of it, and the matter eventually reached the attention of the King. We think it not unreasonable to assume that there was something in the character of Obed-edom, and the conduct of his home, in his reverence for the Lord and his confidence in Him, that had to do with the blessing accompanying the possession of the Ark; because we have no record of any special blessing coming to the house of Abinadab during the seventy years that the Ark remained there. We might draw a lesson from this applicable to spiritual Israel. The Bible in some respects represents the Lord to us, as the Ark represented Him to natural Israel. To it we go for the settlement of our questions. From it we hear the message of the Lord speaking peace to our souls, the forgiveness of sins, etc. The Bible has been in many homes in Christendom for more than seventy years without bringing any special blessing to those homes; yet to some, even in a few months, it has brought inestimable favors. What is the difference? We reply that very much depends upon the genuineness of the Israelite and the degree of reverence he has for the Lord and His Word, and his carefulness to consult that Word in respect to all his affairs, and the affairs of his home. Those who have the blessing of the Lord's Word, and especially those who have any light upon its pages in this dawning of the Millennial morning, if they are not receiving great blessing from it in their own hearts, peace, joy, comfort, courage, strength, and finding such blessings also upon the members of their households, have reason to inquire to what extent they are responsible for, their failure to profit thus.

Hearing of the blessing of the Lord upon the home of Obed-edom, King David took fresh courage, and realized that these different experiences of Uzzah and Obed-edom taught the lesson that those who reverently and carefully sought to know and to do the will of the Lord would have a blessing in proportion to their

nearness to Him, while the careless and the irreverent only need be in fear. Again the King assembled the representatives of the nation from all quarters, the chief men of the tribe and the chief representatives of the army, etc., and apparently this day of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem was the most joyful and the most notable day in David's entire experience. See an account of this in I Chron. 15, 16. On this occasion care was taken to follow the Divine direction, and the Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, frequent stoppages being made, during which sacrifices were offered to the Lord.

On the whole we discern that the Lord's dealing in this matter taught David and all Israel a great lesson, and was very advantageous -to the nation as a whole. Thus it is with all the corrections in righteousness which the Lord may at any time give to those who are truly His; rightly received they will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness, reverence and obedience.

## **THE KINGLY KINDNESS OF DAVID**

--AUGUST 8-2 SAM. 8:15; 9:1-13-- 4

*Golden Text.--"David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people."--2 Sant. 8:15.*

THE LORD gives us a deep insight into David's character, and shows us one of the abilities he possessed which constituted him "A man after God's own heart." Entirely overlooking and forgetting the evils which he experienced from King Saul during the years in which the latter sought his life, King David remembered with appreciation the conduct of Saul's son, Jonathan; how the latter had befriended him, and how he had made a covenant that in turn he would show kindnesses to Jonathan's family. For a time, busy with the affairs of the kingdom, King David apparently forgot to make any special inquiry respecting the family of Saul, but something occurred which brought prominently to his mind his obligation to Jonathan. Presumably this was about the middle of his reign; and quite possibly it was David's serious sin with Bathsheba and his hearty repentance therefor that now quickened his mind in respect to his responsibilities to those about him, including the family of his deceased friend.

Ziba, chief servant of King Saul, was called to David and inquiry was made respecting any of the remaining members of Saul's family. This disclosed the fact that there was still living 4 son of Jonathan, who was a child of five years at the time of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and who was lamed in his feet by falling from his nurse's arms as they fled at the news of the defeat.

King David explained to Ziba that he desired to do kindnesses to Saul's posterity, and bade him bring to court Jonathan's lame son Mephibosheth. The King's command was obeyed, although it must have been received with great fear and trepidation and doubt with respect to its sincerity. It was the custom at the time, that when one king succeeded to the dominion of an other all the heirs of the throne should be sought and killed, lest they should give trouble later to the new dynasty. This was evidently expected of King David, and hence the secrecy in respect to the whereabouts of Jonathan's son was kept so that the King knew not of him. However, Ziba was a man of large family interests and realized that it

was incumbent upon him to perform the King's bidding, even if it should mean the death of Saul's heir. And the latter, being lame and knowing that his present residence was known to the King, could do nothing less than respond and present himself at the court. His fear that the King's words might be treacherous, his thoughts that so great a generosity as has been suggested could not be expected, or trusted, doubtless caused him fear and trepidation as, coming to the presence of the King, he prostrated himself at his feet, saying, "Behold thy servant!"

"Fear not," said David "for I will surely show thee kindnesses for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the lands of Saul, thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

With the people of oriental lands the eating of food together as friends implies a pledge of friendship and fidelity; and to eat continually at the table signifies membership in the family. We are not to consider this a light matter, for David had two wives and their children 'were hopeful of being his successors to the kingdom and this bringing a stranger into the family might properly be considered as a menace to their interests, especially as that stranger already, according to the usages of nations, had a prior claim to the throne, superior even to that of the King.

The entire operation shows us the fearlessness of the King and confidence that the kingdom should not be taken away from his posterity; and it shows us also the confidence which all the members must have felt towards him and respect to his judgment as to the affairs of the home and his headship in his home. This headship we cannot suppose was used in an austere and arbitrary manner, but with loving kindnesses and generosity and in the interest of his entire household. He who could be thus kind to the son of a friend, certainly could be kind and generous. also to the members of his own family.

### **LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES**

The most advanced even of the Lord's consecrated people may draw some helpful suggestions from the incidents of this lesson.

(1) There is really no more worthy trait to adorn a righteous character than that of gratitude. It is gratitude that returns to God that filial affection which is due from the creature to the Creator. It is gratitude that encourages and sweetens the cup of loyal devotion between friend and friend. It is always the due reward of loving service and especially of self-sacrificing service, though it is not always the reward rendered. The spirit of the world is, alas! so far removed from this that even loving and self-sacrificing service is more frequently rewarded with cold, thankless indifference, and not seldom with reproachfulness or persecution. Those who will therefore live godly and cultivate the graces of a godly character must not be disappointed in failing of their reward here, and in meeting the rebuffs that are sure to come to them in the line of duty. Let them duly appreciate their opportunity of proving their devotion to righteousness and truth by taking patiently and bearing with humble fortitude whatever of reproach or ingratitude may be the present reward, content to await God's time and God's way for giving to righteousness its due reward. Such overcomers who count not their lives dear unto them are of the David (Beloved) class.

(2) A friend in need is a friend indeed. Jonathan had been David's friend in his time of need and thus had attested his nobility of character, his faithfulness to principles of righteousness, his loyalty to the Lord, even when the Lord was taking his kingdom power to give it to David. -David's friendship came in -time of need to the poor man with lame feet, who lived in secret, fearful that anyone should recognize him lest his life should be taken.

(3) David's searching for the opportunities to do good reminds us that such should be our attitude; that we should not merely wait until circumstances force upon our attention the troubles of others and their need of assistance. Well do the Scriptures say, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." This is a God-like quality, and whoever practices it is to that extent godly. The Apostle says of God, that He looked down and beheld the "groaning of the prisoners" in their condition of sin, degradation, dying. He looked further to note that there were no other means of assistance, that they were wholly dependent upon Him; then His own arm brought salvation. The arm of the Lord Jesus was revealed for man's uplift from the condition of death back to harmony with God. Our Lord suggested, "Be ye kind even as your Father in heaven; for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil and the good."

In harmony with this, our generous sentiments and helpfulness should not be confined to those who have claims upon us through love relationship. Our generosity is to go beyond, even to our enemies. "Yea, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." So shall we be the children of our Father in heaven; so shall we know that we have His disposition, "the mind of Christ," who, when we were enemies, died for us. We are not, however, urging the same degree of love and benevolence toward all. The Lord specially loves those who are in accord with Him-and so should we, but our love and sympathy and assistance must not be confined only to these, for we have the admonition that "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same." But God commended His love to us as an example of what ours should be in that His Son, "Christ, died for the ungodly."

(4) David's justice and generosity are both manifested in the course he pursued. Instead of coveting Saul's possessions and using his power to attach these to his own he deliberately settled the matter that the profits of Saul's estate should all go to his son, who at the time would be continually partaker of the King's bounty at his table. Comparatively few would have been so just and so generous. The incident gives David's character a fresh luster and helps us to understand why he was so beloved of the Lord. He was not content with merely wishing to do right, willing to do right, he went forward and dealt justice. He put his bright thoughts and generous impulses into practice, and made "footprints on the sands of time" which have helped to mark the proper pathway for the millions who have since examined these in the holy records.

While the Scriptures everywhere inculcate the thought that God's people are to be generous towards strangers as well as their own people, they make common the thought that they should have a special interest in one another, as the Apostle expresses in these words, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." Ali! Yes. Kindness is certainly one of the elements of love, as the

Apostle says, and tender-heartedness must characterize those who would have a participation with our Lord in His kingdom. Hardness of heart and cruelty are evidences of degradation-the loss of the image of God. The coldness and the hard-heartedness of the world make countless thousands mourn, even more than their circumstances necessitate. As the Apostle declares, "The whole creation groaneth," waiting for the King of Glory, who will bring in restitution. And it should be a part of the mission of every member of the Body of Christ to do something to help ameliorate the world's difficulty. And each may do something, even if it be no more than the cheering Word. Indeed, we rejoice as we see the manifestations of the coming Kingdom of our Lord, "The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."--Acts 3:20.

### **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER**

Are not the Lord's people commended "to be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? And if this is so, what in each others conduct would they have to forgive? Ah! there it is. At heart they must will perfection absolutely; but how to perform it they find not; hence, as the Apostle says, in many things we all fail. "There is none righteous; no, not one." More than this, the Lord's Elect are not, according to the flesh, the highest, the noblest, the best. "Not many great, not many noble, not many rich hath God chosen." While the Apostle intimates that some great, some rich and some noble may be expected amongst the Elect, he emphatically declares that God has chosen chiefly the mean things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are. How strange! Nevertheless, it is just like the Lord to pass by the self-righteous and the proud, and to declare that "Only those who humble themselves shall be exalted and those that exalt themselves shall be abased." This fact, then, that God will accept none but the humble, accounts for the fact that those who have received the message in humility are chiefly the mean, the ignoble. It is only the humble-minded, taught in the school of Christ, who are able and willing to accept the ignoble ones who rally to the Lord's standard and who may be accepted. To love the ignoble signifies that we must view them from the Divine standpoint and love them as God loves -them-not because of their ignoble and mean qualities, but in spite of these; because of their heart's desires towards God and righteousness. As we come to love and appreciate all those who stand for and strive for those principles, we take our position with God and view the situation from the Divine standpoint, having compassion upon those who are weak and out of the way and doing all we can to assist them, if they are of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity and are striving in harmony with their ideals.

The more such have to contend with the more will they call forth the love and sympathy of God and all who are His. God has promised to "cover their blemishes" and this must be the sentiment of all who are on His side. As the Apostle said in this text we must be disposed to forgive one another and, as he again in 1 Cor. 12 teaches, that "Those members in the Body of Christ which are most ungainly," upon them we should bestow more efforts' and energy for their assistance, especially covering their blemishes, especially assisting them. Along this line the Apostle elsewhere says that we ought to follow the example of Jesus

in laying down our lives for the brethren--"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."--Rom. 15:1.

Too often the Lord's people forget this injunction and are disposed to lay down their lives for themselves, for their own comfort, or to lay down their lives, their time, their energy, in fellowshiping with those of the brethren most congenial to them in cultivation or in advancement. Is not this pleasing ourselves in ignoring to serve those members of the Body who need our assistance most--the more ignoble? Let us then take our lessons from the great Teacher of whom it is written that "even Christ pleased not himself."

## **THE SINS AND SORROWS OF DAVID**

--AUGUST 15-2 SAM. 12:9, 10; 18:1-15--

*Golden Text--" Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."--Gal. 6:7.*

PROSPERITY did not work to King David's advantage. After years of phenomenal success under the Lord's blessing, when his kingdom was mighty and his name honorable, and the necessity for his personal participation in wars was passed, and his heart had begun to gravitate towards earthly pleasures and was less zealous for the Lord and the Law than at first, the king fell into very grievous sins, which appear all the more black in contrast with the high moral character shown by him in his earlier life, when he was the man after God's own heart. The story of his sins, how he became enamored of Bathsheba and committed adultery with her, and subsequently, to shield himself, caused her husband Uriah to be placed in the forefront of the battle that he might be killed by the enemy, involving the loss of several other lives as Well, is told in the Scriptures in a most straightforward manner, without the slightest effort to condone the King's wrong-doing. No excuses are offered in connection with the account; the full weight of these awful crimes is laid directly on the King's head. Whatever excuses may be offered on his behalf must come from the reader of the account. We may suggest some thoughts along this line: In that day the kings of the world exercised a despotic authority and it was a theory among the people that the king could do no wrong--that whatever he pleased to do was proper to him because of his high position as the head and ruler of the nation. We could in no sense of the word agree with such a thought. Nevertheless we can reasonably suppose that a sentiment so general would have more or less influence upon the mind of the King. He who respected Saul's life, because he was the Lord's anointed, may have to some extent fallen into the misconception that his own anointing by the Lord relieved him in some degree from the responsibilities resting upon others of his nation.

It was in the midst of this season of outward prosperity, yet decline of inward piety, that David succumbed to temptation and to the dreadful crime he committed against God and man. (2 Sam. 11:1-27.) Poor fallen human nature! how weak it is, and how prone to sin, even at its best state! Truly, there is no safety from the power of sin except in a close and constant walk with God, and a resolute purpose to continually avoid and resist the intoxicating influences of the spirit of the world. To allow its pride or vain glory or desire for self-gratification

to actuate us in any measure is to bring our moral perceptions to that extent under its stupefying influence. And when any one is intoxicated with the spirit of the world (which in large measure is the spirit of Satan), he will blindly do many things which in his sober senses he would shun and despise. So it was with David, a great and wise man, and, until this intoxication came upon him a good man and therefore beloved and highly honored of God, yet even he -fell; and the previous height of his moral character makes all the more sad his decline and fall.

### **COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD FORGOTTEN**

Well indeed would it have been for David had he remembered the command of the Lord,--"And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book.... And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them; that his heart be not lifted tip above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left." (Deut. 17:18-20.) If in this matter even such a man as David failed, and therefore was overcome by the power of temptation, let every child of God take heed and profit by the lesson of his folly. The Word of God must be the daily companion, instructor and guide to every one who would be kept in the paths of righteousness, be he little or great. It is not enough that we read it, nor even that we study it, for the sake of mere information or for argument: it is given us to ponder and to feed upon, that its principles may be incorporated into our being, molding our thoughts and 'guiding all our actions. This is what it is to have the word of the Lord dwelling in us as an energizing and moving power; and if we thus have fellowship with God through His Word and the privilege of prayer, we shall not be beguiled into sin, nor partake of the intoxicating spirit of the world.

It has been suggested by some, by way of excuse for David, that a man's life should be judged as a whole, and not by the failures in it, the intimation being that if in such a view of his life the good predominates, then it should be considered a righteous life, or *vice versa*. And so, it is suggested, we should estimate the character of David and numerous others, among them the inquisitors of times past, who burned and tormented those who differed from them. Many of these, it is suggested, were good, but mistaken men.

From this line of reasoning we are obliged to differ, because it is at variance with the judgment of God, as clearly expressed by the Prophet Ezekiel, as follows: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth,--all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. . . . But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes [which implies also the pondering and study of them], and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness \*that he hath done he, shall live.... When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them [unrepentant], for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth



that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."--Ezek. 18:24, 21, 22, 26-28. See also 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

### **SIN'S EARLY BEGINNING**

It would be a great mistake to presume that the blindness and spiritual stupor that result from intoxication with the spirit of the world constitute a proper excuse for the sins committed while in that state. God did not so judge in the case of David. The beginning of any sin is the first yielding to its intoxicating influence and therefore we are faithfully warned to abstain from the very appearance of evil. (I Thes. 5:22.) David's sin, like that of all other sinners, began in giving heed to the first suggestions of evil, and having done this the subsequent steps were easily taken.--Compare James 1:14, 15.

But, thank God, there is such a thing as repentance and remission of sins. And although David had sinned grievously, and God was very angry with him, yet in His wrath He remembered mercy, and sent Nathan the Prophet to reprove him. It was doubtless a difficult task for Nathan to approach the king on such an errand, but he did not hesitate when the Lord commanded, nor did he go about the duty in any other way than that of straight-forward, yet respectful simplicity. He did not first endeavor to offset in David's mind his present evil course with a rehearsal of his past good deeds-of faith and valor and justice and humility, thereby intimating that the latter balanced the former, but, remembering that in God's reckoning all former good deeds would count for nothing unless present sins were repented of, he came straight to the point, and with skill he presented the case in a parable which David mistook for an actual case, and hastily pronounced the sentence of death upon the offender. He probably desired to show the man of God how zealous he would be for righteousness, little surmising that the Prophet knew of his unrighteous course until, with heroic fortitude which waived every other consideration but the doing of the will of God, Nathan brought the lesson home to his conscience, saying: "Thou art the man. . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou has killed Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house. . . . Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." --m--2 Sam. 12:7-12.

### **A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR DAVID**

It was a critical moment for David, and probably for a time silence reigned. What would he do? Would he proudly resist the power of the truth, thus calmly but kindly pressed home by his old and trusted friend, the humble man of God? Probably, this was the first impulse of the pride engendered by his thus far successful career; but there was the truth so plainly set before him: how could he deny it? how could he excuse it, or in any sense or degree justify it? Even to his own mind there was evidently no excuse, no palliation. Conscience, which had been more or less restless and even at times remorseful, ever since the crime, was now thoroughly awakened, and a crisis was reached. There were but two courses before the king: one was repentance, confession and reformation; and the other was to plunge deeper into sin by angrily denouncing the Prophet and wickedly misusing his power as a king to punish the man of God for presuming to reprove

him, and then proudly declaring it to be the right of kings, as exceptional individuals, to do as they please, such being the generally acceded custom of kings in all the nations. Thus he would have been claiming that the customs of the world, instead of the Law of God, were to him the standard of privilege. "What king," he might truly have said, "considers the rights of his fellow-men in preference to his own desires?"

But we are glad that David did not take this latter evil course. On the contrary, he allowed his better nature to reassert itself; and David said unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die"--although in the judgment of the parable David had unconsciously condemned himself to death. How gracious is God, how ready to pardon when true repentance is manifest! "Howbeit," said Nathan, "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." David in his contrition meekly accepted both the reproof and the penalties pronounced against him; and realizing that his sin was very grievous, and that his example before the nation was very detrimental to the moral and religious interests of the people, he resolved, and carried out his resolve, to make the example of his deep contrition and repentance as far-reaching in its effects for good, as his sin had been for evil.

This was a noble resolution, and in nothing does the nobility of the man shine out more clearly than in his humble and public confession of his sin, his efforts to undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, and his meek submission to the penalties which God in his wisdom and mercy saw fit to inflict upon him, that thus his wrath against sin might be manifest to all, and that king and people might so be warned against it. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) So in overcoming the pride and selfishness that had taken deep root in his heart, David proved himself a greater hero than even in his youthful conflict with the giant of Gath, or in any subsequent encounter.

### **ABSALOM THE REBEL**

Our lesson includes the story of Absalom's rebellion defeat and death. In this account of the life of Absalom there are several important lessons to thoughtful minds:

(1) We notice in Absalom the sin of disrespect to the God of his father, which was but the natural result of his lack of love and confidence in his father. He entirely ignored the facts that the kingdom was the Lord's and that the Lord placed whom He would upon the throne, so that his youthful ambition plotted not only against his father, David, but also against God, who had anointed David to be king, and who also promised to establish his throne and to indicate his successor, and to subdue all his enemies. In his rebellion Absalom vainly thought not only thus to, outwit his father, David, but also the Almighty Jehovah. How vain and foolish! what reckless folly! And yet, how many have repeated this folly, and few of the sons of men have paused to consider how puny is the arm of flesh when lifted in defiance of the Almighty.

(2) We see how political intrigue stole the hearts of the people and made the cause of Absalom temporarily very prosperous, so that "the conspiracy was strong and increased continually with Absalom." But every successful step of the plot

was only bringing the young man nearer to the height from which he must eventually fall. So it is in the temporary success of every evil device: the much sought elevation only adds force to the final disaster. In this view it is manifest that the truest friendship to the wayward is resolute, wise and well-planned opposition, which no flattery or political craft can overcome. Such friendship is seldom appreciated except by Him who reads the heart, though it does sometimes turn the sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death. For such service how necessary is great sobriety, patience, faith, hope and love! especially in any efforts to assist fellow members of the prospective Body of Christ, who are now on trial, for eternal life and in the race for the prize of our High Calling, lest any, becoming wayward, should fail of the grace of God.

We observe the progressive course of evil -- how the sin of ingratitude and dishonor to a father brought on ambition and defiance of God; how this led to unscrupulous political intrigue, flattery and lying; and finally to a bold and wicked plot which was treason alike to the king and to God. In all this Absalom was cultivating that haughty spirit which goes before a fall.

While thus noting the course of Absalom and its lessons to the young, there is also a hint of wisdom for parents which they would do well to heed. The example of David to his children was not a faultless one: the sins of his youth and of his later years yielded a most undesirable harvest. Not only had he violated the law of God in multiplying wives to himself (Deut. 17:14-17), but he had further transgressed by taking some heathen wives, the mother of Absalom being the daughter of the heathen king Talmai, king of Geshur in Syria; and the children of a polygamous household, living apart from their father with their several mothers, were necessarily almost without a father's influence and care, so that Absalom was brought up under the influence of a heathen mother and apparently with little reverence or respect for the true God.

The sin of Amnon for which Absalom slew his brother was one deserving of punishment, and yet in view of his own sin with the wife of Uriah how could David become the avenger? The crime doubtless caused him sorrow and tears and bitter reflections upon the past, all of which he recognized as part of his own penalty but, remembering his own folly, he could not punish the offender.

In the slaying of Amnon, whatever purpose of selfish ambition or personal hatred may have mingled with his indignation, Absalom was avenging the crime against his sister with only a lawful vengeance, the prescribed penalty being death. To David, who loved all his children, this was a terrible blow, and Absalom, fearing his indignation fled to his maternal grandfather where for three years, unrecalled by his father, he remained, under the influence of that heathen land, no doubt restive under unfavorable conditions, with no indication of any favorable turn of affairs and chafing under a sense of injustice, since in avenging his sister he had merely executed the sentence of the Law (Deut. 27:22; Lev. 20:17) ; and, brooding over his misfortunes and magnifying all the faults and weaknesses of his father, it is no matter of surprise that the spirit of rebellion strengthened; for in the absence of any expression of his father's interest in him, how could he know of his heart yearnings? And when after three years he was permitted to return to the land, still he was not permitted to see his father's face, nor to know of his continued love for two more years.

## **THE TRAGEDY OF GRIEF**

It is not, therefore, surprising that the experience of these five years fastened upon the mind of Absalom the conviction that his father no longer loved him or considered his interests; and this feeling rankling in his heart, he prepared to set at defiance his kingly authority, and in the fire of his youth, the self-consciousness of early manhood and his now dominant ambition, he also recklessly ignored the Divine Authority.

This attitude of David toward his son was a great mistake on the part of David, the realization of which when it was too late to rectify it doubtless greatly deepened the grief which was subsequently expressed in the bitter and tearful lament, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son!" For five years David had allowed the hard side of his nature to thoroughly conceal his tender emotions; and not only so, but in all that time he had been neglecting his opportunities for exerting a godly influence upon his son, and that at a time when he most needed such influence, and instead of which he was surrounded with the influences of a heathen land. It was a dear price for David to pay for his resentment, and in the light of his son's highest interests it was certainly very poor policy. Yet how often is the mistake of David repeated by fathers! Many seem to forget the temptations, trials and inexperience of youth, and so fail to be gracious, considerate, forbearing and studious of their highest interests. Kind, generous, self-forgetful interest will follow the son long after childhood has matured into manhood, and will make parental counsel very potent long after parental authority has ceased.

There is probably no time in life more fraught with danger than when the young birds leave the home. nest and launch out to try their own wings and to carve out their own fortunes. And if they can go with a father's and a mother's blessing; if every rebuff and misfortune they meet from a hard, cold world elicits home sympathy and prayers and loving encouragement; if father's house is felt to be the place of refuge in case of a sudden disaster; if they feel that loving forbearance there offsets the hard knocks of experience outside, what a power is there for good! It certainly is not a wise father that will long permit any pride of dignity or stiff reserve to forego the privileges of his position for the blessing of his offspring.

Parents should heed well this lesson, that the bitter lament of David over a son whom kindness, forbearance and loving counsel and sympathy might have saved, may not be theirs; and in every relation of life let us all see to it that love not only exists, but also that it is made very manifest.

## **THE DECISIVE BATTLE**

The successful conspiracy of Absalom, so artfully planned and skillfully executed, finally drove David from Jerusalem and planted Absalom there. But the victory of the conspirators was not yet complete while David, the rightful sovereign, lived. So Absalom and his counsellors conspired further against the life of the king.

But the Lord raised up in Hushai a friend for David, and placed him among the counselors of Absalom, and thus through his counsel brought to naught the foolish and wicked conspiracy. In the pride and wickedness of his heart, bent on

the slaying of his father, Absalom placed himself at the head of a great army and went forth to fight. In contrast with this wickedness mark the father's love, even under these extremely trying circumstances, saying to his men as they went forth to meet Absalom, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

How suddenly God brought to naught the evil designs of this wicked young man; elated with his success and proudly riding to expected victory, he was suddenly caught by the head in the branches of a great oak; his mule passed on leaving him helplessly suspended, and the friends of David finished the work. Joab's trumpet of victory is blown, the conspiracy has come to naught, the usurper is dead and buried under a heap of stones, and those, that were with him seek to hide their faces for very shame; and King David, the Lord's anointed, returned again to Jerusalem in peace.

In the lesson which these circumstances afford let us mark well how short is- the triumph of evil doers. Though their eyes stand out with fatness and they have more than heart could wish (Psa. 73:7), and though now the world calls the proud happy and they that work wickedness are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered (Mal. 3:15), yet soon they will all be as stubble under the feet of the righteous. (Mal. 4:1.) The time may indeed seem long to those burdened by oppression; but it is not long in God's estimation. He will bring forth judgment unto victory just as soon as the wisdom of His purposes will permit. If justice be delayed, it is only for the development of some greater good than could be accomplished by a speedy adjustment. in this confidence, therefore, let the Christian rest, assured that all things-even the seeming delays shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28.) "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."--Heb. 10:36.

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

### **STUDY XXII--AUGUST 1**

#### **THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED**

(106) To where has St. John's attention been given during the opening of the first four Seals, and to what different point is his attention now specially turned during the vision of the opening of the fifth Seal? H'19-72.

(107) What followed the opening of the fifth Seal, and what lesson is taught in the symbols used--the Altar, and the souls under the Altar? H'19-72.

(108) Who were the souls under the Altar? When were they slain for the Word of God, and what is the import of their prayer, "How long, O Lord?" Z '07-233; H'19-72.

(109) When will the Lord avenge the blood of these persecuted ones on them that dwell on the earth? Z '07-233.

(110) What were the white robes that were given them; and what is the import of the statement that "they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants should be killed, etc."? Z '07-233.

#### STUDY XXIII--AUGUST 8

#### **THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED**

(111) What was first brought to St. John's attention on the opening of the sixth Seal, and has there been a literal fulfillment of these symbols in the earth? D 584, 585 -1 H'19-73.

(112) Are we to expect a symbolical fulfillment of this vision, and if so about what point in history should we look for it? What should we understand by the great Earthquake? D 531; H'19-73.

(113) What is to be understood by the darkening of the Sun, the Moon turning to blood, and the falling Stars? D 590, 594; H'19-74.

(114) What does the Heaven departing as a scroll signify? H'19-75.

(115) What are we to gather from the language of verses 15, 16 and 17 in connection with the fulfillment of the foregoing symbols? H'19-75.