

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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WHAT IS PRESENT TRUTH?

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."--2 Pet. 1:12.

TRUE to the promises of the Divine Word, the pathway of God's servants down through the ages has shone brighter and brighter with the light of Truth. As time and events have made due the knowledge of certain truths, pertaining to the Divine Plan, those who have been in a right attitude of heart have been given to understand the things that were meet for them in their day. The statement made in the Old Testament times, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day!" (Prov. 4:18), though fulfilled in preceding dispensations, has continued in process of fulfillment throughout the present Age. Going back to the First Advent of the Savior, we note how distinctly His coming marked the due time for a fuller revelation of the Divine plan's and purposes. What some now call the "spirit dispensation" was ushered in; and no statement is more significant of a new dispensation, with a new work privileges and blessings, than that recorded by the Evangelist, saying of the Savior that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to be come the sons of God,, even to them that believe on His name."--John 1:11, 12.

In fulfillment of this, we find that those who became disciples of Jesus were admitted-into a special relation ship, and given to receive certain rich and distinguished blessings, represented in the Savior's address to His followers,: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God," etc. (Mark, 4:11.) Following the completion of our Lord's earthly mission and His ascension, there was even a more pronounced manifestation of Divine favor, in the coming of the Holy Spirit, which resulted in the enlightenment of those who were in a waiting and ready attitude; and there the Gospel Church was fully instituted. We have abundant testimony in the lives and ministry of those whom Jesus appointed to be the twelve foundations of the Church that a special dispensation of Truth was due, the general purpose of which was to accomplish the satictification and transformation of those who should constitute the Body members of Christ throughout the Age.

Perhaps none,, therefore, knew better than St. Peter the meaning of his own language with regard to being established in the present Truth. His thought evidently was that of being grounded and fixed in the Truth that was then due the, Church; and, of course, the inference is that there were truths then enjoyed by God's servants that it was not proper to reveal prior to that time; hence the term "present truth," as distinguished from whatever truths might have been possessed not to that time.

Inasmuch as the followers of Christ have been admonished to continue to walk in the light and to continued make progress in the pathway of Truth, we observe in our study of the history of the Church's experience Of the past nineteen centuries that the faithful have been kept, protected, and blessed with an increasing understanding of the Divine purposes, even though it has seemed at times that the surrounding powers of superstition and darkness would almost overwhelm the seemingly weak and insignificant vessels of light." The, promise of the Master, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the Age," is seen. to-day to have been verified, and His true followers have never been permitted at any, time to be overcome by any deluge of darkness or by the triumph of any of the forces of evil.

"BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER UNTO THE PERFECT DAY"

Now that We find it our happy privilege to be borne down the stream of tithes to the end of this Age, Where we witness the closing Scenes of this dispensation, we have seemed, to see a new" and deeper meaning in the promise of the Savior, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God," in view of the fact that a fuller revelation of the Divine program is due to be made known to the Church, I according to the' promise of the Master Himself, as well as by the mouth His inspired representatives. (Luke 12:37; 1 Thess. 5:4, 5, 6.) Therefore, the knowledge that has been committed to followers of Christ in modern times has become the occasion for them to make special application again of the language of the. Apostle, "though ye know them and be established. in the present truth." The assembling together of the various fragments of Truth by which we have been enabled to see the harmonious whole of the Divine Plan, has constituted the message for these days that has been. most appropriately designated "Present truth," as distinguished from the more or less hazy and beclouded presentations of the Message of the darker past; and throughout the days of the Harvest of this Age, servants of God have realized it their privilege and mission to herald this further message concerning the Divine program, and call the attention of all Truth seekers to the fact that this is the Present Truth, or the light for the last days, by which all the faithful might become so strengthened and fortified as to endure faithfully the remainder of their pilgrimage in, the Narrow, Way.,

But the "perfect day" has not yet been reached in the final sense; and, as we find throughout the past forty or fifty years, during which there appears to have been a general harvesting work going on, the path of, the saints has been growing brighter with the rays of Truth; so faithful servants of the Lord continue to realize it their privilege to press on in the path way that continues to shine by reason of time and events making manifestly more clear "the more sure word of prophecy" that was promised to continue to shine in a dark place until the day dawn. What more inspiring. example of this gradual progress into the light could we possibly observe than that of PASTOR RUSSELL? At no point in his experience do we observe a disposition to recline in idleness or to conclude that there was nothing more to be known. How keen indeed has been the interest of the Lord's people in the history he has given us of the development of Present Truth! Referring to the earlier years of his study and progress, he explains:

"But when, in 1872, I came to examine the subject of restitution from the standpoint of the ransom price given by our Lord Jesus for Adam, and

consequently for all lost in Adam,, it settled the matter of restitution completely, and gave me the fullest assurance that *all must come* forth from their graves and be brought to a clear knowledge of the Truth and to a full opportunity to gain everlasting life in Christ.

"Thus passed the years 1869-1872. The years following, to 1876, were years of continued growth in grace and knowledge on the part of the handful of Bible students with whom I met in Allegheny. We progressed from our first crude and indefinite ideas of restitution to clearer understanding of the details; but God's due time for the clear light had not yet come.

"During this time, too, we came to recognize the difference between our Lord as 'the man who gave Himself,' and as the Lord who would come again, a spirit being. We saw that spirit beings can be present, and yet invisible to men, just as we still hold and have set forth, in '*Millennial Dawn*,' Vol. II., Chap. 5. And we felt greatly grieved at the error of Second Adventists, who were expecting Christ in the flesh, and teaching that the world and all in it except Second Adventists would be burned *up* in 1813 or 1874, whose time'-settings and disappointments-and crude ideas generally, as to the object *and* manner of His coming brought more or *legs* reproach upon *us* And upon all who longed for and proclaimed His coming Kingdom.

"These wrong views so generally held of both the object and manner of the-Lord's return led me to write a pamphlet--'*The Object and Manner of the Lord's Return*,' of which some 50,000 copies were published.

"It was about January, 1876, that my, attention was specially drawn to the subject of prophetic time, as it relates to these doctrines and hopes. -- Z '06-230.

PASTOR RUSSELL CEASED NOT TO MAKE PROGRESS

We have but to read his story of the opening up, progress and development of the great Truths of this time to be convinced that we are indeed in the days of the Presence of the Son of Man, and that what we have received is in fulfillment of His promise to come forth as a servant, girded for the purpose of serving the household with things new and old; but what we desire to have impressed upon our minds is that it has been a gradual, unfolding and clarifying of the Divine *message*, as we have just noted in the example of the one whom the Lord has apparently used more than any other in discerning and, proclaiming the Truth. 'We Observe that the life of our Pastor throughout was one of progress without cessation. His clearer elucidation and unfolding of the Truth with regard to the Mediator, Sin-Offering, and Covenants during his latter years is also evidence in confirmation of our claim that, he never ceased to make progress. Moreover, an important phase of the Truth that had PASTOR RUSSELL'S careful and most serious consideration was that of the "Times and Seasons," for he considered that it was meet and proper for God's children to make humble and earnest inquiry into what had been written in the sacred prophecies bearing upon the end of this Age; and concerning this feature, we note his gradual progress from the cruder conceptions and understanding to a clearer and more reasonable appreciation of what the facts were concerning the Times and Seasons.

Our Pastor informs us that earlier in his investigations, it was his thought and firm conviction that the year 1878 would witness the translation of all the remaining

members of the Church in the flesh-that that date would mark their glorification and the completion of the Church. Following the failure of his expectations regarding that time, he set forth in his writings what seemed to be the reasonable and right conclusions, stating that the year 1910 would probably mean the conclusion of the Church's experience. in the flesh and her glorification, and that by 1914 the time of trouble would be over with and the Kingdom established, with the Ancient Worthies in charge of affairs upon the earth. It was early in the year 1904, however, that PASTOR RUSSELL published his further explanation bearing upon this subject, stating that whereas he had expected the passing of the time of trouble by 1914, he now believed this was an erroneous view, and that we should rather expect the Harvest work to continue on approximately up to 1914, and that the time of trouble and overthrow of the nations should be expected subsequently, together with the establishment of the Kingdom. He continued, however, to look for and expect the glorification of the Church before or by 1914.

It is now a matter of history, of course, that these views, hopes and expectations have proven failures, as each of these years; 1910, 1914, etc., while indeed bringing significant events, did not witness just what we had hoped for. It is, indeed, to the credit and honor of our beloved Pastor that, passing all of these dates he did not insist that his expectations had been correctly founded anyway, contrary to the facts but humbly admitted that, we: were in error in expecting certain things to happen; and his faith and trust in the Lord and His Word continued undisturbed and unshaken, and he remained trusting. It is recalled that as be further investigated, it appeared, as he set forth in his last messages, that the year 1918 might probably witness the long-looked-for "end of all things," with the Church's glorification and the establishing of the Kingdom. This latter date, we now observe, is in the past, and the expectations of the brethren still unrealized so far as the final consummation of their hopes is concerned.

NO REPUDIATION OF PRESENT TRUTH

These points we have briefly reviewed, we trust for our mutual encouragement, and to make manifest the steady progress of the one whose memory we cherish and whose life-work and ministry hold that exclusive place in our hearts sacred and dear. In the presence of such noble examples as the one we have just been discussing and that of other godly servants of the Lord of modern times, as well as of the past, we seem indeed to hear the voice of the same Divine Master today urging upon His followers, "Onward, Christian soldiers!"--and the lesson appears to be that we should still give heed to "the more sure word of prophecy" that we should suppose would *continue to shine* in the "dark place until the day dawn," and that we should betake ourselves earnestly to the study of our Father's Word, to know assuredly what His will concerning His true followers might be in these days.

The brethren who have been engaged in the ministry represented in our INSTITUTE and "*The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*," have been earnestly inquired of by some, if our recent investigations and presentations bearing upon the Times and Seasons, and chronological lines in general, do not indicate to some extent a *departure* from, and *repudiation*. of Present Truth. Our reply has been that there is no. departure from, or repudiation of what we have regarded as Present Truth to any extent whatever- If the term "Present Truth" signified merely the believing in

some particular day or year as representing the end of the Church's career and the overthrow of the present order of things, then we must all agree that there have been several departures and repudiations of "Present Truth" in the past, and that by PASTOR: RUSSELL also; for, as we have pointed out foregoing, there have been several dates to which he and we all looked forward as marking the ultimate and final climax, but we have seen also how as each of these dates have passed, leaving our expectations unfulfilled, *that the Present Truth has remained the same*, and that our faith and confidence in the Lord have continued on. Therefore, in pointing out as we have recently done in the pages of the HERALD certain lines of thought that indicate where I we have been probably in error in I the past, and pointing out certain logical deductions that would lead us to look toward the future for the fulfillment of our hopes and expectations--all of this procedure is exactly what PASTOR RUSSELL and other godly men have done in the past. At we have before stated, the knowledge of Present Truth does not mean the discerning of some particular date or year in which all things are to end.

WHAT IS PRESENT TRUTH?

The understanding of Present Truth rather involves a knowledge of the great facts and truths relating to the various features,. steps and developments of the Divine Plan of the Ages and its consummation in the Age to come, in the glorification of the Church, the removal of the curse from the earth, and the restitution of all the willing and obedient of humanity to Paradise. That this was the substance Of PASTOR RUSSELL'S thought as to the significance of the term "Present Truth," is most evident from his own exposition bearing upon this line. Let the following be carefully noted:

"To be established in the Truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by 'the law and the testimony' (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of. fellowship with Him; we have partaken of His spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fullness of His grace as manifested in the wonderful Divine Plan of the, Ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that Plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the *fullness* of the appointed times. This is what it is to be 'established in the Present Truth.' It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor, take away."--Z '02-307.

Surely we can gather from the foregoing expression that it was not PASTOR RUSSELL'S thought that the essential features of Present Truth necessarily include the believing in any particular day or year as marking the time when this, that or the other thing would hap-pen, although we do properly include in the term "Present Truth" the thought of a general knowledge of the Times and Seasons, of time prophecies as we are permitted to understand them in the light of developments and events of modern times. It is most evident that a knowledge of the exact day or year of the Second Advent of the Savior or the glorification of the saints, is not to be regarded as the all-important thing; rather, the point of utmost importance is to be able to recognize *the fact that the Master is present, after He*

has come, and to be able to read in the events of our day the fulfillment of "the more sure word of prophecy."

LESSONS FROM OUR LORD'S FIRST ADVENT

But do we have evidence today of the Lord's presence outside of any chronological data? Oh yes, we answer,--there are signs all about us we believe, that eloquently speak of the presence of the Son of Man, and of the fact that He is supervising a work in the affairs of men today, preparatory to the establishing of His Kingdom. Let us take a lesson in this connection from some of the incidents associated with our Lord's First Advent. John the Baptist, having been cast into prison, apparently became depressed and somewhat of doubtful mind with regard to Jesus. He therefore sent a message to the Master asking Him to state definitely if He was the Messiah, or should they look for another. It is of significance that Jesus in replying did not refer to any chronological lines whatever to establish the fact of His Advent, and presence then. There is no doubt that He could have done this. Jesus was familiar with the prophecies of Daniel that had announced seventy weeks of favor for Israel. Very probably Jesus understood that they had already entered upon the seventieth week and were approaching the middle, in which it had been declared that Messiah should be cut off. Jesus could indeed have gone into the details of this prophecy and explained to the messengers of John certain chronological data to establish his faith in Jesus as the Messiah purely from that standpoint alone, but we observe that Jesus proceeded altogether differently. He made no reference to the seventy weeks or any other chronological lines. What did He say? He merely called the attention of the messengers of John to what was then in evidence; namely, *the works of Messiah*. Jesus said, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."--Matt. 11:2-5.

Thus it is seen that Jesus desired the faith of John the Baptist and that of others to rest more upon the signs and evidences of His presence than upon the basis of anything else, and may we not indeed consider that this may, be the will of the Lord concerning the faithful today; namely, that instead of endeavoring to ingeniously establish some particular day or year when the Master became present, or some particular day or year when the final collapse would come may it not be more pleasing to the Lord for us to look rather, at the signs about us of His presence and of the consummation of all things, and thus have our faith confirmed in this way? We recall that the Master in answering questions concerning His Second Presence gave a description of general circumstances and conditions that would be associated with His return; 'and amongst other remarks, he said: "Then shall appear the sign of *the Son of Man*, in heaven [the ecclesiastical heaven]," He further remarked, "*When ye see all these things*, then know that it is near, even at the doors."

Surely, the lesson in these remarks of the Savior is that our confidence and faith in His Second Presence now, and the close proximity of His Kingdom, should be based upon the signs and indications about us, rather than upon certain chronological data. As our readers should be aware, we do not wish to discredit or discourage investigation along the lines of chronology, but to the contrary we would say that as faithful watchers it is our privilege to take heed to "the more

sure word of prophecy" and see therein all the corroborative testimony possible for the confirmation of our faith; ever bearing in mind, however, that a knowledge of the particular day or year when events will happen is not so important as is the thought that *we should maintain that attitude of alertness and readiness for any event at any time*, even though it mean our long-promised change. The variation in our chronological calculation need not be, considered of vital importance, though it amount to one year or even several years.

EVEN TWENTY YEARS A "TRIFLING VARIATION"

Some years prior to the death of our Pastor, in reviewing his deductions with regard to Gentile Times and what he expected to come to pass in 1914, he said:

"If any be disposed to dispute the exactness of these figures we need have, no quarrel, but simply say that any difference in the calculation must of necessity be but small--possibly one year, POSSIBLY TWENTY YEARS-but in so. long a period [as the 2520 years] HOW TRIFLING WOULD BE SUCH A VARIATION.

"What we are specially interested in is THE FACTS OF THE CASE, AND WHAT WILL OCCUR WHEN THIS LONG PERIOD TERMINATES."--Z '11-238.

Who, in reading the foregoing lines, could fail to appreciate the thought Of PASTOR RUSSELL; namely, that even though his calculations might be as much as *twenty years* out of the way, it would be such a *trifling matter* after all as to make no difference, because, as 'he said, *,ewe are specially interested in the facts of the case.*" And what did he mean by "the facts of the case"? Surely he could mean nothing less than this: That at the conclusion of Gentile Times or thereabouts, the reign of sin and death would cease, the Kingdom of 'God would be established, the restitution of all things would commence, and the abolishing of the curse from the earth. These are the facts he said we were all interested in, and that a variation of one year or twenty years in our. calculations should make no difference so far as our faith or the "facts" are concerned. And, indeed, was not this the substance of one of his latest remarks, shortly before his death:

"If 1915 should go by without the passage of the Church, without the Time of Trouble, etc., it would seem to some to be a great calamity. It would not *be so* with *ourselves*. We shall be as glad as any one if we shall all experience our change from earthly to spirit conditions before 1915, and THIS IS OUR EXPECTATION; but if this should not be the Lord's will, then it would not be our will.. If in the Lord 's providence the time should come TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, then that would be our, will. This would not change the fact that the' Son of God was sent by the Father, and that the Son is the Redeemer of our race; that He died for our sins; that He is selecting the Church for His Bride; and that the next thing now in order is the establishment of the glorious Kingdom at the 'hands of this great Mediator,,- who during His Mediatorial Reign will bless all the, families of the earth. THESE FACTS REMAIN THE SAME. THE DIFFERENCE WOULD BE MERELY THAT OF A FEW YEARS IN THE TIME OF .THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM."--Z '14-4.

Here again we have very plainly stated PASTOR RUSSELL'S thought that though the time might be twenty-five years later than what he had been,

expecting, this, he said, *would not change Present Truth*, the great facts in which we are all interested,-- for, as he said, "the difference would be merely that of a few years in the time of the establishment of the Kingdom." It was in that same connection that PASTOR RUSSELL distinctly pointed out that should there be a failure of his expectations with regard to the change of the Church and the present order, of things in 1914 or 1915, that he would say that *"evidently we have been out somewhere in our reckoning. In that event we would look over the prophecies further, to see if we could find an error."*

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS OF OUR FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP?

Dearly, beloved of the Lord, do we not indeed see in the example and attitude of PASTOR RUSSELL that which should constitute for us today the voice of wisdom, the voice that urges great carefulness and sobriety in these days? We have heretofore urged upon the brethren that any difference of opinion that there might be amongst us with regard to the particular days or years for things to happen should not be allowed to hinder or disturb the fellowship of the saints. The grounds of our fellowship are not along those lines, and in fact, the kernel of our Message does not imply that we shall announce to others any particular day or year; nor should we permit our own personal views with regard to the matter of dates to be tests upon one another to any extent or degree. Here again let a wise message be heeded:

"This, then, proves that the kernel of the Gospel is not the Jewish law, nor certain scientific theories and abstruse problems; but the simple teachings which our Lord delivered to the Apostles. What were these?

"(1) He taught that all men were sinners.

"(2) That He came into the world to 'give His life. a ransom -- a corresponding price for the sins of the whole, world.,

"(3) That no man could come unto the Father, but by Him. I

"(4) That all who would come by Him must, in addition to the exercise of faith in Him, also take up his cross and follow Him.

"(5) That all believers are one with Him, as the branches of a grapevine are parts of the vine.

"(6) That every branch to abide in Him must bring forth fruit, else it will be taken away,

"(7) That those who trust in Him are to hope for and to expect His Second Coming--'I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.'

"(8) That the ultimate end of our hope for all promised blessings is in and through a resurrection of the dead.

"(9) That Love is the law of the New Covenant -- 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength; and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"We are fully authorized, therefore, to teach and to believe that these are the points. of faith and practice which are necessary to, both Jews and Gentiles who, shall be favored with the call of this Gospel: Age; and that nothing else is

necessary or pertinent to the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ or the faith once delivered to the saints.' WHO EVER MAKES TESTS GREATER OR LESSER THAN THESE IS IN ERROR. – Z '98-176.

"BUT IF YE BITE AND DEVOUR ONE ANOTHER"

In, conclusion we- urge again upon all that our most ,serious consideration and attention be given to the things that are thus set forth to be the essentials and fundamentals of our faith and that we thus seek by every honorable, means to be fortified ourselves and to assist others to remain steadfast in this, the Present Truth because it alone can sanctify and separate unto the Lord and unto, holiness, preparatory to our sharing with Him in His glorious Kingdom, in the inheritance of: the saints in light; and whether or not we shall be given, to see eye to, eye, with, regard to the particular year of the end of all things and the time of our glorification--let this matter not, but let us press forward in the development of the Christ character, in the development of the spirit of patience, meekness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness and love. And in this connection we cannot but have before us the solemn warning of the great Apostle Paul, applicable to Christians of all times--to beware of and to put away the work's of the flesh., "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Now the works of the flesh are manifest . - . hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, . . . of the which I tell you before, as I, have also told you in time past, that they which, do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, -gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is, no law."--Eph. 4:22, 31; Gal., 5:15, 19-23.

Surely the Apostle's language is so, plain that the simplest follower of the Lamb must recognize its spirit and its import--that the image of the Master set before' us as our, ideal signifies that we must develop very largely of the love of Christ in our hearts; that all disposition to speak evil of and to slander our brethren is positively forbidden; that all disposition toward malice, anger, hatred and strife must be overcome in order that we may be accounted worthy to share in the First Resurrection of the Blessed and the Holy. So it is in view of this fact that the, Apostle earnestly admonishes the Church to be firm and steadfast in the "Present Truth," saying: "for if ye do these things, ye shall, never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto, you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--2 Pet. 1 :10, 11.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY LXXIII--JULY 24

THE VISION OF THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION (cont.)-- REV. 14:2-5

(461) Where, and at what point of time should we logically look for the fulfillment of the "Voice" as that of Harpers, and the singing of the "new Song"?

What:, are the similes used in verse 2 and how should these be distinguished from symbols? H '20-72.

(462) In view, of the lessons in other visions preceding this one, what would, we reasonably suppose to be the symbolical, significance of the Voice from Heaven and in what way is it like "the Voice of many Waters" and "the Voice of a great Thunder"? H '20-72.

(463) What is. signified by the "new Song," and what is the marked distinction between the "Voice as that of Harpers" and the singing of the "new Song"? Who are those represented by the "Voice as that of Harpers playing on their Harps;" and who sing the "new Song"? H '20-73.

(4,64) Explain verse 4: What constitutes being defiled with women and "following the Lamb"? What in this verse confirms the thought that the 144,000 include all of the Church class? H '20-73.

(465) What important characteristic is brought to our attention in verse 5 as being possessed by, this class? What beautiful, and harmonious. sentiment was expressed by A. J. GORDON bearing along the line of the fulfillment Of this vision? H '20-73, 74.

STUDY LXXIV--JULY 31

THE FIRST HARVEST ANGEL'S MESSAGE--REV. 14:6, 7

(466) In harmony with our previous observation as to the symbolical use of the term "angel": what would be the significance of the angel flying in "Mid-heaven"? Was its proclamation a true message? 'H '20-86.

(467), At what time should we look for the fulfillment of this vision and what feature of the vision would enable us to locate the time? What is the thought of many earlier expositors as to this, and what is the particular objection to, these views? H '20-86.

(468) What was the import of the message of this angel and for whom was it intended? What would- seem to be the distinction between the proclamation of this message and the "new Song"; and what particular ministry would therefore fulfill this feature of the 'vision? H '20-86, 87.

(469) What effect was this message to have upon the hearts of, men ? Has the work of proclaiming this message yet been completed? H '20-87.

(470) How does this vision correspond with the preceding one in point of time, and when will they both have been fulfilled? How did PASTOR RUSSELL apply this vision? H '20-88.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES III-A

THE SEVEN STARS AND THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS

"As for the Secret of the Seven Stars which thou sawest in my Right hand, and the Seven Golden Lampstands; the Seven Stars are Messengers of the Seven Congregations, and the Seven Lampstands are Seven Congregations."--Rev. 1:20.

THE Savior speaks of the seven Stars and the seven golden Lampstands as a secret, and in explaining their meaning, He not only shows that they are symbolical, but also that His, relationship to them, as described in the vision, is symbolical. A Star evidently represents a teacher who spreads the light of God's Truth in the circle that surrounds him; and a Lampstand represents a Church of Christ supporting such a teacher in the station he was qualified by Christ to fill; and the thought evidently is that the Lord upheld and directed such teachers or representatives of His Churches.

In considering the significance of this vision of the seven Stars and the seven-golden Lampstands, etc., in the midst of which the Savior is represented as standing, and following closely His interpretation of its meaning, we may with confidence say, that there were seven Churches of Christ (at the time St. John had the vision) existing in Asia Minor in the different, cities mentioned, namely Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira , Sardis,, Philadelphia and Laodicea; and the messages primarily applied to them.,

We will examine first the primary signification' of the Lampstands and Stars, i. e., as they relate to the seven Congregations, or Churches existing in Asia Minor at the time St. John had the vision,- and to, whom he was commanded to send the. messages. In doing this we believe we will be. better able to correctly apply the symbols. The primary application to seven local Churches existing in St. John's time would seem to be the basis of interpretation to be followed.; The number seven denoting completeness would seem to signify that these seven Churches were selected as representatives of the *complete 'Church existing at that time.* It would hardly be reasonable to -suppose that these seven messages were intended for these seven Churches alone; and this would imply that the many other Churches existing at the time would also need the exhortations, reproofs and en couragements contained in the messages. It is quite certain that at this time these Congregations contained both "wheat," true Christians,, and "tares," mere profes- sors. This is proven both from history as well as from the character of the messages themselves. The "Lampstands," therefore, would symbolize these as- semblies as a whole, containing both true and nominal believers. This has, indeed, described the condition of the Churches of Christ ever since that time. And "there are many reasons for concluding that while the messages were given to the seven Churches specified, and were applicable to them, nevertheless these messages should properly have a still wider application to the whole Church of Christ, the number seven rep resenting completeness and the order representing different epochs in the history of the Church. Thus the Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the [whole] Church at the time of the writing of the messages; while the Laodicean Church would rep resent the Church in our day--in the end of the Gospel Age. The other Churches would correspondingly rep resent different epochs intermediate, between then and now."--Z '16-343.

In all of the seven phases, it has been the professed mission of the Churches represented by the 'Lampstands to hold forth the light of life, the Word of Truth, and thus cause it to shine out in the surrounding darkness. "Alas, how poor the

wicks have some times been! How feeble the light that has sometimes shone out into the darkness of this world! How much trimming has been necessary *and how much more may yet be required!*"

PASTORS AND TEACHERS FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH

St. John was commanded to send the messages to the assemblies, congregations through their "Angels, Messengers, designated by the Savior, "Stars." Who are represented by these "Stars," is a very important matter to settle. It is quite certain that they were not Apostles; neither was there a custom to have diocesan bishops, -- a bishop's appointed over certain territories containing several Churches, as has been a custom since. If there was anything, of this nature existing in St. John's day, it did not have the sanction of Divine authority or approval. It was indeed, this unauthorized kind of an official in the: Church, that gradually but surely developed, into prelacy; or Papacy. It is well known, that the. order established by the Apostles was that each congregation have its teachers--elders, bishops or pastors. These, doubtless, were the ones referred to, as the "Angels," Messengers, symbolically called ""Stars," in the seven local Churches in Asia Minor. It should be borne in mind that the Savior has never abdicated His right, never given to another, the honor and responsibility of, qualifying and placing and upholding any of His ministering ones. The only Apostolic succession taught in the Scriptures is that referred to by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou, to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Recognizing that these seven assemblies, represented all the assemblies existing at that time, it is a most reasonable and Scriptural deduction then that the term "seven Stars" Would represent in the complete sense all the pastors and teachers of the different Churches over the world at that time--those duly and Scripturally selected by the different Congregations under the Lord's direction, to fill the positions, and thus represent them. *These, like* the assemblies themselves, would be more or less imperfect, but according to their faithfulness would be upheld and used by Christ in ministering, serving their respective Congregations. The responsibilities of these pastors would be first to Christ; and their services, etc., would be as far reaching as the Lord in His providence might see best to make them.

NO PRELITICAL BISHOPS OR LORDS OVER GOD'S HERITAGE

Concerning the Messengers to whom the messages were addressed, MR. BARNES has very truthfully urged that "this does not refer to them as a collective or associated body, for the addresses are made to them as individuals--an epistle being directed to 'the Angel' of each particular Church. (Chap. 2:1, 12, &c.) The evident meaning, however, is that what was recorded should be directed to them, not as pertaining to them exclusively as individuals, but as presiding over, or representing the Churches, for what is recorded pertains to the Churches, and was evidently designed to be laid before them. . . . There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to the meaning of the word *Angels* here. By the advocates of Episcopacy, it has been argued that the. use of this term proves that there was a presiding bishop over a circle or group of Churches in Ephesus, in Smyrna, etc. . .

"It cannot be proved that the reference is to a prelatical bishop presiding over a group or circle of Churches, called a *diocese*, for there, is nothing in, the word *Angel*, as used in this connection, which would be peculiarly applicable to such a personage-it being as applicable to a pastor of a single Church as to a bishop -of many Churches. There is no evidence that there *were* any such groups of Churches then as constitute an episcopal diocese. The use of the word 'Church' in the singular, as applied to Ephesus, Smyrna, etc., rather implies that there was but a single Church in each of those cities. Compare chap. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; see also, similar language in regard to the *Church* in Corinth, 1 Cor. 1:1, 2. . .

"If it does not refer to a prelatical bishop, then it follows that it must refer to some one who, presided over the Church as its pastor, and through whom a message might be. properly sent to the Church. Thus understood, the pastor or 'Angel' would be regarded as the representative of the Church; that is, as delegated by the Church to manage its affairs, and as, the authorized person to Whom communications should be made in matters pertaining to it--as pastors are now. . . . The supposition that a pastor of a Church is intended, will meet all the circumstances in the case: for, (1) it is an appropriate appellation; (2) there is no reason to suppose that there was more than one Church in each. of the cities referred to; (3) it is a term which would designate the respect in which, the office was held; (4) it would impress upon those to whom it was applied a solemn sense of their responsibility. Further, it would be more appropriately applied to a pastor of a single Church than to a prelatical bishop-to the tender, intimate, and endearing relation sustained by a pastor to his people-to the blending of sympathy, interest and affection, where he is with them continually, meets them frequently in the sanctuary, administers to them the bread of life, goes into their abodes when they are- afflicted, and attends their kindred to the grave, than to the union subsisting between the people of an extended diocese and a prelate-the formal, unfrequent, and, in many instances, stately and pompous visitations of a diocesan bishop; to the unsympathizing, relation between him and a people scattered in many Churches, who are visited at distant intervals by one claiming, a 'superiority in ministerial rights and powers,' and who must be a stranger to the ten thousand ties of endearment which bind the hearts of a pastor and people together. The conclusion, then, to, which *wē* have come is that the 'Angel of the Church' was the pastor or the presiding presbyter in the Church; the minister who had the pastoral charge of it, and who was therefore a proper representative of it."

Bearing in mind that all these messages are addressed to the "Stars," or ministering class which has been duly selected and recognized as representing each separate assembly, we observe that the' messages are not meant for these alone, but for the various individuals who make up these assemblies. The command is for everyone to hear "what the Spirit saith *to the Churches*," and we ask, To whom could the instructions, the exhortations, the encouraging commendations, the reproofs, the severe rebukes and threatenings contained in these messages of Christ be more properly intrusted to in St. John's day than to the several pastors of the different congregations mentioned as existing in the cities designated. It would be supposed that the necessary qualifications for such a ministry had been recognized in the men selected by these Churches, and were chosen in the Scriptural way by these Congregations to serve them in this capacity.

"HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS [Messengers] A CHARGE CONCERNING THEE"

Applying the matters contained in, these messages, indeed the whole system of Truth, to our day, we ask, *Are not these duties expected of those chosen to fill these positions as teachers in the Church?* It would seem as though there could be but one answer. This conclusion is in perfect harmony with the words of St. Paul, that there is a ministry in the Christian Church,--that various gifts or ministries are distributed in the Church; and as these gifts are recognized by the Churches, those possessing them are, in the Scriptural way, elected by the, Churches to represent them. By this election, these persons become bishops or elders (the terms being synonymous), possessing more or less the pastoral gift. From the fact that these are addressed, we are enabled to discover something of the nature and responsibility of those filling these positions in the Church. From this we learn, in harmony with St. Peter's words, that the position these hold, is not a *lordship*, but a service--a service, according to the manner in which it is fulfilled, they are, and will be held, responsible to God and to Him. alone. It is the business of this Angel, or bishop, or, pastor, to read, expound, and make forceful the exhortations and the lessons, etc., contained in these messages. And so far as these are faithful in their special sphere of service and work, they are, upheld by the Savior, who holds the seven symbolic Stars in His right hand. This indeed., is the thought clearly annunciated by PASTOR RUSSELL in expounding the 91st Psalm, verse 11, as follows,:

"For he shall give His Angels [Messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard, thee in all thy ways.' That is, God will raise up some *faithful pastors and teachers who will 'watch. for :your souls as they that must give an account.'* True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the. Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to, subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of, heart God's children require a. 'Thus saith the Lord' for every element of their, faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so , the Apostle Paul (Heb. 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep."--Z '04-75.

Let it be understood then, that the messengers, elders or bishops of all the Churches throughout the whole Gospel Age are as much "Stars" in Christ's right hand as these seven primarily addressed by Christ, and they certainly should not be left out in the solemn representation.

ST. JOHN THE WRITER OF THE MESSAGES

Again we urge the reader to observe that these Divine messages were addressed to the "Stars" or "Angels" of the, seven Churches, and that the form of address to each of the symbolical messengers was the same. The Common Version renders it, "Unto the angel of the Church . . . write." The Diaglott translation, which in some. instances is preferable to that of the, King James Version, renders these words, "By the messenger . . . write, etc., instead of "Unto" or, "to the messenger . . . write," as all other translations do. A recent expositor, accepting the Diaglott as the correct translation, when applying the messages to seven distinct periods of the Church's history, has interpreted the text as teaching that the messengers are to

do the writing for these several periods--a single individual writer for each period. We believe all will recognize the importance of our determining whether or not this is the correct application before we proceed to unfold the messages themselves. And how shall we decide this feature? The answer is, the whole matter is settled in chapter* 1 : 10, 11, 19, where it is very plainly stated that St. John, himself, is to do the writing. "And I [John] heard behind me a loud voice as of a Trumpet, saying, 'What thou [John] seest write in a Scroll, and send to those Seven Congregations, etc.'" "Write therefore the things thou sawest, even those which are, and the things which are about to transpire after these?" (Vs. 10, 11, 19.) These utterances comprehend everything contained in the book of Revelation; therefore, St. John was the writer. St. John was also the sender, and the messages we are about to consider are the translations of the same into the English language, and the "Stars ... Angels," or Messengers, primarily, were the representative bishops or pastors of the seven local Churches- to whom they were sent. We conclude therefore that

- (1) St. John was the writer.
- (2) What was written has been in the possession of the Church since he wrote.
- (3) St. John was instructed to employ the duly chosen Messengers or, representative bishops or pastors to read and explain them to the Churches.
- (4) Christ has given these messages for the whole Church today to study.
- (5) It has ever been the duty of the duly appointed bishops, elders or pastors, to read and unfold these messages, as they may have ability, to the individual members of the various Churches.
- (6) The facts of history have proven that these messages have, to a greater or, less degree, been read and studied in the Churches.
- (7) The facts of history have also proven that many have assisted in explaining the significance of the messages, and this has been in the usual way, both by writing and speaking. The learned and devout Dr. Bengel recommended these epistles above everything to the study of especially young ministers.

Having therefore clearly recognized that the things commanded by Christ to be written were written by St. John over eighteen centuries ago, and the things written by him We have in our possession today, preserved for us, we would next logically examine what is written, taking advantage of the help to be derived from the explanations of others to whom these messages belonged, as much as they belong to us today. In doing so, we find that as the history of the Church has unfolded, the light has increased, and therefore more and more clearly- do we see that these seven messages have been applicable to all of the Church throughout its entire history. There can be no doubt of the fact that there is contained in each and all of these messages very important matters that were - intended by Christ to apply to all of God's consecrated ones throughout the whole Gospel Age. This is plainly implied, indeed, stated in the words of the Savior addressed to each Church: "He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith *unto the Churches.*" The vital importance of this exhortation is emphasized by the fact that these words are repeated *seven times*; and in each instance reference is made to all the Churches. (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3 :6, 13, 22.), Not to understand the matter this way would be to deprive the whole Church of the benefit of the most

edifying exhortations and warnings to be found in all the volume of Divine inspiration.

MESSAGES APPLY TO ALL THE CHURCHES

We may therefore conclude assuredly, that the exhortations, the warnings, the threatenings, the encouragements, and the promises contained in them, apply in -the following special ways:

(1) To the seven particular Churches mentioned by Him, as existing at the time St. John wrote.

(2) To all the Churches of St. John's day scattered over the Roman Empire.

(3) To the individuals of all these Churches.

(4) To local Churches existing in every generation since St. John's day. The words. of an eminent Scripture writer of the middle of the nineteenth century are very pertinent on this point: "The seven must be regarded as constituting a complex whole-as possessing an-ideal completeness. Christ, we feel sure, could not have placed Himself in the relation which He does to them,--as holding in His hand the seven Stars, walking among the seven golden Candlesticks, these Stars being the Angels, of the Churches , and the Candlesticks, the Churches themselves-unless they ideally represented and set forth in some way or other, the universal Church militant on *earth*."--*Trench on the Seven Epistles--44*

Another of these. older writers has thus very truthfully expressed himself on the same: "The number seven is used throughout the Apocalypse in a symbolic sense., and is admitted to be expressive of -completeness or perfection. Why should -the 'seven Churches' be an exception to the rule ? Were the seven local Churches, the names of which - are given, the only Light-bearers or Candlesticks? Did the. light entirely cease to shine when, these Asiatic Churches ceased to exist? Let these seven Churches, or Candlesticks, be regarded as a sevenfold or perfect representative of the one Church in its responsibility to Christ, as His Light-bearer or witness before the world, and we have an interpretation at once consistent with the entire character of the book, and sufficient to account for the selection of seven local Churches, the divers state of which furnish for this sevenfold or perfect view of the whole professing body."--*Plain Papers--418*.

(5) To individuals in the Churches, existing in every generation since St. John's - day. A& one has truth fully said: "In dealing with these epistles, every man, of every age, has a Divine thermometer whereby to tell exactly where he or his Church stands in Christ's judgment, and one constructed and delivered to him by Christ Himself for this specific purpose. They tell what Christ's judgment of each of us is, and what we may expect in the great Day of His coming. In every age, and in every congregation, Christ is walk ing among His Churches, with open, flaming eyes; and these epistles give us His opinion of what His all revealing glance discovers."

(6) In a prophetic sense, to seven distinct periods or epochs of the Church since St. John's day

(7) In a very special sense, to the period in which we find ourselves as Christians today.

One writer who has given very close attention to the unfolding of these seven messages has noted that each one embraces seven distinct parts, which fact of itself is of very deep significance: *First*. An address: "Unto the messenger . . . write.," *Second*. A citation of some one or more of the sublime attributes of the speaker, Christ, being different for each particular Church. *Third*. An assertion of Christ's complete knowledge of the sphere, duties and doings of the persons or Churches addressed. *Fourth*. A description of the state of each, and such interspersions of praise and promise or censure and admonition as the case required. *Fifth*. An allusion to His promised coming, and the character it will assume to the persons described. *Sixth*, A universal command *to hear* what is said to all the Churches. *Seventh*. A special promise to the ultimate Victor or overcomer.

In the last four, the order of succession of these parts is different from the first three, and the call to "*hear*" the messages is placed after the promise to the "overcomer;" but in each one, these seven parts may be distinguished, thus showing that there is a fullness, a completeness about the whole, which proves that in their significance and application they cannot be confined to the few particular Churches to which the messages were originally addressed.

MESSAGES APPLY TO SEVEN DISTINCT EPOCHS

The Churches existing in St. John's day were doubt less, from the world's standpoint, of little importance, scarcely noticed by the world, and despised or held in light esteem by the people of the world in general. However neglected, despised or persecuted, we see by these special epistles of the Savior to them, that imperfect as they were, they were considered of more importance in heaven than any organization of earth, and had, the first, chief place in the Savior's mind, as well as that of the Heavenly Father Himself. We again emphasize the fact of the very wide and general application of the reproofs, the rebukes, the warnings, the dangers and evils pointed out, as well as the special words of comfort and promise to the overcomers, to all the generations of the Church's history, both individually and collectively. However, the facts of his tory themselves have proven, beyond any reasonable doubt that the peculiar characteristics described of each of these Churches, fits exactly seven distinct, successive epochs in the order mentioned of the history of the Church, and this establishes and fulfils the prophetic character of the messages, themselves. Still further, we add, that in the measure that we become familiar with the history of these seven epochs, will we be able to see their most remarkable fulfillment. The prophetic character of these messages has been seen by many, if not nearly all, of the expositors Who have written on the Revelation for the last two centuries. However, we believe it is perfectly reasonable that all the various matters associated with these messages in their primary application to the seven particular Churches mentioned and their ministry, must be the Divine basis, as well as rule, by which we interpret the symbols of the seven Lampstands among which the Savior is walking, and the seven Stars held in His right hand.

In a very particular way these messages show us the moral and spiritual condition of these primitive Churches. We would most naturally expect, from the fact that they were founded by the Apostles, that they would be perfect patterns and models of excellence; that they would be pure in morals and free from evils, false

doctrines, and the defections we find later on in history, as also in this last time. However, as we examine these messages, we find that they were, very much like the Churches since, and in fact, of all the different generations of the Church throughout the Age. There was equally as much to censure as there was to commend. There were loyal and true children of God whose affections were centered on things above and whose citizenship was in heaven, but there were many whose love for Christ had lost its fervor, some whose affections were set on worldly things; others who had a name to live, but were dead to a real experimental knowledge of the saving power of Christ; and still others who were proud, boastful, claiming- to be rich and increased with goods, i. e., with all that they thought was necessary for a Church to possess, and were so blind to the real riches that they are represented by the Savior as wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked-actually possessing nothing of the true inward qualities, necessary to represent the Savior and to perform His work. With five of the Churches out of the seven, the Savior finds serious fault. In one of these five, Laodicea, He finds nothing whatever to commend; and two alone, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are able to pass the searching inspection, and these find themselves in contact with elements which He severely condemns.

MESSAGES SHOW WHEAT AND TARES GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE AGE

We conclude this general description of these messages in the language of a godly pastor long since passed beyond: "Viewing these epistles, then, as descriptive of the entire Church, I find in them this item of fact: that the professed, Church, as pronounced upon by Christ Himself, is a mixed society, embracing, interminglings of good and evil from its beginning to the end. Whether we take, the seven Churches. as significant of seven successive or seven co-existing phases, they must needs reach to the end, and so depicture the entire Church. And as there is not one of these epistles in which the presence of evil is not recognized, so there can be no period in the earthly history of the, Church in which it is without bad admixtures. Whether the Ephesian Church extends, as in some sense it must, from the Apostolic era to. the consummation, or whether it relates mainly to the first period alone, and the Laodicean the last, we still have A vast deal. which the Lord and judge of the Church condemns, stretching its dark image from the commencement to the close. There were fallen ones, and some whose love had cooled, and some whose first works had been abandoned, and some giving place to the base deeds of the Nicolaitans, and some false, ones claiming to be Apostles, and were not, even among the [few] warm, patient, fervent, enduring and faithful Ephesians. In Smyrna were faithless blasphemers, and those of Satan's synagogue, as well as faithful, suffering ones, and those whom Christ is to crown in heaven. In Pergamos were those who denied the faith, and followed the teachings of Balaam, and the doctrines of the detested Nicolaitans, as well as those who held fast the name of Jesus, and witnessed for Him unto death. In Thyatira we find a debauching and idolatrous Jezebel and her death-worthy children, and multitudes of spiritual adulterers, as well as those whose works and faith, and charity, and patience are noted with favor, and who had not been drawn into Satan's depths. 'In Sardis there was incompleteness, deadness, defalcation, need of repentance, and threatened judgment, as well as names of those who had not defiled their garments. 'In Philadelphia we discover 'the synagogue of Satan,'

falsifiers, those who had settled themselves upon the earth, and such as had not kept Christ's Word, as well as such as should be kept from the sifting trial, and advanced to celestial crowns. And in Laodicea there was found disgusting lukewarmness, empty profession, and base self-conceit, with Christ Himself excluded.

"Never, indeed, has there been a sowing of God on earth, but it has been oversown by Satan; or a growth for Christ, which the plantings of the wicked one did not mingle with and hinder. God sowed good seed in Paradise; but when it came to the harvest, the principal product was tares. At earth's first altar appeared the murderer with the saint--Cain and Abel. And in all ages and dispensations, the plants of grace have ever found weeds upspringing by their sides, their roots intertwinning, and their stalks and leaves and fruits putting forth together. The Church is not an exception, and never will be, as long as the present dispensation lasts. Even in its first and purest periods, as the Scriptural accounts attest, it was intermixed with what pertained not to it. There was a Judas among its Apostles; an Ananias and a Simon Magus among its first converts; a Demas and a Diotrophes among its first public servants. And as long as it continues in this world, Christ will have His anti-Christ, and the temple of God, its man of sin. He who sets out to find a perfect Church, in which there are no unworthy elements, and no disfigurements, proposes to himself a hopeless search. Go where he will, worship where he may, in any country, in any age, he *will* soon find tares among the wheat, sin mixing in with all earthly holiness; self-deceivers, hypocrites, and unchristians in every assembly of saints; Satan insinuating himself into, every gathering of the sons of God, to present themselves before the Lord. No preaching, however pure; no discipline, however strict or prudent; no watchfulness, however searching and faithful, can ever make it different. The Savior Himself has taught us that in the Gospel field, wheat and tares are to be found; that it is forbidden to pluck *up* the bad, lest the good also be damaged; and that both are to 'grow together *until* the harvest,' which is the end of the economy--the winding up of the present order of things--'the end of the Age.'"
"--SEISS.

PAUL AND BARNABAS ATTEND IMPORTANT CONFERENCE

--AUGUST 21-ACTS 15:1-16:5--

Golden 'Text' "But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the, Lord Jesus."--Acts 15:11

CHRISTIAN liberty is to be sharply differentiated from the liberty of license, lawlessness, anarchy; and this lesson furnishes a good illustration of this fact. To the Jews who had been under the Mosaic ritual and its washings, fastings, feasts, new moons, sabbaths and holy days, Christian liberty meant a release from a considerable measure of these institutions, many of which were, typical and educational--suited to the "house of servants," but not appropriate to the "house of sons." To the Gentiles to whom God had never given the Law, and who were therefore, not under any of its provisions or conditions or requirements, but who

were under certain superstitions, wrong appetites and customs, Christian liberty meant, the abrogation of all wrong customs and superstitions, and additionally, the imposing of a law;--not the Mosaic Law and 'its institutions and ceremonies, however, but "the Perfect Law of Liberty"; the "Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"--restraints of the will of the flesh, under the law of love. (Jas. 1:25; Rom. 8:2.) We are not to be surprised that both Jews' and Gentiles, coming from opposite directions into the Church of Christ and its perfect law of liberty, were somewhat confused and bewildered respecting its requirements and proprieties.

It was nearly twenty years after the day of Pentecost that the conference noted in our lesson took place in Jerusalem. It was held for the purpose of reaching a decision respecting this very subject -- the Law of Christ, its bearing upon Gentile converts, and upon Jewish converts -- to what extent the Mosaic requirements were abolished as regarded the Jews, and to what extent the Law of Christ put restraints upon the converts from amongst the Gentiles and to what extent these two classes, previously separated socially and religiously by the requirements of the Mosaic Law, might now come together with full brotherly fellowship and affinity, without the violation of the conscience of any, and without unnecessary restraint of the liberties of any.

QUESTIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

The Church at Antioch had become the center of Christianity amongst the Gentiles, and Jews born in Gentile lands. Its Gentile surroundings, no less than its membership, tended to cultivate in it a broad spirit of Christian liberty;--some of its membership, under the influence of brethren who had come from Jerusalem, feared that it had gone too far in the matter of Christian liberty, and held that Gentiles, upon accepting Christ through faith, should likewise accept Judaism and the Mosaic Law, and come as fully under the conditions of these, 'including circumcision, as though they had been born Jews. Certain brethren who, had recently arrived from Jerusalem accentuated these fears, and as a result there was quite a dissension in the Antioch Church, amounting, as the Greek word shows, almost to a schism, a split. But the right spirit evidently prevailed; because, instead of splitting over a vexed question, each party respected the conscientious convictions of the other, and it was wisely determined to appeal the matter to the Church at Jerusalem for, such, words of counsel and advice as its leaders, the Apostles and Elders, should see fit to give. The Antioch brethren evidently had full confidence that God had appointed the Apostles, and that their conclusion on the matter would ultimately be the correct one. At the same time, knowing that the brethren at Jerusalem were surrounded by the Judaizing influence, tending rather to narrowness of view as respected the Mosaic customs, they sent their two leading representatives, Paul and Barnabas, to present before the Jerusalem Council the views which seemed to the majority of, the Church to be the correct ones, that thus the entire subject might be fully, fairly, thoroughly investigated, and the mind of the Lord determined as accurately as possible.

This Was a beautiful spirit--the right spirit; far more commendable in God's sight and in the judgment of sound-minded men than any immoderate course they could have taken. *People who take the immoderate course are generally those who do not have sufficient faith in the Lord as the real Head of the Church, and in His overruling providence in the affairs of those who are seeking to know and to do*

His will;--they are generally those who feel too much self-assurance, as did even the meek Moses, when he erred in smiting the rock in the wilderness, the second time saying: "Ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock"?--Num. 20:10.

The Truth has nothing to lose by fairness, openness, and a reasonable moderation and the turning on of all light obtainable. And while the Church at Antioch evidently had great confidence in Paul and Barnabas, they properly also had great confidence and respect for the Apostles at Jerusalem, and reasoned that since these men all gave evidence that they were truly the Lord's special servants and mouthpieces, it would be strange indeed if meeting together and hearing all that could be said on both sides of the question, they could not arrive at a unanimous decision respecting the Lord's will, that would assure the Church in general. We commend this noble principle which is as applicable now as it was then. Today, however, as we cannot refer questions to the living Apostles, we must refer them to the recorded teaching of our Lord and the Apostles,--seeking assistance in this amongst the brethren who appear to have the best knowledge of God's Word and the greatest insight into the Divine Plan.

EN ROUTE TO THE JEWISH CONFERENCE

The journey from Antioch to Jerusalem brought Paul and Barnabas in contact with many of the household of faith, a few, here and there, in almost every city through which they passed. Of course, the brethren were glad to hear, as these ex-missionaries were glad to tell them, of God's favors upon their missionary labors in Galatia and vicinity; and although the brethren reached were almost exclusively Jewish converts, it is with pleasure we read that the report "caused great joy unto all the brethren." (Acts 15:3.) This shows that they had the true Christian spirit--that they had largely, if not completely, lost the Jewish prejudice and jealousy, as concerned the giving of the Gospel to the Gentiles. It shows us that with the majority of the previously Jewish brethren the contention for the Mosaic Law and ceremonies implied no opposition to the Gentiles themselves, but merely a confusion of mind concerning the Lord's will on these subjects;--they had not yet discerned the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Divine Plan, as they subsequently learned these, and came to appreciate the perfect Law of Liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed, in the true sense, all who become truly His.

Arrived at Jerusalem, the representatives of the Antioch congregation were met with a hearty welcome, for such is the significance of the Greek Word rendered "received" in verse 4. As they had given to the others en route, so the returned missionaries gave the Jerusalem brethren detailed accounts of the Lord's blessing upon their journey, telling what miracles and wonders He had wrought, that a considerable number had believed, and how loyal, faithful and enduring were some of these newly-found brethren in Christ, who had previously been aliens, strangers, Gentiles.

There is some reason for believing that previous to this Paul and Barnabas and Titus had made a visit to Jerusalem, in which they did not, as now, appear publicly before the congregation to give their testimonies, but had secret conferences with the Apostles and chief brethren, Paul explaining to them what he understood to be the perfect Law of Liberty under the Covenant of sacrifice the

will and plan of God regarding the Gospel amongst the Gentiles. It would appear that the Apostles had been largely influenced by those presentations, although they had not uttered any public testimony on the subject, nor engaged in any manner in the missionary work amongst the Gentiles. Apparently they had 'not considered it necessary to stir up the subject to any extent, and thus possibly to breed more or less of strife amongst the Jewish converts. Thus the subject had been left for some years for gradual development and enlargement of heart and mind on the part of the believers. This thought is based upon the Apostle Paul's statement in his letter to the Galatians, on this subject.-Gal. 2.

But now the question, of receiving Gentiles, and how they should be treated, and what were their obligations, etc., came up in a natural way, without forcing -- rather, it forced itself for decision. The Apostles and Elders heard the reports of God's blessing upon the Gentiles, and offered no objection, evidently being quite in accord with the matter from the first; but, as was to be expected, there was dissatisfaction amongst brethren who previously had been Pharisees. This sect of the Jews was firmly set, not only for the Law of Moses and all of its ceremonies, but also for many additions and accretions to it; so that they were quite dissatisfied, we remember, with our Lord's observance of the Law, which we know was perfect. These, in all honesty, objected that the missionaries were too lax, too slack in their work, and that all believers should be required to be circumcised and to keep the Mosaic laws respecting fasts, new moons, sabbath days, washings, etc.

NOBLE DEFENSE OF THE TRUTH OUR DUTY, STRIFE AND WRANGLING IMPROPER

Thus the question was brought forward, and a special meeting was appointed, at which, the Apostles and Elders heard all that was to be said on the subject, and we read that there was "much dispute." We do not want to say a word in favor of disputes, wrangling, etc., amongst the Lord's people. On the contrary, we understand the Scriptures to teach that wranglings in general are improper, out of order, injurious to the interests of the Church and of the Truth; because such wranglings and disputes are generally about things to no profit, but to the subverting or unsettling of the believers, and especially of those who are new or weak in the faith. But it is a different matter when the question is an important one, as was this under discussion; and at such a time dispute, in the proper manner, with the spirit of love, with force and yet with kindness, love and gentleness of word and manner, is most appropriate.

We rejoice that there was such a spirit of broadmindedness in the early Church as is represented in the course pursued--we rejoice that when an important subject was to be considered, with a view to knowing the mind of the Lord, that there was fullest liberty granted for as much dispute or debate, in a proper manner, as was necessary to bring the whole subject before those who had it under consideration. There is a difference, however, between disputes and discussions inside the pale of faith and disputes outside that boundary. As the Apostle says, "He that is weak in the faith receive ye [do not reject him because he has not such full, strong, vigorous faith as we should like to see], but not to doubtful disputations"--do not receive him to dispute his doubts--what he doles not believe. Let him have a full

opportunity, for hearing the faith discussed; if his doubts do not then disappear, probably he himself will disappear-drop out of the assembly.

PAUL AND BARNABAS UPHELD

The fact that the question at issue was-the obligation of Gentile converts to the Law, is not to be understood as signifying that the Law of Moses was recognized as being of binding force upon Jewish converts. All were bound to concede that the Law Covenant had saved none -that Christ's fulfillment of it brought all under Divine grace. It was more a question of usage-the Jews were used to circumcision which preceded the Law, used to abstaining from pork, not only merely because the Law forbade it, but because aside from the Law they considered it unclean. What the Jew did in the exercise of his liberty he thought the Gentile should be forced to do;--a very common error with many. It requires development to learn to use our consciences and liberty and to let others use theirs, even though they, differ.

When a fair hearing had been granted to both sides of the question, Peter, one of the leading Apostles, and doubtless the eldest, rehearsed his experiences with Cornelius; then Paul and Barnabas were heard, and James closed, the discussion. All upheld the teachings and practices of Paul and Barnabas, and cited the leadings of the Lord's spirit, as well as the prophecies of the Old Testament, in corroboration of this position which, doubtless, as above suggested, they had held tentatively for some time, though they only now thought it necessary to make a public statement regarding it. The conclusion was satisfactory to the Apostles and Elders and the whole Church; and an answer in harmony with this was sent to., the friends at Antioch, Syria, and throughout Silicia--the regions which had been affected by the Judaizing teachers.

To give weight to the letter, two of the prominent brethren of Jerusalem were sent with Paul and Barnabas and the letter, that, they might confirm the letter orally, and thus establish the hearts of those who had been somewhat troubled by the false teachings. The letter first disclaims any authority for those persons who had, however honestly intentioned, taught error with truth, and confused the hearts of the believers on the subject of circumcision and the Law. It states also the conclusions of the conference, and commends Barnabas and Paul, calling them "beloved," and noting the fact that they had hazarded their, lives in the Lord's cause. The decision rendered is expressed as being the mind of "the Holy Spirit and us." We may reasonably presume that the meaning of this is that the Church not only found the teachings of the Scripture and the leadings of the Divine providence to be in- favor of the acceptance of the Gentiles to Christian liberty, without, becoming Jews or coming under the Law, but that this finding of the Lord's will was not against the wishes or prejudices of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem; that it found a ready echo, a hearty response in their hearts.

RECOMMENDATION RESPECTING OUTWARD. CONDUCT

God's dealings and, instructions commended themselves both to their hearts and, to, their reasons, and covered four points. (1) Abstaining from meats offered to idols, which might appear to be giving sanction to idol worship. (2) Abstaining from' the eating of the blood of animals. (3) Abstaining from eating things that,

had been strangled, in which the blood 'Would remain, which would imply the eating of blood. (4) The avoidance of fornication.

In considering these rules we are to keep in memory the circumstances and conditions of the times, and the objects sought to be attained. (1) The idol worship which prevailed at that time had connected with it A great deal of sensuality, which would be contrary to the spirit of Christ in every sense of the word. (2) The object was to permit a ground of fellowship and brotherhood between those whose previous experiences and instructions had been lax, and those. whose previous instructions had been rigid. And the things here required of the Gentiles were not merely features of the Mosaic Law, for the forbidding of the use of blood, and the explanation that it represented the life, was given long previous to Moses' day-to Noah after the flood, when he and his posterity were granted the privilege of eating meat, because of the changed conditions and the impoverishment of the race, and the need of more stimulating food. The use of blood was still more common then than now, being used, not only in blood puddings, but also as a drink mixed. with wine, as some today use beef extract blended with wine.

The message was received in faith by all, and caused universal rejoicing in the Church. There was a general recognition of the Lord's providential care in the Church's affairs, and this faith and confidence in God prepared all parties to receive the message on this subject, which they believed God would assuredly give them, and which they had rightly looked for through the channels which God had previously been using for their blessing and edification. Thus we have a. lesson' respecting the proper course of the Lord's dear people today,--not *to carry disputes, even on important matters (not fundamental) to the length of rupture, division*, but, with hearts anxious to know and to obey the Truth, inquiry should be made of the oracles of God, and the results, after a fair hearing of -all the testimony, should be conclusive, satisfactory, and bring consolation--peace and joy-so that. the unity of the faith in 'the bonds of love may continue within the walls of Zion.

The two brethren who came as representatives of the, Jerusalem Church were prophets, or public teachers, and, as was intended, they exhorted the Church in harmony with the letter they bore, and confirmed and strengthened them., Thus what might have been a serious rupture,, resulting in much damage and in many roots of bitterness, antagonisms, etc., became really a means of increased blessing to all connected therewith, because wisely and properly handled. May such occasions be likewise treated by the Lord's people today, and with similar blessed results, under the guidance of the same Lord and Master who more than eighteen centuries ago guided by His Word and Spirit.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HAS MADE US FREE

Strange to say, a peculiar combination-of too much liberty and too little liberty-is creeping over nominal Christendom today. The too little liberty feature objects to any discussion. of the doctrines of Christ, and the teachings of the, Apostles, for fear some differences of. opinion. should be manifested. This is an endeavor to have an outward ."union" Without a union of the heart and a union of the head. It is injurious, both to those who hold the error, which cannot be -exposed, and

injurious also to those who hold the Truth and who permit, themselves thus to be bound, and hindered from growth in, grace and knowledge by the proper exercise of the liberties wherewith Christ has made His people free. The general trend along this line favors the covering over, the concealment, of truths as well as errors, in a wrong assumption that the appearance of union will, serve the purpose of real union, and be real effective as respects the prosperity of the true members of the Body of Christ. Such a false union, however, may be effected, and to such extent cause prosperity in the nominal church, but can only last for a brief season, when the time of trouble shall overwhelm all..

On the other hand the too great liberty which we see drawing on, is that represented by the teachings of the higher critics and evolutionists. Their teachings are given in quiet, -in the theological seminaries, at the fireside, in the daily interchanges, and in the, pulpit; and any attempt to contradict these false doctrines is tabooed, as being calculated to stir up strife, and destroy the unity of the Church. Thus the too great liberty and the too great bondage are, working together in the nominal church, systems today, to thoroughly expel and ostracize the, Truth, and all who love it and wish to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. It is calculated to, install and multiply and qualify and honor the error, which, so, rapidly is gaining control, although the control be generally denied. Let all who are the Lord's people, and who have tasted of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, see to it -that they., stand fast in that liberty, and as soon as an attempt is made to restrain it, if not sooner, let them get out completely. from all the bondages of human systems, that they may stand firmly and loyally with the Lord, our Redeemer, our Instructor, our King.

The question may arise, Does this direction to abstain, from meat offered to, idols conflict with the Apostle's later teachings addressed to the Corinthians? (1 Cor. 8.) We answer, No. The Apostle is not advocating the eating of meat., previously offered, to idols; but on, the contrary, is answering some who so practiced, He is admitting the logic of their argument, that an idol being nothing but so much wood or metal or stone the meat could be neither benefited nor injured by the offering. But he shows that the restrictions should be practiced in the interest of some of less logical mind who would be unable to -comprehend, this and who would thus be led to defile their consciences, and thus into sin;--which might abound more and more, eventually, to their destruction. For the voice of conscience must be obeyed: it is at our peril-, that, it is, violated--no matter how erroneous and superstitious, may be its standards. Let conscience be educated; but let its ignorance never be violated. Every violation of conscience is so much of character destruction All need, to remember this in respect to their own consciences as well as in dealing with. Others -- especially with children.

FROM ASIA TO EUROPE

--AUGUST 28-ACTS 16:6-18--

Golden Text.--"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."--Acts 16:31.

TODAY'S lesson is connected with the introduction of the Gospel into Europe. After the conference at Jerusalem, noted in a previous lesson, Paul and Barnabas remained for a time at Antioch. But seeing that there were many laborers there and that a larger field was little worked, a second missionary journey was planned. Barnabas and his nephew John Mark went in one direction, while with St. Paul went Silas (Sylvanus), with whom he had become acquainted, at the Jerusalem conference and who is reported to have been a Roman citizen, as was St. Paul. It is with this latter couple that we have to do in this lesson. Their course lay through Syria and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra. In these places they confirmed the faith of such as had already been accepted of the Lord through the Apostle's first missionary tour, and the working of the Truth during the interim. It was at Lystra that Timothy was found, a young man of Jewish mother and well trained in the Scriptures by her and his grandmother-his father being a Greek. We note that amongst the things presented to the Churches was, the decision of the Jerusalem conference that the Jewish Law should not be considered binding to the Gentiles, except in certain, features noted in our previous lesson.

After good success in the mission up to this point the Apostle had in mind a journey through Asia Minor; but apparently things went unfavorable until the Apostle concluded that the Lord was hindering their efforts and in perplexity began to think of other fields of labor. His moment of uncertainty was the Lord's opportunity for directing him. He dreamed that he saw a man dressed in the costume of the Macedonians beckoning to him and saying, "Come over and help us." The Apostle accepted, this as of Divine leading, and promptly began the journey; which took him into Europe. We have here an evidence of God's supervision of all the interests, of His Church. He was not averse to permitting the message to go into Asia Minor, for it did go there later, possibly at a more opportune time. But this was the time for sending the message to Europe.

It is supposed that it was about this time that Luke, the physician, became attached to St. Paul's company. A man of education, a scribe, as well as a physician, the Lord evidently provided him as St. Paul's amanuensis, that thereby the Apostle's letters should reach many of the Churches of that time, as well as the Lord's people from then until now. Thus it came that Luke wrote not only a version of the Gospel, but also the Book of Acts and nearly all of St. Paul's epistles. Here we have another illustration of the privileges of the various members of the Body of Christ. Luke could not be the Apostle Paul nor could he do St. Paul's work; but he could be used of the Lord honorably and efficiently in a greater spread of the Truth.

So it is with us. We cannot be Apostles. We cannot do, anything very great; but, if filled with the Spirit of the Lord, it is our privilege to be used to some extent in some service of the Truth. And any service for the Lord and for the brethren, even to the washing of feet and any menial service, is, as our Lord shows, honorable and a privilege.

LYDIA OF THYATIRA.

Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia, in Greece, appears to have been the first place for the preaching of the Good Tidings in Europe. As usual, on the Sabbath day the Apostle and companions sought for some who worshiped God,

who hoped for the Kingdom that God had promised, knowing that such would be the better prepared to receive the message he had to deliver; that Jesus had appeared as the Redeemer and had laid the foundation for the Millennial Kingdom in the sacrifice of Himself; that the blessings of His sacrifice would ultimately be made available to every creature, but that now, in advance of the dealing with the world in general, the Lord is' calling out a spiritual Israel, a "little flock," to be His kings and priests with Jesus in the administration of the Millennial blessings.

Apparently there was no synagogue in Philippi, and matters may have looked very unfavorable to St. Paul and his companions. However', they heard of a little religious, meeting held every Sabbath by the river side, outside the city gate. It was; a prayer meeting principally and place, of Divine fellowship. Not having the facilities; of a synagogue they probably had no Scripture parchments, and, hence no reading of the Law, but merely prayer and worship. All this was favorable to the Gospel Message the Apostle had to present. He spoke to those who resorted *thither, commending*, the importance of their worshipful condition of heart and the importance of praise to the Giver of all good., Then he proceeded to declare the, Good, Tidings of the sacrifice of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, and His Second Coming in power and great glory. He showed surely that the invitation now being given was for joint-sacrifices with Jesus whose reward would be joint-heirship with Him in the Millennial Kingdom', as members of His Body, the *Church*.

However many or few were at the meeting there, was one present whose heart was in the right condition to receive the Message -- a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple. Dyes were much more expensive in olden times than now and the secret knowledge of how to make them was turned to financial profit. Thus it is supposed that Lydia was. in quite comfortable circumstances financially. Not *only* did the Truth open her heart, en lightening the eyes of her understanding, but she was prompt to obey it in full consecration and prompt to symbolize that consecration in water baptism--"She and her household."

It is not always that religious parents have religiously inclined children. - Several instances of the kind are mentioned in the Scriptures. Personal experience' teaches us also that the parent who is earnestly consecrated to the Lord and guided by His Word has generally a good influence upon those nearest to him and directly under 'his care. Such an influence should be hoped for, prayed for, sought for by every parent. But it cannot be obtained except by carefulness, circumspection of word and deed.. These in subjection imply that the very thoughts of the heart are brought, into captivity to the will of God in Christ. Nevertheless, parents who have failed to discern the Truth -and recognize its, responsibilities until their children have outgrown parental instruction must not chide themselves unmercifully if their children do not respect them and their religious convictions. Rather they should remember that the Lord is thoroughly acquainted with the situation and Will hold them accountable only for what they do or do not after they have come to know Him and to an opportunity for understanding the instructions of His Word respecting their own lives and the training of their children in the nurture and admonition of the' Lord.

"AND SHE CONSTRAINED US"

The fact, that Lydia's household believed implies that she was the mother of adult children. And these were so thoroughly under her influence that they worshiped with her the true, God, neglecting the idolatries prevalent in Philippi. We may infer that she was a widow' since her husband is not -mentioned., Hence it was her, right, without conference with, anybody, to invite the Apostle and his companions to share the hospitality of her home. She 'seems properly to have realized that, instead, *of honoring* them, she -was, honoring herself, and, her, *home* by having such guests--the ministers of God,' the brethren of Christ--under her, *roof*. Note her language when inviting, "She besought us saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she,; constrained us.". The latter, statement, implies that the Apostle was not too ready to force himself upon anybody, that he did not urge, saying,. Surely., myself and companions who have preached to you should be served by you in temporalities--though that was the, truth. Rather, the Apostle made no reference to, temporalities Indeed, after the suggestion of Lydia had been made it was apparently not quickly accepted, but with the indication that the disciples of Jesus had no desire to intrude: upon others. This, is implied in the statement that they were "constrained," gradually drawn or led to accept the invitation. How beautiful it is to see God's children wisely exercised in such matters! How much more is their influence upon one another for good!

This lesson may be considered as specially teaching Divine supervision of the true Gospel and its ministers,. Yet how diversified God's dealings and how necessary that His children in -ministering the Truth should have fullest confidence in *His* wisdom, love and power! Note the sharp contrast that, after specially guiding the Apostles to this place and then to a very small meeting and apparently one family of converts, the Lord next allows what seems to be a great catastrophe to befall His, faithful servants. This trial came through the evil spirits. A young woman, possessed, (obsessed) by an evil spirit (one, of the 'fallen angels), was used *for* fortune-telling, etc.,,, the spirit working through her, divining or giving intelligence of things that were lost, telling fortunes, etc. She was a slave girl and very profitable to her owners a syndicate apparently of influential men.

For several days, as the Apostle and companions went to and from the home of Lydia attending to the Lord's work, this obsessed girl followed them, shouting in a loud voice, "These be the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way 'of salvation." Of course, the girl did not know them but the evil spirits knew them, but the evil spirits knew them. To what extent they forecasted the results we may not definitely know but quite possibly what occurred was what they had premeditated, namely, that the Apostle would. cast out the evil spirit and that this would bring upon. them and any, converts a violent attack from the owners of the girl and their friends and all whom they could arouse to, a frenzy of excitement, of wrath and rioting. Or the evil spirit may simply have told the truth, without considering the possibility of the Apostle commanding it to come out of the woman--possibly supposing that they would be rather pleased with a testimony from any quarter. But we read that St. Paul was grieved as day after day this testimony was made. He was not grieved that a testimony was borne to the Truth, but grieved that it should come from such. an evil source, for he knew that it would have no respect for the Truth;. for any of the fallen angels who would have respect for God and the principles of righteousness would not seek to obsess

humanity when it knew that it would be to their injury and contrary to the Divine will. The Apostle said not a word to the young woman, assuming that she was not at all accountable. He addressed, the evil spirit as such, and commanded it in the name of Jesus to come out of the woman -- just as Jesus and the Apostles under *His* instruction had frequently cast out these spirits.

In proceeding thus the Apostle was of course doing. what was right, and doubtless was acting under the direction of the spirit or mind of the Lord concerning the: matter. In so doing he was privileged to relieve the cause of Truth of the reproach and odium that were being brought upon it by the conduct of the obsessed woman. Not only so, but the casting out of the evil spirit' from: the woman was undoubtedly an act of the Lord's favor toward her in being dispossessed of an influence that could have only a demoralizing effect. Thus, as is always the case, the operation of, the Lord's power and spirit tend toward relief from the powers of darkness, the leading of 'those operated thereon into a state of peace.

Present-day higher critics and lower critic's are, disposed to dispute that there are evil spirits, and that. human beings ever are or ever were possessed by demons. Such incline to suppose that either deception or insanity, was mistaken by the Lord and the Apostles in these cases of obsession. However, to those who have learned to respect the Word of God there is no room for questioning the. accounts. Our Lord commanded evil spirits to come out of possessed ones, and they obeyed Him; and in this case the Apostle Paul invoked the same Divine power, for the healing of this young woman -- for her deliverance from the evil spirit being which had obtained possession of her and made her its slave, speaking through her, and otherwise using her mouth, ears, etc., as channels of communication. These fallen angels adapt themselves to the' varying conditions of humanity in all parts of the world, and in connection with all the various systems of religion, all of which we may properly accredit, more or logs directly, to the great Adversary of the Truth, who worketh by and through those who will submit themselves.

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WHO MAY ADVANCE IN THE LIGHT?

WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO MINISTER IN HOLY THINGS? WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES?

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."--2 Tim. 2:2.

A BROTHER has raised the question as to the propriety and consistency of any brother or brethren in these days endeavoring to set before the friends any lines of thought or interpretation in addition to and beyond what was presented in the ministry -- sermons and writings -- of PASTOR RUSSELL. It is urged that in view of PASTOR RUSSELL'S unique and important, office and position in the ministry of the Divine Word, does it not seem presumptuous, and is it not treating the memory Of PASTOR RUSSELL with disrespect, for any brother to attempt to

investigate the Scriptures or to present anything that was not taught by him. And, furthermore, it is questioned: In view of the fact that PASTOR RUSSELL was used so largely in clarifying the Truth and setting it in order, should we not therefore decide conclusively that the Lord gave His people, through PASTOR RUSSELL, all His messages-absolutely every detail of the Truth that there is to be had for the remainder of this Age-and is it not therefore in vain, and displeasing to the Lord, that anyone since PASTOR RUSSELL's death should seek to walk in further light on any point or attempt to help others so to do? -- reference being made in this connection to the Revelation expositions and articles on chronology recently presented in the HERALD.

The brother presenting the above reasoning urges a second proposition, namely: Should not any brother or brethren who would seek to make progress in the path way of Light and Truth at this time, or help others to see more clearly the import of the Divine messages, be able to point themselves out as being clearly referred to in certain figurative or parabolic statements of the Bible, and should not such brethren be able to prove that they are thus peculiarly ordained and referred to under the figure of some symbolical angel or messenger for the last days, before they could consider themselves authorized to handle the things of God's Word and help others to clearer light. regarding any question in these times?

We acknowledge, of course, that the foregoing lines of reasoning are very interesting, and that it is indeed important that we arrive at wise and sound conclusions with regard to the various questions involved. For this reason we have deemed it proper and profitable to here present before others what we believe to be the teachings of the Scriptures concerning these matters.

It should be entirely unnecessary to here state that the brethren who have the ministry of our INSTITUTE in charge, hold the memory and life-work Of PASTOR RUSSELL in the most sacred regard; that in the ministry of this institution the most unswerving loyalty to the interpretations of the Truth as presented by PASTOR RUSSELL has been shown: in fact, we feel that we can safely state that there are no brethren who hold more sacred and hallowed the work and ministry of PASTOR RUSSELL than the brethren of our INSTITUTE; and this has been demonstrated in our reprinting so much of his writings in these pages and in quoting so lavishly from his interpretations, as well as in the frequent use of his name in the pages of this journal; and that in the most reverential and respectful manner that we know how. Nor has there been any change in the attitude toward PASTOR RUSSELL of any of the brethren of the HERALD staff; but contrariwise, our love and esteem for, and confidence in our Pastor have only been enlarged from time to time as we have observed increasingly how broad and comprehensive has been his insight into, and his -vision of, God's will and purposes; and we are not surprised, therefore, to find that he has doubtless excelled all other Christian leaders of modern times in the quality as well as the scope of his ministry of Gospel Truth.

"ONE CONTINUOUS AND INCREASING LIGHT"

But while all of this is true, we find ourselves unable to agree with the propositions set forth above, because the reasoning contained therein is quite positively in opposition to the plain teachings of the Bible, as well as contrary to

the clear and sound elucidations given by PASTOR RUSSELL himself as to the increasing progress of Truth and Light. We believe that no one will be able to locate anything in the Bible to the effect that upon the departure of any of the spiritual teachers of the Church, the revelation of Truth would cease; nor is there anything in PASTOR RUSSELL'S writings to lead us to conclude that he believed that his death would mark the end of progress for God's people in the path of light, and that thereafter followers of Christ should settle down and expect no further illumination--should make no further progress in the study of Truth. His teachings are most explicitly to the contrary, and we can do no better than quote his own words along this line:

. . . 'The path of the just that 'is as, the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' . . . Patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints of the past and present have walked in its increasing light; AND THE LIGHT WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE BEYOND THE PRESENT--unto the perfect day. It is one continuous path, and THE ONE CONTINUOUS AND INCREASING LIGHT is the Divine Record, illuminating as it becomes due.

"Therefore, 'Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous,' expecting' the fulfillment of 'this promise. Many have so little faith that they do not look for more light, and, because of their unfaithfulness and unconcern, they are permitted to sit in darkness, when they might have been walking in the increasing light.

Surely no one who believes the Scripture statement that the path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day, will claim that the perfect day came in Luther's time; *and if not, we do Well that we take heed to our lamp as unto 'a light that shineth in a dark place UNTIL THE DAY DAWN.'*--2 Pet. 1:19.

"Nor is it sufficient that we find ourselves now in the path of light; we must 'walk in the light,' CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS, else the light, which does not stop, will pass on and leave us in darkness. The difficulty with many is that they sit down, and do not follow on in the path of light. Take a concordance and examine the texts under the words *sit* and *stand*, then compare these with those found under the words *walk* and *run*, and you will find a great contrast: Men '*sit* in darkness,' and with 'the scornful,' and *stand* among the ungodly, but '*walk* in the light,' and '*run* for the prize.'--Isa. 42:7; Psa. 1:1; Heb. 12:1.

"PERFECTION OF KNOWLEDGE IS, NOT A THING OF THE PAST, BUT OF THE FUTURE--the very near future, we trust; and until we recognize this fact we are unprepared to appreciate and expect fresh unfoldings of our Father's *Plan.*"--*Studies*, Vol. 1-20, 21, 25.

Such was the wise and, we believe, Scriptural view presented by PASTOR RUSSELL. It is most evident that he did not consider that the time had come for the Lord's people to stand still and cease to make progress; nor did he consider that that time would ever come, until 'the perfect day' was fully ushered in. *Therefore, whatever views any of us shall hold concerning the important place that PASTOR RUSSELL occupied in the ministry of the Truth, such views must not be allowed to stand in the way of, or in opposition to, plain statements of the Bible, on the grounds of which PASTOR RUSSELL urged all followers of Christ to "walk in the light," and to continue to make advancement "unto the perfect day."* As was pointed out in a preceding issue of this journal, PASTOR

RUSSELL'S entire life is seen to have been one of unceasing progress; and he urged the brethren always to be in the progressive attitude, to discard error as fast as they saw it. His own example shows that he was repudiating error throughout his entire lifetime. It is very well remembered by those who were in close association with PASTOR RUSSELL that frequently in reply to a question, he would say: "I am not sure as to the proper answer to the question. I am hoping to see the matter more clearly later." Or, at another time, he would answer: "I am expecting certain developments and events to make more clear the truth with regard to that point." Or, at still another time, he would answer; "I am not just sure. I am waiting to see," etc. It is plainly evident that in these answers his attitude was that of holding himself open to see certain lines of Truth more clearly, and this attitude he encouraged all the brethren to hold. It would not therefore seem reasonable that he would now advise the brethren, in his absence, to close their minds and eyes to all further developments and refuse to see or make further progress.

"HALTED AROUND FAVORITE LEADERS"

Another thought advanced by our Pastor and most important to be considered in this connection: It is quite evident that he *did not wish the brethren after his death to gather around him personally and form a creed fence* that would prevent them from making further progress. His teachings were strictly, against this procedure, and as students of his writings we well recall that he frequently, referred to, the great mistake that Christians in the past had made by gathering around such as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell; each of these groups forming creeds and establishing themselves inside the creed fence around these leaders, and thus prohibiting and preventing further progress. Our beloved Pastor advised the brethren everywhere not to do this sort of thing, but urged us to "prove all things" by the infallible Word; to recognize the Scriptures alone as the source of information, as our spiritual guide, and as that which should settle all dispute. Let us carefully consider his exact words. Speaking with regard to the great Reformation and its results,, he said:

" . . . God raised up bold champions for his Word, among whom were Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Wycliffe, Knox and others. These called attention to the fact that Papacy had laid aside the Bible and substituted the decrees and dogmas of the church, and pointed out a few of its erroneous teachings and practices, showing that they were built upon tradition, contrary to truth, and opposed to God's Word. These reformers and their adherents were called Protestants, because they protested against Papacy, and claimed the Word of God as the only correct rule of faith and practice. Many faithful souls in the days of the Reformation walked in the light, so far as it was then shining. But since their day Protestants have made little progress, because, instead of walking in the light, they have halted around their favorite leaders, willing to see as much as they saw but nothing more. They set boundaries to their progress in the way of truth, hedging in, with the little truth they had, a great deal of error brought along from the 'mother' church. For the creeds thus formulated many years ago, the majority of Christians have a superstitious reverence, supposing that no more can be known of God's plans now than was known by the Reformers.

"THIS MISTAKE HAS BEEN AN EXPENSIVE ONE; for, aside from the fact that but few great principles of truth were then recovered from the rubbish of error, THERE ARE SPECIAL FEATURES OF TRUTH CONSTANTLY BECOMING DUE, and of these Christians have been deprived by their creed fences. To illustrate: It was a truth in Noahs day, and one which required the faith of all who would walk in the light then, that a flood was coming, while Adam and others had known nothing of it. It would not be preaching truth now to preach a coming flood, but THERE ARE OTHER DISPENSATIONAL TRUTHS CONSTANTLY BECOMING DUE, of which, if walking in the light of the lamp, we shall know; so, if we have all the light which was due several hundred years ago, and that only, we are measurably in darkness."--Studies, Vol. 1-23, 24.

True enough, our Pastor frequently cautioned the brethren against being too anxious after new light, and sought to put the brethren on guard against foolishly speculating and guessing along any line. We all admit that this was very wise advice, which has been sadly neglected and has gone unheeded since his death. There is really no "new light," however; it is the same light as of, old, only shining brighter and brighter.

In consideration of the foregoing, therefore, we fail to see wherein any disrespect is shown to our beloved Pastor, or wherein it can be at all displeasing to the Lord, for the brethren of our INSTITUTE to proceed as they have been doing., In fact, we must conclude that the best way to express our respect and loyalty to PASTOR RUSSELL his ministry and life-work, is to act upon, 'and in accordance with, his, own advice and teachings on the subject of giving heed to the "more sure word of prophecy," and to "watch," and "walk in the light, as Christ is in the light," and surely by so doing we Will also be pleasing to the Lord. It is in accordance with this view and conclusion that the brethren who are readers of this journal generally express themselves as very much refreshed and consoled in what has been presented before them in the Revelation expositions and in the chronological lines recently published. Nor has the reading of this journal resulted in any less confidence in, or love for BROTHER RUSSELL on t he part of any, but rather we are assured that their faith in, and esteem for him have been in creased; as the Revelation expositions are made up largely of his own interpretations; and the chronological views we have presented, while noting now certain obvious errors in the deductions we have hitherto held, really go to substantiate and support the general system of faith and knowledge which our beloved Pastor so fully brought together, we believe, under the Lord's direction.

BY WHAT AUTHORITY

Coming now to the second proposition of the subject noted above, namely, that any brethren who would make advancement in the path of light or assist others to do so in these days, should, in order to be consistent, be able to prove that they have received of the Lord some unusual unction under the figure of some special messenger referred to in the Bible: We must disagree most fully with any such line of reasoning or conclusion, for the reason that we 'find it to be emphatically contrary to the teachings of the Word of the Lord. The instruction given by the great Head of the Church is that primarily His Church has but one teacher, and that is Himself: "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," and H e distinctly announced that He was appointing twelve Apostles, to be special

witnesses and under-teacher, whose messages and ministries were to play a very important part for the instruction of the Church throughout the entire Age. These twelve are referred to in the Book of Revelation as the "twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem." One of their number, St. Paul, who occupied a unique position amongst the others, declared that the Divine order for the Age, in his day and subsequent thereto, was that "He [Christ] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come," etc. The history of the early Church shows that this was the order in the beginning of the Age: there were evangelists, pastors, elders, etc., selected by the different companies of the brethren to serve in spiritual things; and those who have maintained the simplicity and purity of the early Church down through the Age have followed the order outlined in the instruction given by the Apostles. We do not find in any of their messages any word authorizing any of those who would be teachers in the Church throughout the Age to look for, or identify themselves as some symbolical angel or messenger, and to trust in this as an ordination to proclaim Divine Truth; and we cannot but add here that this disposition to seek for such identification in the Bible does not appear to us to be in keeping with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness and humility. It would seem that the best evidence or credentials that any minister of the Truth can present is, his possession of the Holy Spirit and the exemplification of that Spirit in the illumination of his ministry.

Our Lord was asked by His disciples respecting important matters relating to His Second Advent. The Master in reply said, "Take heed that no man deceive you," and He went on to explain that there would be false teachers who would arise and deceive many. In fulfillment of our Savior's prophecy there have been those who have arisen from time to time throughout the Age and have announced themselves as specially anointed of the Lord to speak His Truth. The time came early in the Age, when the most popular bishop of that time, living in the city of Rome, was finally announced as the successor of St. Peter, and specially anointed of God to be the Head of the Church-the Vicar of Christ on earth. This man accepted the office and took to himself honors and dignity really belonging to the Lord, because *he thought he saw himself in the Bible as appointed of God to take the place of Christ in the Church on earth.* It is now a matter of history that one great evil after another was permitted to enter in, which resulted in a dreadful apostasy.

Others since then have arisen from time to time, even to this day, and have taken to themselves the position and honor of being specially anointed teachers sent from God and as having received an extraordinary anointing, because they have claimed to see themselves in some picture or symbol of the Bible; and as Jesus predicted, have deceived many.

ORDINATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

We ourselves can place no confidence in the claims of any brother or brethren to see themselves in any portion of the Bible as an extraordinary anointed channel to lead others into the Truth. We feel that it is indeed significant that our beloved Pastor, when he was assailed by his adversaries in nominal Christendom and was charged with not having been properly ordained, made no attempt to establish the fact of his ordination to preach the Word by referring to any particular symbol or

statement in the Bible as referring to himself, but to the contrary, in great simplicity and modesty, he referred to the anointing originally given to Jesus as the Head of the Church, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He referred to how this anointing had extended to all consecrated believer; in Christ from that day to this. He claimed for himself *merely* that as a consecrated follower of Christ he had come under this original anointing, and so taught that every one receiving the anointing of the spirit is a qualified ambassador of God to speak in His name. We are glad indeed that we have this, the only Scriptural ordination, explained and set before us in the teachings and example of our Pastor.

It is in accordance with the foregoing, therefore, that we believe the readers of this journal have observed that our brethren of this ministry claim for themselves only *such* ordination and privileges as the weakest and humblest follower of Christ is privileged to claim, namely, that anointing of the Holy Spirit shared in by every member of the Church; which anointing qualifies them to study the Word of the Lord, and authorizes each and every one to make advancement in the path of light as rapidly as the Lord may be pleased to reveal the Truth. *None are authorized to do more than-this.*

Asked as to whether or not the brethren in charge of the INSTITUTE claim to have any special privilege or call to minister to God's people today, and, urged by others, that probably some of the symbolical angels in the Book of Revelation personify the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE, we, reply most emphatically that we make no such claims and see no foundation whatever for anything of the kind. We feel that we cannot be too outspoken or speak too plainly with regard to this point, and wish all the brethren to understand once and for all time that our brethren here wholly reject and repudiate all such suggestions and applications. The friends Who read this journal well know that our brethren here lay no claims to any special office and do not see themselves pointed out in the Scriptures in a figure of a channel or any symbolical servant, angel or messenger. Nor is there any claim that the messages presented in this journal have any special inspiration or guidance of the Lord more than that of other brethren; for, as before stated, our professions and claims in the ministry of the Truth *are such only as every fellow-member of Christ is permitted to entertain*, namely, an anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Word, to assist others to discern the mind of the Lord and to pursue successfully their course in the Narrow Way. This much we believe to be the privilege and duty of all consecrated believers; as the Apostle Paul suggests, the spirit of Christ in any and every member of His Body would lead such to make use of their talents and opportunities in doing good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES IV-A

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO EPHESUS

"By the Messenger of the Congregation in Ephesus, write; These things says He who Holds the seven Stars in His Right hand, He who walks in the Midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands."--Rev. 2:1.

THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS was the first of the seven to be addressed by the Master. In His message to this Church the Savior is announced as the One who holds the seven Stars in His right hand, and who walks in the midst of the seven golden Lampstands; and then, addressing the Church *through its messenger*, describes its condition in the words: "I know thy Works, and thy Toil, and thy Patient Endurance, and that thou art not able to endure wicked men; and thou hast tried Those who Declare themselves to be Apostles but are not, and hast found them Liars; and thou hast patiently endured and hast suffered on account of my Name, and thou hast not been weary. But I have this against thee, That thou hast relaxed thy First Love."--Rev. 2:2-4.

Let the fact be borne in mind that these words are addressed to the Church of Ephesus *through its pastor or its minister* who serves in spiritual things. We inquire Who alone of all its members will hear--give heed? The Savior Himself, seven times repeated, answers this question in the words: "*Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Congregations.*" (V. 7.) It is important that we give earnest heed to this fact, that the only one who hears, in the sense of giving heed, be he minister, bishop, or one who holds no position of responsibility or trust, is the "overcomer"; he alone is the one who truly hears and finally is chosen to inherit the promises, and to at last become. of the Little Flock of joint-heirs in the Heavenly Kingdom. This thought has been well expressed by another: "How hard is it to understand that while we may obey in much that in fact cost us little, the true test of obedience is just in that in which we are called to renounce our wills, and our wisdom, *perhaps to forfeit the esteem and companionship of others, by doing what has only the Word of God to justify it, and must wait for eternity to find right appreciation!*"

The one great specially important point in this. message to Ephesus is plain and it is left to stand in solemn contrast with all the other matters that receive unmingled commendation. What, were the seemingly commendable characteristics possessed by this Church and its angel or minister? Briefly summing these up we discover that He who holds the seven Stars and walks in the midst of the Candlesticks, found in Ephesus, works, labor, endurance, steadfast opposition to evil, faithfulness and firmness in discipline, cheerfulness in bearing any burden, and a just hatred of deeds and practices which Christ also hates. One who fails to look closely At these qualities and contrast them with the one solemn charge: "Thou hast left thy first love," will most naturally inquire, Can it be possible to possess all these qualities and yet be lacking in this one all-important thing? The words of Him who walked among the Lampstands plainly answers that it is. The words also imply that the loss of first love must be the immediate cause of departure from true Christian life. Let us then examine more closely this Message to Ephesus.

"LEFT THY FIRST LOVE"

Ephesus was the first Church, and as its name (first, desirable) indicates, it possessed advantages that were indeed desirable. Ephesus it was that labored and was patient and could not bear evil, -etc., to whom these words were addressed by the Savior, so expressive of disappointment on His part. We inquire then, What is this "first love"? Was it love for the Truth alone? Was it love for the work, or service of proclaimingof giving out the Truth? Ah, no! Ephesus did not fail here. Wherein then was their failure? What was their "first love"? Was it not that for

which the Truth was made known to them? Was not the Truth given to them for the purpose of begetting in them a true, a deep love for the Lord, to, enable them to become acquainted with Christ Himself, as an ever present Savior, friend, counselor and guide? There can be but one true answer: It was.

The infallible test of "first love" then is something beyond the love of the Truth, and the desire for and service of it; it is the love for the Lord Himself ; first for what He has done for us; love for His own glorious personality which reflects the Divine attributes; this, the supreme and highest form of love, finds in Him, its full and complete satisfaction. All other forms and degrees of love are incidental to, this, our "first love," which finds expression in our desires and aims to please Him -- He who first loved us and "whom having not seen we love."

A comparison of St. Paul's words of commendation to the Thessalonian believers will, we believe, enable us to discover the deep significance of these reproofing words of Christ to the believers at Ephesus. The Apostle when writing to the Thessalonian believers thus commended them: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work *of faith*, and labor *of love*, and patience *of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father - knowing brethren beloved your election of God." (1 Thess. 1:2,3.) The fact that in the Savior's words to Ephesus, "works," "labor" and "patience" are mentioned , but "faith, love and hope," are not coupled with them is remarkable, and seems to explain the situation and condition of these, in Ephesus. In the Thessalonian- Church each one of -these latter were active, and were that which produced the others. These three most important of all graces, faith, hope and love, clearly indicate that the Thessalonian believers were in the sweet enjoyment of the person of Christ as Head, and that their hope of His Second Coming was clear and bright.

ESPOUSED AS A CHASTE VIRGIN

"Works" were in Ephesus, but Christ does not say "of faith"; "labor" was there, but He does not say "of love"; "patience" was there, but He does not say "of hope." These were evidently dimmed. Let all three of the others be active, but the freshness of what called them into action be lacking, they could become a creed , a mere belief, without the power. To assist to a better realization of the matter, we inquire, What is the first love in the natural, human relation, in one who is espoused as a chaste virgin to one husband-who belongs to him, and who looks upon him as the one ideal man of the whole world? We answer, she is absorbed in him, guarding his honor and reputation; watching his countenance, living as in his presence, and forsaking all others for him alone. This, and this alone, is what the Church of God is called out of the world for--for Christ alone, His person. It is to reign with Him, because she will be with Him. She will wait for His coming because He is hers. As has been truly said: "To leave this first love is to lose all. For whom are all the varied excellencies and beauties [of character] named but for Him? The assembly is not adorned for the world; it is not to improve the world; it is not a companion and caterer to the world; is not responsible to it; owes no allegiance to it. If it is not absorbed with Christ, living in and for Him, only for His admiration and smile and comfort, it has nothing distinctive from the nominal believer.

"Leaving this, then, all other apostasy is possible of the grossest and most abandoned kind. When a maiden betrothed to a man loses him out of her heart, she is ready for another. The assembly of God is thus. It (the loss of first love) is the root of all the sad things in the mournful story of the decline and fall of the Church, told in the book of Revelation. Unfaithfulness of heart is a crime to the sensitive heart of the betrothed; to get used to doing without the man of her affections, to be content without him, to be engaged with things that have not him in them. To the people of God, this prepares the way to be engaged with what Christ abhors. This is to be "fallen." 'In the first stage it is fallen-all these graces, industry, patience, sensitiveness to His Headship, and fallen! A possible condition is this, is the teaching of these words of Christ."

"THE FAIREST OF TEN THOUSAND"

One well versed in the things of the spirit of God has thus expressed what "first love" is, and the one unailing remedy to apply when it has relaxed:

"How dreadful a dishonor to Christ is this, to lose our first love! It is as if at first He was More than He proved on longer acquaintance! Is not here the very germ of final apostasy? . . . Here is what makes the world such a battlefield [for the Christian]. Capable, on the one hand, of enjoying all the joys of heaven; capable on the other of being attracted by that which lies under the power of the wicked one-the eye affecting the heart-day by day we are solicited by that which daily lies before us and from which there is no escape. Our danger here is first of all distraction, some gain to us which is not loss for Christ, or that dulling of the spiritual sense; . . . the dust of the way settles upon the glass in which Faith sees her eternal possessions. Our remedy is the presence of Him who with basin and towel would refresh His pilgrims, cleansing away the travel stains that they may have part with Him.

"Here alone first love is maintained. Here in His presence, we learn His mind and the holiness of Truth is accomplished in us. What is unseen, which is eternal, asserts its power in us. The illusions of the prince of this world pass from us. The glory of Christ is revealed, and the eye also affects the heart; He becomes for us more and more the light in which we see light, the Sun which rules the day, not only enlightening but life giving; the light in which we walk is the 'light of life.'

"Now here . . . first love cannot but be maintained. Who could be daily in His presence, ministered to by Him, having part with Him, and yet grow cold in response to His love? It is impossible. Where this is the case, intimacy has not been kept up. We have not permitted the basin and towel to do its work. Assurance of heart before Him has, been replaced by an uneasy unfitness for His presence, the true causes of which we have not been willing fully to face, and for which the remedy has therefore not been found. . . .

"What is the test, then, of 'first love'? Not 'work-activity in outward service; this they had at Ephesus; not 'labor,' for this too they had; no, nor yet 'endurance'--though a more manifest sign than either [of the above] of Divine power in the soul. Not zeal against evil, nor boldness to, examine and refuse the highest pretensions of those who claimed Apostleship; not suffering, even for Christ's name and that unwearied. All this is good and acceptable to God, and the

Ephesians had it all, and yet says the Lord, 'I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.'

"What then, is the test of first love? It is in the complete satisfaction of the heart by its object. We know what power often there is in a new thing to take possession of one for the time being. And in 'first love,' it is characteristic that it engrosses the subject-of it. The Lord claims again and again the power to give this complete satisfaction of heart to His people."GRANT.

THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANS

One special evil is mentioned by the Savior as existing in Ephesus, or at least seeking to gain a foothold there, which the Ephesian Church resisted, even to the extent of hating it. It is specially singled out by the Savior, and words of commendation are given to this Church for hating it. His words are: "But This thou hast, That thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."--V. 6.

There is quite a general agreement among expositors concerning -what Nicolaitanism is. It is interesting to notice that it was a thing that started in practice in Ephesus, and afterwards embodied itself in theory; and finally in Pergamos it is mentioned as becoming a feature of doctrine, and the Savior thus again expresses Himself concerning it in the message to, Pergamos: "So in like manner thou hast also those holding the Teaching [doctrine] of the Nicolaitans." (Rev. 2:15.) It has been forcefully described as "something which put down the people [of God], superseded them in their rights, and set them aside; for this is the plain import of the name, which Christ gives it, and the names which are divinely given are always exactly descriptive of the things or persons that receive them. We also know from the Scriptures and from the common representations of all ecclesiastical historians that the Church was hardly founded until it began to be troubled with the lordly pretensions and doings of arrogant men in violation of the common priesthood of believers, and settling upon ministers the attributes and prerogatives of a magisterial order against which Peter, Paul and John were moved to declare their apostolic condemnation, but which grew nevertheless and presently became fixed upon the [professed] Church as a part of its essential system. We know that there is to this day a certain teaching and claim and practice in the largest part of the professed Church according to which a certain order severs itself entirely from the laity, assumes the right and titles of priesthood, asserts superiority and authority over the rest in spiritual matters, denies the right of any one, whatever his gifts or graces, to teach or preach in the Church, who has not been regularly initiated into the mysterious puissance of its own self-constituted circle, and puts forward its creatures (however glaringly deficient in those heavenly gifts which really make the minister), as Christ's only authorized heralds, before whom every one else must be mute and passive and whose words and administrations every one must receive, on pain of exclusion from the hope of salvation [or of losing their crown].

"We also know that this system of priestly clericalism and prelatical hierarchism. claims to have come down from the earliest. periods of the Church, and traces for itself a regular succession through the Christian centuries, and appeals to patristic practice as its chief basis, vindication and boast. We know that it first came into effective sway in the period immediately succeeding the Pagan persecutions,

reaching its fullest embodiment in Popery, and has perpetuated itself in the same, and in Laudism, Tractarianism, and high-churchism, even to our day, and to our very doors. And if we would know what the Lord Jesus thinks of it, we have only to recur to these epistles, in which He lays His hand right on 'it, and says: "THIS THING I HATE."--DR. SEISS.

"The 'doctrine of the Nicolaitans' seems to be the theory of lordship or headship in the Church. The strife as to who should be greatest existed amongst many of the patriarchs--fathers--of the prominent Churches. At their councils there was a bitter fight for supremacy. The tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many coveted the honor. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome were the most prominent. The first two dropped out of the conflict, but the strife continued for several hundred years between Constantinople, and Rome. It was settled only by a division of the Church: the Eastern or Greek Church, accepting the Patriarch of Constantinople for its head; and the Western or Papal Church, acknowledging the Bishop -- Pope or Father of Rome.

"Many of the true followers of the Master in the Churches denounced this attempt to disobey the direct command of Jesus, 'Call no man father.' (Matt. 23:9.) Of course, they received the promised persecution. (2 Tim. 1:12.) This class in Pergamos is commended by our Lord under the symbol of 'Anti-pas, My faithful martyr.' In the Greek, anti means against, and *papas* signifies father. In this stage of the development of the Church those who sought to be popular received the emoluments of the Church; but the promise to the overcomers is that of pleasure and honor that shall be eternal."--Z '16-346, 347.

HISTORY HAS REPEATED ITSELF

It was only in its incipiency when mentioned in the message to Ephesus. It, as we have shown, only becomes a *doctrine* in Pergamos. The evil of "Nicolaitanism" has always existed in the Church since shortly after its establishment. Every reform movement in the Church since the Apostles' day--every effort to get back to primitive simplicity of doctrine, of Church order, and of methods of service, have, in the course of time, resulted again in sectarianism, and have left the faithful few (Protestants) in the "wilderness." Lording it over God's heritage, idolizing messengers, and human organizations, symbolized by "Nicolaitan ism," is responsible for these sad results. This evil has been repeated again and again in the Church's history. Even in the very closing hours of the Church's pilgrim age we are witnessing again its repetition.. Let him that readeth understand! How necessary, how significant, how timely the Savior's warning: "Take heed, let no man deceive you." *The worshiping of fallible men, of imperfect human systems-making idols of them, allowing them to occupy the place that Christ and Christ alone should have, has ever been Satan's method to take away the liberty that is in Christ Jesus, and thus mar the fellowship and destroy the unity of "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth."*

As a faithful shepherd, when his sheep become frightened by strange voices in their midst,, or bewildered and exhausted by the storm, utters, his wellknown welcome call, and thus gathers his sheep, so Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for His sheep, speaks, and His sheep hear His voice and gather around Him and are led into the shelter of the true fold; their fears are allayed, and once

again they go in and out and find the green pasture and are led beside the still waters.

Are not the words of PASTOR RUSSELL fraught with timely significance to us now! "Dearly beloved, *one and only one deserves all the honor of the Church* both now and forever, and that one is her true Lord and Master; and His name only should she own in any manner. He leads, He teaches, He feeds; and the various human agents used by Him, . . . should neither take His place in her heart nor share His honor before the world."--Z '08-116.

The Good Shepherd, through His messages, reminds the sheep that they were called by Him out - of bondage into liberty. (John 8:31.) His Word reminds them that the enjoyment of Christian fellowship and unity is based upon their relationship to Him as members of His Body; for all such are to be partakers of the one spirit; called in one hope of their calling, to recognize but the one Lord, to be of the one "like precious faith," experience the one baptism, and trust in the one God and Father of all.-Eph. 4:4-6.

But are we not to appreciate and hold in proper honor those older ones, who in humility and faithfulness minister to our spiritual needs; who, in a certain sense, are under-shepherds, and who watch for our souls? We answer, Yes, but how shall we honor them? Let us note the Apostle's words, "Remember them which have the rule over you [margin, are your guides], who have spoken to you the Word of the Lord: whose faith follow considering the end [object] of their conversation [conduct]. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:7, 8.) Ah! yes, these are the ones that we are to honor, to appreciate--those who *have as the only object of their entire service for the saints, to please Jesus Christ*. Does not the Apostle Paul say, "Follow me"? Yes, but hear him further,. "Even as I follow Christ." Who among men does the Apostle tell us to follow? Note his advice: Those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises."--Heb. 6:12.

There is indeed a marked difference between giving worship and homage to servants, and loving and appreciating and esteeming them very highly for their works' sake. A severe test is often required to make manifest the difference. The one who gives undue honor to a servant of the Lord, possesses, though perhaps unconsciously, a man-worshipping spirit; and when one object of worship is taken out of the way, naturally such a person desires another, and will soon find another, and transfer his allegiance to the same. On the other hand, the one manifesting the true spirit of appreciation for -service rendered, does so because he sees in the servant the humble, submissive, unselfish, self-sacrificing spirit of the Master Himself, and thus is caused to long for and strive for that same spirit. Many saw these characteristics of the Master's spirit in the one who faithfully ministered during the past forty years and have not ceased to appreciate that spirit, as they continue to derive encouragement and assistance from the messages he left when he passed beyond.

"I WILL REMOVE THY-LAMPSTAND"

Ephesus, however, hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, and were commended by the Savior for so doing. Yet, notwithstanding this--notwithstanding all her other good and commendable qualities, she had left her first love, and the words of the

Savior are not only Significant and applicable to Ephesus, but to all individual believers since, who have done likewise. These words are:

"Remember, therefore, whence thou hast fallen, and reform, and do the First Works; but if not, I am coming to thee, and I will remove thy Lampstand out of its Place, unless thou reform."--V. 5. 1

Did Ephesus repent? We mean that local, Church existing in St. John's day. History does not give us any information regarding this matter, so far as those particular persons who made up that obscure, and doubtless despised, Church are concerned. We do know, however, that the descendants, the successors, in later generations departed farther and farther away from the Savior, both in life and precept; indeed, went into apostasy, and today there is not the slightest semblance of a congregation that bears even the name Christian in the City. The Lampstand was removed. But still we may be sure that there were a few individuals who heeded the words, "Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the Congregations," and will inherit the promise given by the Savior to the overcomer: "I will give to eat of the grove of life which is in the Paradise of God!"

Concerning the meaning of this promise as applying to the spiritual overcomers, the heavenly joint-heirs, it is stated in the Scriptures that the Paradise of God refers to both the heavenly and the earthly, future state. "Our Lord refers to this paradise in language which identifies it with the first Paradise of Eden, saying, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God! It will be remembered that all the trees in Eden were trees of life, but that the one in the midst of the garden was then a forbidden tree, the disobedient eating of which brought death on Adam and his race. That tree in the midst of Paradise was called the tree of knowledge, and our Lord's promise is that the overcomers of this present Age shall have full liberty to partake of that tree of knowledge, and under most blessed and satisfactory conditions, when the knowledge will be of benefit to them under Divine approval, and not bring a curse. It is this same Paradise of the future on this earth that our Lord referred to when, addressing the penitent thief, He said, 'Verily, verity, I say unto thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' This Paradise, we recall, is elsewhere referred to by the Apostles as 'the third heaven'--'a new heavens and a new earth.' 2 Cor. 12:2; 2 Pet. 3:13."--Z '01-198, 199.

Having considered this message of Christ to Ephesus, as it related to the Church of that name in St. John's day, we now view it from its representative standpoint, i. e., as it related to the period or epoch in history that was described by it. In regard to this we will say that all expositors who apply these messages to seven periods of Church history, are agreed that this Ephesian message described the condition, of the Church as it was in St. John's day, about 100 A. D., at that time about closing. We find ourselves in agreement with one who gives us the following significant statement:

"The nature of the vision in which John received these epistles, assumes that not these seven Churches alone, but in them the entire Church is to be contemplated. These seven Churches, then, besides being literal historical Churches, stand for the entire Christian body, in all periods of its history. But how, or in what respects? In the first place, the seven Churches represent seven phases or periods in the Church's history, stretching from the time of the Apostles to the coming of Christ,

the characteristics of which are set forth partly in the names of these Churches, but more fully in the epistles addressed to them. There has been an Ephesian period--a period of warmth and love and labor for Christ, dating directly from the Apostles, in which defection began by the gradual cooling of the -love of some, the false professions of others, and the incoming of undue exaltations of the clergy and Church offices."--DR. SEISS.

The further statement we also endorse: "The Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the Church in the Apostle's day, at the time of the writing of the messages."--Z '11-341.

THE "STAR" OF EPHEBUS

Referring again to the "Stars" in the right hand of the symbolic personage representing Christ in the vision, the Savior Himself makes the explanation that the Stars are the messengers of the Churches, and in the light of the general testimony of the Divine Word we have seen that the symbolic Stars may be applied variously:

- (1) To the bishops or pastors of the seven particular Churches addressed in the epistles.
- (2) *To all* the bishops or pastors over all the Churches existing in St. John's day.
- (3) To all the bishops or pastors of all the Churches existing in the different periods or epochs of the Church's history. The faithful angels or messengers of all Churches in the different periods or epochs may in a sense be considered as symbolized by the Stars in Christ's right hand, even as the particular seven addressed, originally; and a reasonable exegesis will not admit of leaving them out.

While it is not to be doubted that at different periods -- critical periods in the history of the Church, Christ has called different men, special men, to declare or give emphasis to certain neglected truths, or to bring forth from the Lord's storehouse truths long hidden, lost sight of, or truths only due to be understood at special epochs, *it would, however, be utterly erroneous, be carrying the matter too far, to say that the truths they thus brought forth were to be the ones, and only ones, necessary for the Church to know and to be proclaimed during these special times.* It would be savoring of Nicolaitanism or Popery to claim that those truths that each specially chosen one gave out were to be sufficient for the Church until another was called. To illustrate: It cannot be doubted that Martin Luther was a specially prepared and called servant to emphasize certain neglected or hidden truths necessary for the Church to know; it would, however, be unreasonable and even dangerous to think that during the long period intervening between his call and that of John Wesley or any of the later reformers, no other truths were to be understood or made known. *This has always led, when carried to its logical conclusion, and believed, to the most egregious kind of sectarianism, and clericalism, and is by the Savior in this epistle denominated Nicolaitanism.* It has had the effect of inculcating the doctrine of Nicolaitanism, which thing Christ has plainly set *His* seal against. *If it would be Scriptural and proper to apply the seven messengers of the seven Churches to seven special men, called in these different epochs, it would be only consistent to do so, by recognizing that these men would cease their work at death; and that their messages would not cover all features of*

truth, but only certain special truths needed. To do otherwise than this would, as we have stated, lead to very serious and egregious error. The unwholesome effects have been to cause certain Christian leaders to be looked upon as inspired. It has caused some to believe and teach that it is wrong to expect any further light than that proclaimed by the one supposed to be the messenger of each epoch; and some have been misled into trying to settle all matters of doctrine by the special "Star" or teacher, instead of by the Scriptures, which are ever the sole rule by which all matters must be finally determined and settled.*

That PASTOR RUSSELL did not have any established conviction that the seven Stars *must* represent seven individual teachers throughout the Age is evident from the fact that in referring to Ephesus, the first period, he names three of the Apostles as of the "Star" class for that particular period. Note his statement following:

"The word Ephesus means first, desirable. During this period our Lord 'holdeth the seven Stars in His right hand, etc. (Chapter 1:20.) *The messengers of the Churches--St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, etc.--were so powerfully led and kept in the grasp of our Lord Jesus during this epoch that we accept their teachings as His, believing that their words were really His words. This stage of the Church is commended for its faithful, patient labor and for its discernment of Truth and true teachers.-Act 20:28-30; 1 Cor. 11:19.--Z '16-346.*

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY LXXV--AUGUST 7

THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE-REV. 14:8

(471) To what movement does this vision refer; and what relation as to time does it bear to the two preceding visions? H '20-88,89.

(472) What term do we find used in this vision for the first time in the Revelation? Give a description of the ancient empire from which this symbol is drawn? H'20-89.

(473) What is the symbolical significance of "Babylon"? H '20-89.

(474) Point out the parallel features between literal and symbolical Babylon as given by MR. BARNES; and how do expositors in general agree with this interpretation? H '20-89.

(475) What elucidation did PASTOR RUSSELL give bearing upon the subject of symbolical Babylon? H '20-89; D 21-31.

STUDY LXXVI--AUGUST 14

THE SECOND ANGELS MESSAGE- (Cont.) -REV.. 14.8.

(476) Explain how Catholicism and Protestantism as at present existing constitute a fulfillment of the symbolic Babylon of the Revelation vision. What is the result of the decline of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and what bearing has this on the Fall of Babylon? H '20-90; Studies, Vol. IV-28, 29, 30.

(477) What are the special elements and characteristics of Babylon that the true Christian is to recognize and avoid? H '20-90.

(478) Give briefly the sum of the teachings of several godly expositors of modern times on the subject of the symbolic Babylon, and state whether or not these are harmonious and appear to be sustained by other portions of Scripture. H '20-90, 91.

(479) What is the significance of the statement "drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication"? and describe its fulfillment. H'20-91.

(486) Who is represented by the angel that proclaims the Fall of Babylon; and what is the full import of this' message? H '20-91.

STUDY LXXVII--AUGUST 21

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE--REV. 14:9-12

(481) What was the third angel's message, and at what period of time may we look for the fulfillment of this portion of the vision? H '20-101.

(482) What class is symbolically represented by this angel; and what are 'some of the necessary developments to be looked for before all the requirements of the vision would be met? H '20-101.

(483) Give a brief review of what we have previously observed as to the significance of "worshipping the Beast and his Image" and receiving the "Mark"? H '20-9, 58, 59.

(484) How do we harmonize the Apostle's admonition to "Be subject to the powers that be," with the fact that those who do yield to the systems mentioned in this vision and obey their requirements are to receive retribution? What should be the attitude of the Christian under these circumstances? What is the significance of the statement "Here is the patience of the saints"? H '20-102, 103.

(485) What is the significance of the "torment" mentioned, and of the expression "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb"? H '20-103.

STUDY LXXVIII--AUGUST 28

THE FIRST RESURRECTION FORECAST--REV. 14:13

(486) What unusual and important announcement is made in verse 13? What are some of the views of others, of this text? Explain why expositors of the past have encountered special difficulty in interpreting and applying the language. H'20-103, 104.

(487) What is the meaning of this proclamation? and what in this application confirms the interpretation already offered of the vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion? H '20-104.

(488) What is the significance of the expression "From this time"? What class of "Dead" ones can be said to "die"? Give Scriptures confirming the explanation. H'20-104, 105.

(489) How are these referred to "blessed"? In what sense do they rest from their labors and their works follow? H '20-105.

(490) Reviewing the visions of chap. 14 thus far, what are the different features of the Harvest Message pictured, and what relation does the text of our lesson bear to these visions? H '20-105.

FROM PHILIPPI TO ATHENS

--SEPTEMBER 4--ACTS 16:19--17:15--

Golden Text.--"The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."--Psa. 34:7.

NOTHING will so greatly move men as love or selfishness; and under present conditions selfishness moves the vast majority, and with intense power. The young woman out of whom St. Paul cast the evil spirit was a money-winner for the people who owned her. We can imagine what consternation was aroused amongst them when they found that, not only was their source of gain for the future gone, but also, that the large amount of money invested in this slave was lost (for such spirit-possessed ones had a high market value). They became desperately angry. They had no hope of getting the evil spirit back into the woman; they must, have revenge upon those who had financially ruined them. There is much of this spirit abroad in the world today: so long as the Truth and the Lord's servants quietly go their way the world will generally be too busy with its affairs to molest them; but so soon as they perceive that truth and righteousness are inimical to their earthly interests and prospects their opposition becomes intense. Nor should we consider it to, be the chief business of the Lord's people to stir up the animosity of the world and to bring persecution upon themselves. As a rule it is best that we leave the world to watch its own affairs, while we preach the Gospel, *not using it as a sledge-hammer, to break men's hearts, but as the message of peace and love and blessing and joy to those whose hearts under Divine providence have been already broken; and who have ears to hear the message of the grace of God.* Very generally the Apostles pursued as smooth a course as principle would permit, and in this instance very evidently St. Paul acted under special guidance of the Lord. The Apostle's general instruction is, "So far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"--do *not go out of your way to stir up trouble*, but if the Lord in His providence allows it to arise, be courageous and full of faith in Him who has permitted it, that He will overrule it for good.

The owners of the Pythoness evidently had influence, and succeeded quickly in arousing a mob determined to have revenge against Paul and Silas. Of course they did not attempt this by telling the truth. They did not say, We were using a poor slave girl, possessed of an evil spirit, for our financial profit, and these men have restored her mind, her will--released her from mental enslavement to saneness of mind. No; like all who are engaged in a bad cause, they ignored the truth of the matter, and raised spurious charges--that the prisoners were teaching a religion contrary to the laws of Rome, and likely thus to raise sedition. We see that this was contrary to the truth, for the Lord's servants went, according to law, outside the city gates for their worship. However, under the circumstances, the false charge, without proofs, was sufficient to bring down upon the Lord's representatives the severest penalties their judges could inflict: their clothing was torn from them, and the command was given that they should be beaten with rods

and imprisoned. The customary sentence of, the time was, "Go, victors! Tear off their garments! Scourge them!" This was one of the three times St. Paul was beaten. (2 Cor. 11:25.) He referred to it in his letter to the Thessalonians, declaring that he was "shamefully" treated at Philippi.--1 Thess. 2:2.

HAPPY ARE YE WHEN MEN REVILE YOU

The prison was constructed with outer cells, which were more or less accessible to the light and air, and with an inner or central dungeon for the most vicious criminals. It was into the latter that Paul and Silas were thrust, and their feet made fast in the stocks, which often were so constructed as to separate the limbs widely and to make any movement very painful. It was under these unfavorable circumstances, with their backs bleeding and raw from the scourging, that reflecting upon the wonders of the Divine Plan" and their own association with that Plan, these faithful brethren were so filled with the spirit of rejoicing that they gave vent to their feelings in hymn-prayers of thankfulness for their privilege of suffering in connection with the Lord's service, of enduring tribulation for righteousness' sake.

Since as Christians we have learned that it is our privilege to be always rejoicing -- to rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks -- we need not, like the world, wait for special manifestations of Divine favor to call forth our praise, our homage of heart and our grateful obedience to the Lord. Rather, learning that Divine providence is in all of our affairs, ready to shape them for our good, we may rejoice "whatever lot we see, since 'tis God's hand that leadeth us." Someone has Well said: "If we are not ready to praise God where we are, and with our conditions and circumstances as they are, we should not be likely to praise Him if we were differently circumstanced and our conditions just that which now seems to -us most desirable. Daniel could sleep better in the den of lions than Darius in the royal palace; he who could not find rest in a lion's den, when that was the place for him, could not gain rest by a mere removal to a palace. It is the man's self which must be changed, not his circumstances or his possessions, in order to his having a heart overflowing with joy and praise."

When, in 1695, Madame Guyon was imprisoned in the Castle of Vincennes, she sang praises to the Lord, composing one of her own hymns, as follows:

"A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields and air;
And in my songs I sit and sing
To him who placed me there:
Well pleased a prisoner thus to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth thee.

"My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty;
My prison walls can not control
The flight, the freedom, of the soul."

The shaking of the prison, the loosing of the chains, the opening of the doors, the waking of the jailer, his dismay and intended suicide, fearing the ignominy which

would attach to him from the escape of the prisoners, Paul's call to him to do himself no harm, assuring him 'that the prisoners were all safe, constitute together a thrilling episode, more remarkable to the jailer than to anyone, else. Doubtless he had heard something respecting these men, so different from the ordinary criminals with which he had to do. Doubtless, he had been impressed with their unresisting attitude; their Christlike demeanor even under severe provocation; their moderate submission even to their severe treatment at his hands. In any event he seems to have felt a heart-hunger for fellowship with his Creator such as these discredited men under his care enjoyed. Quite probably he had already been reading the Gospel of Christ in the features and conduct of his prisoners, whose living epistles were always open to be known and read by those about them. Had there not been some such preliminary instruction of his heart, we can scarcely suppose that he would so quickly have resolved to walk in the footsteps of the prisoners -- that their God should be his God, and their salvation which was able to make them joyful in tribulation, should, if possible, be his salvation. And this was his inquiry: "What must I do to be saved?"--saved from sin, saved from its penalty-death, saved from its degrading influence, saved from its unrest of heart and mind, saved to the same peace and joy and comfort and consolation which his prisoners exemplified .

The answer to the jailer is one which commends itself to the Christian mind as being the proper one--no more, no less: he should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Redeemer, as the one who had died on his behalf, through whose stripes he might be healed, saved, and through whose sacrifice he might rejoice in at-one-ment with God; and having thus believed with all his heart, whether it required a moment or an hour to explain and to understand these -simple first principles of the Gospel, his next step was to consecrate himself, to be baptized into death with his Redeemer, and to symbolize this consecration into death by a baptism in water. And he was encouraged to hope, not only for his personal salvation, but that his family might be sharers with him.

BE INSTANT IN SEASON

There is a lesson here for us in regard to the promulgation of God's Message. We are not to use words of man's wisdom; not to attempt to philosophize and to show our learning; nor are we to say, Now, do not be in, too much haste; there is plenty of time, and after we are comfortably fixed we will have all day, tomorrow to talk this matter over. We are to remember the declaration of the wise man, "A word in season, how good it is!" The disposition of Paul and Silas to preach Christ to the jailer regardless of their own convenience and comfort and need of rest was in perfect accord with the joy of the Lord which filled their hearts and led them to sing. Dissatisfied Christians, disposed to grumble, would be inclined neither to sing praises under such circumstances, nor to preach the Gospel to a poor inquiring fellow on so out-of-season an occasion. We are to distinguish, however, between out-of-season to ourselves and out-of-season to others; and to be willing to serve others at any time, however out-of-season to ourselves, if it be in-season and opportune for them. We are not to intrude even the Gospel itself at inopportune times, however convenient the occasions may be to ourselves.

The next morning the rulers, learning something of the circumstances of the night, ordered the release of Paul and Silas; but the Apostle sought to forward the

interests of the cause he served by returning word that he was a Roman citizen, and that Roman law had been violated in three particulars in his case: (1) That they had "beaten" him; (2) that this had been done "publicly"; (3) that it was especially reprehensible in that he had not been legally "condemned."

These charges against the -rulers might have gone hard with them; hence, it is not to be wondered at that they came to the prison, as the Apostle requested, and brought their prisoners forth publicly, thus giving 'evidence to the people that they conceded that an injustice had been done them on the previous night. It was agreed that the Lord's representatives should leave the place, and evidently this was as wise a thing as could have been done, at the time, for the publicity given to the Apostles and their teaching would now have opportunity to work, and the new disciples might have a better chance for presenting the Truth quietly, in the absence of their leaders, against whom strong enmity had been aroused on account of the healing of the woman.

HE NOURISHED THEM AS A FATHER

When released from the prison, Paul, Silas and Timothy went about a hundred miles direct to Thessalonica, the largest commercial city of that district -- Macedonia. Nothing daunted by their experience at Philippi, apparently not even waiting for their backs to thoroughly heal' from the wounds there received, Paul at once began a vigorous presentation of the Gospel. As was his Custom, he went first to the Jews. The propriety of, this course is evident: the Jews were familiar with the prophecies of the Messiah, and although making their home amongst the Gentiles, nevertheless, as the Apostle declares, they were continually hoping for the fulfillment of the grand promises made to Abraham, confirmed unto Isaac and unto Jacob, and that by Divine oath, or affirmation.--Acts 26:7.

The result of his labors at Thessalonica was the nucleus of a flourishing church, to which two of his epistles were addressed. The Apostle's attitude toward these brethren may reasonably be taken as the criterion of his general attitude toward all of the Lord's dear flock. He dealt not with them as a lord or master amongst slaves or subordinates; but, using his own words, he was gentle toward them, as a nursing mother to her children. (1 Thess. 2:7.) He admonished, comforted, instructed them, "as a father doth his children.", (1 Thess. 2:11.) He lived an unflamable, unselfish life in their midst, giving them the Gospel, and with it his very life.--1 Thess. 2:5-8, 10.

The method of the Apostle's teaching is expressed in the statement that he "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures," opening and showing forth "that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead." The Greek word used signifies that the teaching was in the nature of a dialogue. He appealed to the Scriptures, offered explanations of their meaning, pointed out how this meaning found its fulfillment in the experience of our Lord, and heard and replied to queries and objections.

The Apostle's work was evidently well done, his arguments effective-the result was that- some of them (Jews) were persuaded and took sides with St. Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks quite a good. many-who had been feeling after God and who probably had realized that there was more true religion with the Jew than elsewhere--were now, because of having less Jewish prejudice, more ready

than their Jewish friends to hear and appreciate the Gospel of, Christ. Of the chief women of the city, too, quite a number were influenced by the message, and became followers of Christ.

Evidently the discussions of those three Sabbath days were all that the Jews as a whole could endure;--apparently the ministers of the Truth, thenceforth excluded, went to the house of a prominent believer, Jason, and from there continued their propaganda, possibly holding meetings at his house. Meantime the opposing Jews at Thessalonica received information from their brethren, opponents of the Truth at Philippi, respecting these servants of the Lord and the message they carried; and, doubtless, the Adversary persuaded them that they were engaged in a noble cause when they gathered a rabble of market-loungers, "roughs and toughs," to raise a commotion, and as a mob to make an assault upon Jason's house, to take the Apostle and his companions before the authorities and have their work stopped. So some of a similar class in spiritual Israel today feel toward the Truth and its servants, if we may judge from the epithets sometimes used.

Not finding Paul and Silas, the mob dragged Jason and others of the believers before the rulers. The charges were very serious ones--inciting to anarchy and treason--turning the world upside down, and teaching that there is another king, Jesus, whose kingdom is to be universal in due time. While these charges were fraudulent as respects the true standpoint, they nevertheless had in them a sufficiency of truth to make them appear serious.

The decrees of the emperors respecting riots and treason were very strict, and all rulers were held rigidly to account. Hence, when the charges were made of anarchy and treason, both the multitude and rulers were "troubled;" the multitude, because more or less of a riot had occurred, seemingly because of treason, and this might lead to the taking away of some of the city's privileges and liberties, its loss of commerce, etc. The rulers were troubled because they were in danger of being called to account unless they took active steps for the repression of anything resembling treason. They knew, nevertheless, that the charges were fabrications, and hence got out of the difficulty by placing Jason and his companions under bonds to keep the peace--to see that similar riots did not occur again. This necessitated the sending of Paul and Silas away as quietly and as quickly as possible.

Leaving Timothy at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas journeyed about fifty miles to a rather obscure Grecian city, called Berea, and, according to their custom, realizing that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ was their chief business, they lost no time in engaging therein. Again they sought the Jews in the synagogue, and this time, found some specially susceptible to the Truth, referred to as "more noble than they of Thessalonica." The Greek word used here for "noble" seems to imply persons of noble birth, a higher and nobler class than those of the more commercial city. Nobility of character is favorable, wherever it is found, and from whatever cause, and true nobility implies reasonableness, as distinguished from prejudice. The Bereans were reasonable, professing to believe all that was written in the Law and the Prophets; to be looking for the Messiah; etc., and they welcomed the servants of God who sought to draw their attention particularly to the "things written aforetime." With all readiness of mind they began to examine the Scriptures, not merely on the Sabbath days, but daily, to see how well the

Apostle's arguments were supported by the testimony of the Law and the Prophets. As we should expect, many of so noble a class accepted the Good Tidings. Indeed, the wonder is that any person of noble and reasoning mind, once becoming acquainted with the glorious message of God's love and mercy in Christ His plan for selecting the Church now, and by and by of blessing all the families of the earth through it-could disbelieve or could attribute such a Gospel to any human source. Surely its internal evidences are convincing that it is not of man nor by man, but of the Lord.

PAUL IN ATHENS

-SEPTEMBER 11-ACTS 17:16-34--

Golden Text.--"In Him we live, and move, and have our being."--Acts 17:28.

PERSECUTION followed the Apostle to Berea, where we, in our previous lesson, left him teaching a very noble class of inquiring and searching minds. His enemies in Thessalonica discovered his whereabouts, and at once began to create a disturbance -- no doubt believing that thus they were doing God service. The Apostle's own experience as a persecutor of the Body of Christ must have helped him to very charitable views of those who so viciously pursued him. The evidences of coming trouble were so strong that the Berean friends feared to have him embark at a regular port, at which he might have been recognized, and the direction of his journey anticipated, and thus prejudices might have gone with him or before him into new fields; they, therefore, secretly hastened him to the near seashore where he obtained coastwise shipping to Athens. The Apostle, as the chief spokesman, "drew the fire" of his enemies to such an extent that their hatred seems to have been confined to him alone-not affecting Silas, his companion, nor Timothy, at this time his assistant or servant. The latter two were left behind, to strengthen and encourage the believers, whose faith already had been established.

Under these circumstances the Apostle arrived at Athens, once the world's capital in every sense of the word; but still its capital in respect to science and art and theology and schools of general instruction-its commercial and political influence having gone to Rome with the imperial control. To Athens came the youth of wealthy families of the world, and many others possessed of a special craving for wisdom, to avail themselves of the teachers, studies and lectures-practically the only means of instruction at that time.

Without a miracle no other one of the Apostles would have been competent to secure a hearing before the Athenian Council of the Areopagites--composed of the teachers of the various schools of learning, and generally speaking, of the reputedly wisest men of the world. That the Apostle Paul, without letters of introduction, without political or other influence, serving as such, should succeed in a few days in obtaining an invitation to address this august body of men, indicates clearly that he was a man of remarkable talent, as well as learning. These natural qualities in him were reinforced by the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the Divine revelation, the true Gospel. The Apostle lost no time in beginning his special work: true, he first made a general inspection of the chief features of the city's attractions, noting its numerous public statues to

the gods, whose number Pliny gives as over three thousand in the time of Nero. It was while making this inspection of the city and considering how best he could launch the Gospel message there, that his attention was drawn to one altar erected "To the Unknown God." He kept this as a text for his principal effort when the time should be ripe, and meantime, as usual, he began his ministry by going into the Jewish synagogues; but apparently finding little interest here he resorted to the public squares and markets, and discussed religious topics with the numerous students and others who gathered there.

Amongst those who heard him were some of a cynical turn of mind who said, Let us listen to what this babbler is saying; the word "babblers" signifying seed-picker, inferentially meaning that the Apostle had gained a mere smattering of knowledge, picked up some seeds of thought from others of the great teachers, and was now attempting to set himself up as a teacher. Others, disposed to persecute, said, He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods, for to set forth any, strange gods in Athens was a crime it being held that they already had them in plenty, and that to admit that any one could present a new god of which the Athenian teachers knew nothing, would be an insult to their learning and evidently a fraud. This, together with the Apostle's talents, secured for him a hearing before the Areopagites, or Council of the Learned. It was this Council which had the power to sentence to death anyone who should attempt to set forth strange gods in Athens; and hence the Apostle's hearing before them was probably, more or less, in the nature of a trial, for life, because he had been preaching Jesus-an unheard of god amongst the Athenians up to this time and the resurrection.

PREACHED JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION

The Apostle's theme is worthy of our notice. Under the Divine guidance he seethed to have a way of approaching the pith of the Gospel most directly, and the words, "Jesus and the resurrection," really embraced the whole of the Gospel preached. The world, under Divine sentence, was dead or dying: the redemption price, our Lord's ransom sacrifice, had just been paid, and the hope to be built upon His work, and to be announced to the people was *the resurrection of the dead-that our Lord's death was the purchase price for the sins of the whole world, and that as a result, in God's due time, an awakening of the dead shall come, and eventually the full raising up to the perfection of life of all who will accept the Redeemer as their leader and guide.* This is the Gospel which should still be preached, but which, by reason of various errors that crept in during the dark ages, has been beclouded and forced out of its way to such an extent that remarkably few lay any stress whatever upon the grand doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; and some are even dropping from their teachings "the ransom for all" given by Jesus.

We can picture before our minds the Apostle addressing the Council of Mars' Hill,, composed of "the noblest blood of Athens, the first politicians, the first orators, the first philosophers; accordingly the most august, not only of Athens, but of Greece, and, indeed, of the whole world, under whose supervision 'came the transactions of the popular assembly, religion, laws, morals and discipline.'" Now the Apostle had use for the text he had found. He must prove to these men that he was not the setter forth of a new theology, but an old one. -He at once

brought forth his argument, not in the discourteous language of our English Common Version, intimating that his auditors were ignorant and superstitious, but, on the contrary, in complimentary language, which we paraphrase, he said to them: I perceive that more than others you Athenians have respect for whatever is Divine. The conviction of this came to me as passing through your city I beheld the various evidences of your devoutness, and amongst other altars noticed one with the inscription, "To the Unknown God." Information regarding this God I am setting forth. He is the God that made the world and everything therein, and is the Lord of heaven and earth, too great to dwell in any temples made with hands, for He is the Lord of heaven as well as earth; neither can He receive service at our hands, for He needs nothing which we have to give, but is' the author of life and breath and all things; who Himself created every nation of men dwelling throughout all the earth-and even all their affairs are subject to his regulations and appointments.

Thus did he set before them the greatness of the true God, in contrast with their numerous gods whom they feared or hated, revered or placated, and whose vices and frequent impotency they admitted. The Apostle thus brought his teachings within the rules and regulations, as being not a new teaching, but a fuller declaration of a God already recognized 'by his hearers: And indeed, so high, so noble, so great a thought of God, must have impressed his hearers favorably. We cannot doubt that the teachings of the Jews, supplemented by the Gospel presentations, have done much to lift the minds of men out of the deep degradation which came upon them soon after the flood, as explained by the Apostle.--Rom. 1: 20-32.

A god who was not merely the God of one nation or of one city or of one precinct, but who had created all races and nations, and had had to do with the rise and fall of nations, was certainly a very different God from anything that had ever been heretofore suggested to the minds of these philosophers; for although the Jews had preached the same God, undoubtedly their presentation of Him as the God of the Hebrews must have favored the impression that each nation had its own god or gods, demanding its worship, reverence, sacrifices, etc.

WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING

In verses 26 and 27 the Apostle implies that the Lord's ordering of the national affairs had something to do with the propagation of the knowledge of Himself , and so we find it has been. The bringing of the world under successive empires-the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman-had tended to unify the race to some extent, and to make more possible the promulgation of the Gospel. During the Grecian period the Greek language was spread abroad throughout various lands, and it still maintained its supremacy as the language of the world, although the reins of government had passed to the hands of the Romans, under whose pushing, warlike power the world in general would be brought much closer together than it had ever been from the time of the confounding of tongues at Babel. All this had occurred at the proper juncture of time as concerned God's favor to Israel, according to the flesh, the birth of Jesus, His crucifixion and the gathering of the ripe "wheat" from that nation, and the scattering of the remainder. All these things were, under Divine supervision, working in the interest of mankind, "that they should seek God, if haply they

might feet after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one ,of us." The Apostle would assist his hearers in finding this true God, who was to be found of them, and whom they had indicated their desire to know when they erected the altar referred to.

Describing the true God further, the Apostle assured his hearers that none could live or move or have existence even, aside from the power and good intent of this great God. His words are equally truthful, whether we restrict them to the imperfect existence of the present time and the dying condition of the world, with but a spark of life, or whether we apply them in the fuller sense to the Lord's provision for the future by restitution processes and arrangements. Still wishing to offset the thought that his message was a new one, the Apostle declares that certain Grecian poets had practically expressed this thought in saying, "We are also His offspring." Carrying the mind, then, to the logical conclusion, he urges that if we are the offspring of God our thoughts respecting Divinity should not lead us. to make or to worship images of any kind, all of which are *professedly* of man's device.

An explanation was necessary as to why this great God who had created all nations, and was directing their welfare, had neglected to send word to the Athenians until now., The Apostle did not go into a full explanation of the matter, with which his hearers would not have sympathy--he did not attempt to show how God in the past had merely been giving the world lessons in respect to the wages of sin, neither did he mention how Abraham's seed had been selected as the line through which Divine blessings were to be carried eventually to all the families of the earth, and that God had been dealing with the natural seed of Abraham for the preceding eighteen centuries, :making types of them and through them illustrating the progress of the Divine Plan as it shall ultimately be carried out. He did not explain, either, how that Christ offered Himself to this nation of Israel, and (in harmony -with the Divine foreknowledge) had been rejected, and that now God was seeking a spiritual seed of Abraham -- spiritual Israelites-to take the place of the broken-off branches of the fleshly house.-Rom. 11.

He contented himself with the bare statement of the truth, that in times past God had "winked at" or overlooked or disregarded and paid no attention to the idolatries of the world, but that now the time was come for a change of dispensation; that now God was sending His Message to them, and to all who had ears to hear, commanding repentance from sin and turning from idolatries to true worship and righteousness. Quite possibly, though the account does not state it, the Apostle explained that the foundation or basis of this call to. repentance was the fact that Christ had been a propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the whole world; clearing men thus from the original condemnation of death and alienation from God, and permitting the return to His favor of whomsoever would.

The word "because" commencing verse 31 has a special significance which should not be overlooked. God calls upon all men to repent and reform, *because* He has appointed for them a day of judgment--a day of trial or testing. Not a trial for testing or judging whether or not they are imperfect and fallen, for this God already knows, even better than we do, and His Word expressly declares that "There is none righteous, no, not one." Such a trial, such a judgment day,

therefore, to see if any were righteous, would be a farce. The object of the day of trial or judgment referred to by our Lord is totally different from this.

GOD HATH APPOINTED A DAY

It is to be a trial day or judgment day to see, to test, to prove which of the world of mankind desire fellowship with the Lord, desire to be obedient to Him, desire to walk in His ways. The Millennial Age is this trial day, and the Lord assures us that a full opportunity shall be granted to each and every member of the race to hear, to know, to comprehend His goodness, His love, His redemption of the world through Christ, and His willingness that they should come back into fellowship with Him-back to a condition in which He could justly accord to them everlasting life. God could not reasonably command any to repent and return until the ransom was secured at Calvary, because it was His own law that had forbidden them to have fellowship with Him, and that law must first be satisfied; and because He could not reward with life everlasting any who would seek His face, until He had made provision through the death of Christ for the payment of the death penalty against the race and through His resurrection, for the times of restitution.

It is a further part of this blessed assurance that the judgment or trial of the world will be "in righteousness" -under a reign of righteousness when the besetments of the Adversary and his deceptions will be at an end, and when, therefore, a clear and explicit knowledge of the Lord and of the Truth will fill the earth, as the waters cover the great deep. What a gracious Gospel the Apostle had to preach! It was so good, indeed, that he had to be guarded in his expression of it-too good for his hearers to appreciate, with their debauched ideas of the cruelty and perversity of the gods, even as it is too good to be appreciated today by those whose minds have been more or less confused by the horrible theological nightmares coming down to us from the "dark ages."

The Apostle was proceeding logically to show that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was God's assurance to all that He would ultimately carry out this great plan of blessing the world, by granting to each member of it an individual trial or judgment for life, under the favorable conditions of the Millennium; and that the resurrection of Christ was not only God's attestation to men that His sacrifice had been satisfactory, but was also necessary, that our Lord Jesus as the risen and glorified Son of God might exercise in due time "all power in heaven and in earth," and thus bring about the great ThousandYear judgment Day, or "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.) But with this his hearers, who must have been amazed with the logic of his argument, and must have wondered how their various disciples would be influenced by the new teacher, and to what extent they would lose caste, as being less logical or less lofty in their sentiments, found occasion for an expression of dissatisfaction, and of thus logically casting aside the entire argument, dismissing it as unworthy of further consideration.

Their objection rested on the resurrection, which the Apostle made so prominent, so indispensable to the carrying out of the entire Plan of God; indispensable, first, as to the Redeemer, that He must rise from the dead, ere He could be the agent of Jehovah in prosecuting the work of blessing the world; necessary to the world of

mankind, that they might come forth from the tomb and be granted a knowledge and opportunity of restitution or resurrection to all that had been lost by Adam's disobedience. When the resurrection was mentioned the occasion for expressions of derision was furnished, as though they would say: We knew that there could be no thorough-going philosophy superior to our own; we were ,on the look-out for the weak point in the argument of this speaker who sets himself up to be a teacher, and now we have found it;--the resurrection ! Nonsense! Whoever saw or heard of a resurrection from the dead?

Others of his auditors were less violent in their expressions, but agreed that they had heard enough for the present--implying that the argument was not very satisfactory when it needed to be supported by a resurrection hypothesis, which, to them, seemed very much less reasonable than their own philosophies--that a man never died, and that when he appears to die he really becomes more alive than he ever was before. From their standpoint of view there could be no resurrection of the dead, since there were none dead--all being more abundantly alive from the moment of apparent death.

However, one member of the Council of Mars' Hill (the Areopagite Society) had been deeply interested in the Truth he had heard; also a woman of some distinction, and others with them; for although the Society alone occupied the place of prominence in such discussions, the people in general were privileged to surround the court. The Apostle's experience here, as elsewhere, like our own, demonstrates the fact that at the present time not many have ears to hear the Word of the Lord; not many are seriously, "feeling after Him if haply they might find Him." The majority are blinded by the god of this world, Satan, through various traditions, heathen and Christian, so that they cannot discern the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the true Gospel. At the present time it is not given to all to see and to understand (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11), but we thank God that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped; and then the preaching of "Jesus and the resurrection" will mean a great blessing, and all shall come to the knowledge of the Truth, from the least to the greatest, as the Lord, through the Prophet, has declared.--Jer. 31:33, 34.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

APPRECIATES CHRISTIAN LIBERTY ALLOWED TO ALL

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings in our dear Redeemer's name!

Enclosed find check, for \$ to cover "Good Hopes" from the Class for the quarter ending June 30th.

As we read the encouraging letters that are published in the HERALD from time to time, we feel sure that your own hearts must be blessed from the many that you receive and that they must be an incentive to you to continue on in the same way of giving out the food to the dear ones everywhere as the Lord may lead you and direct you all. It has always been a great pleasure to us to note the loving,

Christlike spirit that has always permeated the writings in the HERALD, and we are very thankful that the Lord has seen fit to place the same brethren in charge of the work for another year. We know that He will quicken and energize your minds by His Holy Spirit so that the Lord's people will be provided for their every need spiritually through the articles that will be published under His supervision.

One thing that especially appeals to us, dear brethren, is the Christian Liberty allowed to all. Nothing is forced upon any: no one is asked to see "just as I see"; but every one is left free to see and accept, or reject, as much as he likes without in any way making it a test of fellowship. Whether all see alike or not on non-essential points, this attitude -on the part of the HERALD committee is, we are sure, appreciated by those who believe in this principle of Christian Liberty.

May you, therefore, realize more and, more that the Lord's favor and approval are resting upon you all in your endeavors, to serve His people, and may His grace and strength be sufficient for your every need, is our prayer., Be assured, dear brethren, also, of our daily petitions on your behalf at the Throne of Grace. With fervent love, we are

Yours in Christian fellowship, PROVIDENCE ECCLESIA.

REALIZED SHOWER OF BLESSING

Dear Brethren:

I write to express our appreciation for service rendered us at the Toledo Convention through the ministrations of certain brethren and of the INSTITUTE brethren in particular, and which was, specially blessed to our hearts by the operation of God's Holy Spirit.

The heat was so intense and the mental faculties so dulled at times that I feared I could not receive the. spiritual food we were all seeking, but when the season of fellowship was at an end, we realized We were the recipients of a shower of blessing, 'and as a result we are setting our faces as a flint, Zionward.

We realize anew our wonderful privilege in Christ and that the time for the perfecting of that Christlike character is rapidly fleeting. A familiar text sounded to our hearts as a trumpet call--"Blessed *and holy is he that hath Part* in ,the first resurrection." Ali, yes, it is no half-hearted effort that is implied in that word, "holy," but a complete and continual setting apart unto 'God and the Lamb, feeding richly from the storehouse of. His Word and holding ourselves in an abandonment of loving trust in Him 'who has said, "According to your - faith, be it unto you."

Another portion of the Word dispensed to us at the Convention which has remained richly in our mind and heart, and which we hope: to apply henceforth to our daily walk is,. "He that *dwelleth* in love, DWELLETH IN GOD." What a privilege! and how simple -it can be throughout the moments and the hours that stretch before us to apply this measuring line to our progress in His steps.

Dear brethren, we desire here to express our appreciation of the Revelation studies given in the- HERALD. We believe that they are 'from God because throughout they l bear the stamp of Truth and their effect upon both of us has been a *blessedly sanctifying* one. We render praise to God for this evidence of His

favor toward His little ones. Truly, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand."

At Convention we received a clearer focus on what we have felt assured is a solemn fact, namely, that "*the fire of the day 'is trying every man's work,*" and I feel concerned lest I have not built faithfully enough in the golden hours that have passed to withstand the tests ahead; but in a spirit of hope and determination I am pressing forward.

It was a matter of thanksgiving to God that the representatives of the little handful of brethren, who back in the early days of the HERALD said, "Brethren, pray for us," gave humble evidence that God has graciously answered our daily prayer on their behalf. The evidence of their love and faith and humble waiting on God was to our souls a benediction. For this manifestation of Divine grace, we give thanks unto our God.

May the Lord continue to sustain you, keeping *you low at the foot of the Cross*, and may it continue your privilege to refresh the weary, scattered sheep with the pure nourishment of our Father's Word; for the words which He speaks, "they are spirit and *they are life*.,,

Your sister by His grace, MRS. A. K.-Mich.

THE TRIAL OF YOUR PATIENCE

Dear Brethren:

Please accept this humble offering as a little to help as you may see fit to use it, in the glorious work of sending out the messages which are so helpful to us and so refreshing, as meat in due season. I am sure the HERALDS are beautiful. We are seeking to "Prove all things, and hold fast that which, is good," and the Lord is blessing us in doing it. As we see the time approaching, we dare not speculate; but how it tries our patience--waiting--and this may be good for us, as we have the Divine promise. With much Christian love, I remain

Your brother in Christ, I. B.-Ont.

TRUSTING IN THE ROCK OF AGES

.Dear Brethren in Christ:

Enclosed find money order, which is just a little help from grateful hearts. Being so far away we cannot do much financially, having local interests also.

There are about thirty who meet here at P----- on Sundays, and we enjoy sweet fellowship. We would esteem it an honor if we could have a visit- from a Pilgrim brother, if it were possible to come so far. Brother Nicholson has been a help throughout Australia during the testing time, pointing us to the Word of God or helping us to see clearly the true situation. The HERALDS are a blessing and great help to us also. The Revelation articles are truly uplifting, the spirit of the Master (humility) being manifest throughout. . . . We feel so thankful to our Heavenly Father for opening our eyes and giving us grace to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, realizing more fully the beautiful words of Isaiah, 26:3, 4,--Peace, through trust in Jehovah, the Rock of Ages, instead of earthly organizations, etc.

We remember you daily before the Throne of Grace, with all of like precious faith. Looking forward to the consummation of our hopes, with Christian love,

Your brother and sister in Christ, G. and L. B.--W. Aus.