

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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"MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY"

"PRAY without ceasing." This is the second link in the chain of exhortations, mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians, that makes up the life of the mature Christian. The first is contained in the words, "Rejoice evermore." If we are to learn how to rejoice evermore, in all conditions, under all circumstances, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, everywhere and in everything, it is absolutely necessary that we learn and put into practice the exhortation, "Pray without ceasing." Prayer is that which opens the spring from which joy and rejoicing flows. Where can be no true Christian joy unless a living communion with God by continual prayer is begun and preserved.

Look at it as we may, understand it though we may not, prayer has to do with the fulfilling of the promises of God's Word to His people. The blessings of Pentecost were foretold in literal language as well as in type and shadow. This great event in church history is called by the Savior, "the Promise of the Father." It was so arranged in the Divine purpose that it must come to pass, in order to fulfil one of the most important features of His great Plan of Salvation; but when the time drew near for the fulfillment of this promise, He made known to anxious, interested ones, just beforehand, that the time for its fulfillment was near at hand, and as the disciples, gathered . in the "upper room," prayed, the place was shaken, the room was filled with the manifestation of God's presence and power, and a new feature of His dealing with humanity began.

We have the same truth illustrated in Old Testament history: God foretold of His ancient people, that because of their disobedience and sin they would be carried away captive to Babylon; and He made known also to one of His prophets that after seventy years had passed they would be privileged to return again to their native land. When the due time for their deliverance drew near, there was at least one man on earth who had not forgotten the promise; he prayed, and the promised deliverance came.

THE MERCIFUL PRIVILEGE OF SINFUL MAN

Much has been written about prayer -- its nature, its object, its results, and its benefits. The Scriptures do not define it, for it is assumed that men know its meaning. The disposition to pray, to worship that which is superior, was originally implanted in man's constitution. It begins its

exercise in the little babe, as it is made conscious of its want, its need. The moment a child realizes its hunger we have an illustration of the first element of true prayer, which is that of deep, heart-felt longing desire. The moment we feel our need of food, we have what constitutes this first and necessary element of prayer. "Prayer," says one, "is hunger's appeal for food; it is thirst's cry for living water; it is sin's yearning for forgiveness; it is death's last look for everlasting and glorious life." One view or phase of prayer has been very well defined in what is termed the "Shorter Catechism:" "Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies."

The question is often asked, Can a sinner -- one under the Divine sentence -- pray to God. We answer that it is the privilege of penitent sinners to pray; surely the Savior so teaches. While it is unquestionably true that only those who have received the spirit of sonship by the begetting of the Holy Spirit can approach God in prayer as a son to a father, yet when Christ came into the world to reveal His Father's love for the human race, to show His favor towards those who were weary and heavy laden with a load of guilt and sin, those who had become tired of the world and who desired to come to God, like sheep who had gone astray. He illustrated this love by a parable in which is pictured a father's welcome of a prodigal to his house and home. While this parable seems to have been given to illustrate God's favor toward and acceptance of a class of repentant outcasts of Israel, despised publicans, and sinners, etc., at our Lord's First Advent, we see no objection to a general individual application of the parable. The sinner's prayer is shown in the prodigal's words when, far away from home, in the depth and bitterness of his sin, in a condition of estrangement and separation from his father's house, he said: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." The prodigal still felt that the father whom he had long since forsaken had not ceased to love him, and this had the effect of both encouraging and moving him to return.

The parable goes on to picture the father as seeing him when he was afar off, which shows that he had been waiting for him to express a desire to return to his home; and the Savior, in order to exhibit God's love for the brokenhearted, repentant sinner, represents the father as going out to meet him, and after receiving him with open arms, prepares a feast in his honor, and without so much as even a reproach, receives him into his home: Does not this teach that there is a sense in which God looks upon the fallen ones of the race as still His offspring; at least those who, if they knew God, and if their environment did not retard or hinder them, would return to Him? "For," says the Apostle,

"ye [Christians] were as sheep gone astray and are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

It is certainly true then that repentant sinners may seek the throne of mercy and grace; such is in perfect harmony with God's plan in the calling out of the world and selecting the joint -heirs with His Son; and the very first feeling one of the world has that he ought to pray, is God's power in some way, which may not be necessary for the sinner to know, moving him to avail himself of his God-given privilege. God hears heart prayer. "In His ear the publican's first cry, the Magdalene's first tear, the thief's last word, rose with infinite and perfect acceptance, and brought down an answer, exceeding abundant above all that they could ask or think."

"EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER"

There is another matter that is in harmony with God's arrangement concerning a Christian's privilege in prayer that is not understood by some. We may pray for everything which we sincerely feel that we need. Some say, I would pray for God to give me relief from this overwhelming difficulty, or to send me some assistance to tide me over this crisis in my temporal affairs, but I am not sure that it is His will that I ask Him for these temporal things. We reason, however, that in approaching God. in prayer it is not necessary for us to understand what God's will is in the matter before we bring our burden to Him. In fact it is not ;always our business to know what may be His good pleasure. In some of our affairs we recognize that He has clearly revealed in advance in His Word what His will is; while in some other matters we may not be able to read His will. But it is for God to decide what is His will, and His will is always in harmony with what is for our good. It is our privilege to make known to Him all our wants, both spiritual and temporal, the deepest, the greatest:, as well as the smallest. He desires me as His child "to unbosom every want that I feel, and to leave with Him the prerogative of giving what is best, or of withholding what is wrong, or of judging what is most expedient for me." The language of the poet, that we should take "everything to Him in prayer," is the correct thought.

God is a Father to the Christian. He, therefore, does not want us to come into His presence with a cold and distant reserve; but rather to approach Him with filial confidence, as an affectionate child approaches an earthly parent. He desires that we tell Him what we think is good for us, and to leave with Him when, where, and how He thinks best to answer our prayers. He may' not always give us what we ask, but we should be thankful that He will always give what is best. He will surely hear and answer us If we are laboring under a heavy burden, it is our privilege to pray that if it be His will the burden may be removed. It will not always, perhaps seldom, be His will that it be

removed, but He will give that which is far better, that which He gave to St. Paul -- grace to bear it.

IMPORTANCE OF THE WILL RESIGNED TO GOD

However, we need always to remember that the great, never changing condition that should regulate all our prayers, is, that we seek first and all the time the interests of the Kingdom of God. This is one of the most precious and practical laws to be found anywhere in God's Word, to regulate us in our prayer life. When choosing a profession in life, the question with the Christian is not, Will this net me the greatest profit; will this be the best to further my temporal interests; will this bring to me the honor and the esteem of my fellow-men. Rather the question should be always, Will this help me to be a better ambassador of Heaven? Will this assist me most in my Christian development?

If I change my place of residence, it is proper that I select a good site, as well as a house that will be comfortable, where sunshine and shade are well proportioned. However, the paramount questions are not these, but rather, Shall I be so situated that I can hear the Message of God? Is it in a neighborhood where I can hear the Gospel proclaimed? Is it a place where I may have the privilege of meeting with God's people -- where I may join with others in the worship of God?

The present life of the Christian is filled with wants and needs "without ceasing"; therefore he must "pray without ceasing." The Psalmist expresses most beautifully the difference between the Christian's condition on earth, and his condition when he reaches the heavenly state beyond. He says; "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?," The thought here expressed is that heaven is a place of *having*. He does not, however, stop with these words, but adds, "And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Earth, then, is the place of need, of want, of *desire*; heaven, on the other hand, is the place of having; prayer ceases here, and is substituted there with praise.

The mature Christian while contented here on earth is not satisfied. There is planted in his inmost being a knowledge of imperfection, and a desire for perfection. While realizing all the blessings of pardon, peace, acceptance with God, and heart purity, he has a deep longing for that "better country," where sin will no more disturb him. This causes him to feel more and more that earth is not his home. He desires a better country, that is a heavenly. How true in the experiences of true Christians are the words of one long since departed from these earthly scenes: "Our inmost and deepest wants and longings, our sorrows, our griefs, and our bitterness, that rise and fall, and come and go like the successive waves of the ocean in their rise and ebb, and roll like these across the human heart, all tell us unmistakably, what indeed we cannot but feel, that this is not our rest, and that there must still remain a rest for the people of God."

ALL OUR LONGINGS SATISFIED IN THE ETERNAL STATE

While it is true, there is a present rest of faith to believing, trusting ones; while there are longings and desires, and they are many, that can be realized on earth by deep, heart-felt, trusting prayer, yet there are longings and desires that are proper, which can never be realized here below. The very possession of these longings and desires, however, are simply prophecies that foretell their realization and satisfaction beyond these present scenes. Even our sorrows which may be made use of to work our everlasting good, are but presentiments of heavenly comforts and lasting blessings.

In view of all these things what a wonderful privilege is prayer. One of God's trusting ones who fully realized this, has truly said: "Prayer is not so much a duty that we are commanded to fulfil as it is a blessed heaven-bought privilege, we are invited to enjoy." This being true, the great question with us is not so much, *must* we pray, as it is, *may* we pray. There is a great evil that many Christians have perhaps unconsciously fallen into, in thinking of prayer as a duty. It is those things that we look upon as duties that we naturally perform as duties. Looking upon prayer as a duty, a service to be performed, will naturally cause us to feel that when the duty is performed, we have fulfilled our obligations and that is the end of it. Prayer, is not a duty. Prayer is a means to attain spiritual advancement and blessings. The very nature of true prayer, makes it a means, an instrument to make us better Christians, that we may diffuse the light of God, of Christ, of heaven around us.

Again, it is a well known fact that prayer looked upon as a duty to be performed, has led, in one great church system to its being considered as a penance, and it has there become a mere form. Prayer itself will not expiate sin or make atonement for wrong doing. One has truly said, "You may repeat '*Pater Nosters*,' twelve hours without ceasing, and yet you may never have prayed at all; and when you have prayed with all the fervor of a saint, and all the fullness of the Apostolic description -without ceasing-you have never made an atonement for a single sin, nor is it able, nor was it meant to be so. Prayer is not the expression of a love we feel; it is not the expiation of a sin we have committed; it is not the payment of a debt we owe; it is not in any sense the performance of a duty that devolves upon us; it is something far better and nobler, than all these. We must regard prayer as a means, not at end; as a precious and great privilege; not as a provision for God, but a provision for us."

PRAYER DOES NOT ALTER DIVINE PURPOSE

Our Savior also tells us that prayer is not a performance to be seen of men. Very frequently did He warn His disciples against imitating the religious professors of His day, or of accepting their teaching on this line. They prayed on the street corners and in the high ways; their object was to be seen of men; or in other words to let people know they were religious, that they were followers of the great Jehovah. While they called this prayer, it was not prayer. It is quite possible in our day to imitate unconsciously, unintentionally, the Pharisee of our Lord's day. While it may be proper in a public place to bow our heads and give thanks for our food, yet if there is a single thought in our mind in doing this of being "seen of men," we are in that measure imitating the Pharisees of old.

Another thing about prayer is that it is not in any sense or degree intended to alter the designs and purposes of God. Some Christians make a mistake in their reasoning along this line and think that their prayers can alter or change the Divine purpose. Others, and these are the most numerous today, because of superficial reasonings on this subject, have gone to an opposite extreme, and think they understand all of nature's laws and have thus become so "wise in their own conceits" that they have ceased altogether to believe that God can answer prayer. They say, "God is omniscient, and knows all things; God has His sovereign purpose, and has decreed all things. How then can it be possible," they say, "that your prayers can alter the fixed, unchanging purposes of heaven; or, how can He whose plans have been marked out from everlasting, be moved to turn aside from these, no matter how earnest or eloquent your pleadings may be?"

This reasoning fails to take into consideration that when God instituted His plans and purposes, He so arranged them as to reward those who would diligently seek to know and serve Him. Indeed, this is one grand feature of His great Plan. Blessed indeed are those who have discovered this. This is one of the things the great Teacher said is hidden from the wise and prudent according to this world, and is revealed unto babes, humble ones.

We are told that God governs this world by second causes. If there be no rain, the earth will become dry and parched; if there come a frost, vegetation will be affected, and fruit buds will be destroyed. We see this law working always and everywhere. Men see just a little into what they call nature's laws, and thinking they know it all, pronounce upon them; just as some geologists dig down a little under the crust of the earth and then think they can tell us all about its inner contents. It is true that God works by second causes; but this does not in any degree hinder Him from working through these to answer the prayers of those who love and obey Him. We are finite and He is infinite. This

is true in every phase or aspect of God's knowledge, wisdom, and power. The great poet has said truly, "There are more things in heaven and earth than thy philosophy ever dreamed of."

ANSWERS TO PRAYER IN CONFORMITY WITH DIVINE DECREES

We are witnessing new and wonderful discoveries every day—discoveries which enable men to change what they once supposed was nature's laws, and they tell us that we are only in the infancy of these discoveries. It is not difficult now, even from the human standpoint, to see how God can answer prayer without conflicting with or changing what men call "second causes." The following illustration of this, given by one who lived nearly a century ago, is more apt and forcible at the present time than it was when first given:

"Suppose a chain stretching from the throne down to the very footstool. Of course each link is dependent on the previous link, or each third cause upon the second, and each second upon the first, and all upon the staple that fixes it to the throne of God. 'Very well,' you answer, 'how can He do anything that you ask without dislocating the chain; removing one link, and substituting another at your prayer; which would be disorganization and confusion.' The solution is plain. May not the power of God be transmitted down that chain as the electric fluid is transmitted along the wire; not injuring the medium by which it travels and yet achieving stupendous results at the end at which it arrives? May not God, therefore, without dislocating a single link, without ceasing to act by second cause, send an influence through the whole series of causes that will be an answer to your prayer, and yet in full conformity with all the fixed arrangements of His mighty and glorious universe? And if God has decrees -- as we admit He has -- may not His decree include in its execution our desire? And may it not be that the necessity of our desire is just as fixed as the fact of God's everlasting unchangeable decree? But the fact is, the man that wants does not discuss metaphysics; he prays. There is something in our hearts that tells us, like an echo of what God has uttered in heaven, 'Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened; ask and ye shall obtain.' The moment that a person begins to discuss the possibilities of prayer, the philosophy of prayer, the metaphysics of prayer, that moment, depend upon it, he does not feel his deep wants as he should, nor know what are the blessings that can supply them. You never find a hungry child begin to discuss metaphysical difficulties with his mother when he wants bread; and you will not find a man who really, and in his inmost soul feels that he needs saving blessings, pause, or arrest his petitions for a single moment in discussing how it is possible that God can answer prayer; or how, without disturbing His fixed arrangements, He can bow His ear and listen to our petitions. The text that upsets all objections is, that 'God will have men everywhere to

pray.' Make the experiment, 'Seek and you shall find' -- pray without ceasing -- knock and it shall be opened--ask, and you shall obtain.

"I COME TO DO THY WILL"

"Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." Mark 1:1-11.

IT was indeed becoming to the office and work of our dear Redeemer that He was preceded by herald -- one who announced His presence and His ministry. To John the Baptist came this great honor of being our Lord's forerunner, foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. He was the messenger of Jehovah to announce Messiah and to do a work amongst the Jewish people, which is prophetically described as making straight or ready the path before Him. We are not to confound this reference to a messenger of Jehovah preparing the way before Jesus, with the title given to our Lord Himself, the "Messenger of the Covenant." Both John and Jesus were messengers or representatives, but the latter, on a far higher scale, was the Messenger through whom God's covenant with mankind was about to be established -- the Messenger or Mediator of the New Covenant, to be sealed through the precious blood, and to become operative to the world in general during the Millennial Age.

HERALDING THE MESSIAH

As the Scriptures point out, John was just six months older than Jesus, and as both began their ministries at the age of thirty, it follows that John had been preaching just six months when Jesus came to him for baptism at the opening of His ministry. What kind of a work did John do during those six months? The answer is given us in verses seven and eight. He announced himself the forerunner, the trumpeter as it were, of the great Messiah, and declared that it was necessary that the people should come into a condition of heart -repentance if they would be ready for the Messiah and prepared to enjoy the blessings and favors of God which Messiah would dispense. John made no pretensions of being the Messiah himself, but humbly declared that the One who would be shortly made known to Israel as Messiah was so much greater, that he (John) would not be worthy to stoop down and loose the fastenings of His shoes -- His sandals. He proclaimed that those who would be ready for Messiah and the Kingdom should not only renounce sin and reform their lives but should publicly declare the same -symbolizing it by a baptism in water. And yet he assured them that this baptism which he performed for them was as nothing compared to that greater baptism which Messiah would give to the faithful-a baptism of the Holy Spirit; yea, also, to some a baptism of fire.

John's prophetic message was most distinctly fulfilled. Those Israelites indeed who received Jesus as the Messiah were in due time, at Pentecost, baptized with the Holy Spirit from the Father as members of the Body of Christ. Moreover, a work of grace was continued with the Jewish nation, and for over thirty years the Apostles and other believers sifted thoroughly that people for every true grain of wheat and gathered them into the Gospel Garner-into the anointed Body, the Church. Then, all the true wheat having been found, the fire came upon the remainder of that nation-the fire of trouble which consumed and destroyed their national polity, causing indescribable suffering, and scattering the remainder of that people throughout the earth. Some were baptized with the Holy Spirit and some with fire.

GOD'S UNPRETENTIOUS SERVANT

John the Baptist is described as the last of the prophets. With him the old dispensation terminated, as with our Lord the new dispensation began. Apparently adopting somewhat the manner and dress of Elijah of old, his prototype, John was conspicuous amongst the people by reason of the simplicity of his dress, which indicated that his entire life was devoted to the special service of the Lord -- that he was not seeking to serve earthly or selfish interests in any respect-comparatively he had nothing, wanted nothing, needed nothing. The messenger of Jehovah, he could have been provided for sumptuously; but as God would speak not merely to the great but especially to the humble and lowly, His representative or messenger appeared amongst men under humble conditions. And it was the most humble that had the hearing ear for the Lord's message. Nevertheless we are informed that great multitudes went out, and excitement prevailed amongst the people-a revival service. John and his disciples were kept busily engaged telling the people that Messiah was near, that the Kingdom would shortly be set up, that they must repent of their sins if they would be ready for a share in that Kingdom, and baptizing those who, turning to God, confessed their sins.

When Jesus came to John and requested baptism another account tells us that John demurred, declaring that our Lord had no sins that He needed to repent of-that if either one needed baptism it was John himself. The inference is that John did not urge any to be baptized, except such as realized themselves to be transgressors against the Law, who had not been living up to its requirements to the extent of their ability, and that himself and others who had been living consistent lives did not need this baptism. We are to remember the Apostle's words, that the whole nation of Israel had been baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud when they left Egypt. (1 Cor. 10:2.) They were still in Moses, except as they had neglected the Law Covenant which he established. John's baptism was intended to bring the hearts of the people back into accord with the Law, into accord with Moses, that

thus they might be ready for transfer from Moses to Christ-from the typical house of servants to be made the antitypical house of sons. "For Moses verily was faithful as a servant over his house, but Christ as a Son over His house, whose house are we if we hold fast." -- Heb. 3:5,6.

HOLY, HARMLESS, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS

The Lord did not say to John, "You are mistaken, I am a sinner," for He never denied what the Scriptures everywhere set forth -- that He was holy, harmless, undefiled and totally separate from the race of sinners. Indeed He did not explain to John why He was baptized nor what His baptism signified. John could not have understood, none could understand our Lord's motives until after Pentecost. In the light of the New Testament we see that our Lord's baptism was a new thing, totally distinct from John's baptism; that it symbolized or represented a baptism unto death -a burial of the will into the will of God, and the beginning of a reckonedly new life as a reckonedly new creature, symbolized by the rising from the water.

Thus our Lord's baptism into water symbolized a baptism into death, a consecration to death; and this consecration He fulfilled in the subsequent three and a half years of His ministry, which ended on the cross with His cry, "It is finished:" And this is the baptism which belongs to us His followers -- not a washing away of sins, not a returning to Mosaic covenant relationship as Jews, but a consecration of our justified selves, the presentation of our mortal bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service -- to be completed in our natural death and in our resurrection beyond the veil.

"MY BELOVED SON"

An account of this same baptism of our Lord in another Gospel represents John as saying, "I, John, saw and bear record" -- respecting the dove, etc. This lesson merely recites the fact that the heavens were opened and the Spirit like a dove descended upon the Lord, and a voice from heaven said, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"-without saying he saw the dove or heard the voice. Our thought is that John the Baptist alone witnessed this testimony to our Lord's relationship to God, that he alone saw the Messenger of Divine favor, and that he and Jesus alone heard and understood the voice. It was not necessary that 'others should see and hear. John was to be the witness, and this evidence was given him, in order that he might declare, as he did, that the Lord had previously given him an assurance that the One upon whom he should see the Holy Spirit descend and abide was the Messiah, and that this prediction was fulfilled upon the person of Jesus.

A dove was a favorite figure with the Jews as an emblem of peace and salvation. Indeed, Noah's dove, with its olive branch, seems to have become a symbol to all civilized peoples. It was most appropriate, therefore, that since some figure was to be used as an outward evidence of Divine blessing, the dove should be that figure. Yet we are not to suppose that the Holy Spirit is a dove, nor that it has bodily shape like a dove, but as instructed in all the Scriptures, that it is a Divine power or influence. The dove represented fittingly the meek and quiet spirit which is one of the striking ornaments of all those who possess the spirit of holiness unto the Lord.

Similarly throughout this Gospel Age the world knoweth us not: it sees not our anointing of the Holy Spirit. It merely knows that the claim is made for the Church that, as the Body of Christ, its members are recipients of the same Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus the Head-that we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body. (1 Cor. 12:13.) All that the world can see is the fact of this baptism. The effect upon the Lord was His devotion to His Father's work, the ministry of the Truth, even at the cost of the sacrifice of His life. And so with the Church also; it has a ministry of the Truth even unto death -laying down our lives for the brethren. The world recognizes a difference between this Spirit and the worldly spirit, and yet knows not, appreciates not, but thinks rather of the Lord's faithful as they thought of Jesus and the Apostles -- that they are unwise, foolish, in spending time, influence, talent, means, in what the world regards as the "foolishness of preaching."

While John the Baptist was evidently a partial antitype of Elijah on a limited scale, he by no means fulfilled the entire type. He was, we might say, an antitype on a small scale to the little nation of Israel. The Kingdom was indeed offered to natural Israel, but only a remnant of that people had heartily repented of sin and were truly ready to welcome Messiah, and the rest were blinded, while the few were received of the Lord at Pentecost and became the nucleus or foundation of the Kingdom which, during this a Gospel Age, has progressed in development in embryo -unborn, unseen of the world, unknown. Soon the completed embryo will be born in the resurrection, and thus the Kingdom will be fully established in power and great glory -- the Christ.

Those who accept the message are urged to make a consecration of themselves to the Lord and thus to prepare their hearts for His Kingdom. Our announcement then is that the great Christ of glory will shortly appear on the scene and that all in harmony with Him will then receive a blessing of the Holy Spirit -- the completed blessing, the resurrection to glory, honor, and immortality-while to the remainder of mankind will come the great time of trouble spoken of by the mouth of the holy Prophets from the beginning, a time of discipline and

purification, that the whole world may learn the lessons necessary to their harmony with the Lord, that they may be ready to receive the blessing which His Kingdom will put within their reach.

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES XXIV

THE SUPREME WEEK OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY

"And He shall confirm a covenant with many for one seven [Literal rendering]; and in the middle of the seven the He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." -- Dan 9:27.

CONCERNING this prophecy of the seventy sevens of years, there was no, question until modern times that these years were continuous, that is that they represented 490 successive years. The Futurist theory is that the events of the seventieth week, the last seven of these four hundred and ninety years, meet their fulfillment in the period of the Second Advent, instead of the First, and relate to the experiences of the Jewish peoples after they have gathered in their land, at the close of this Gospel Age. It is during this period, and in connection with their occupation of Palestine that the Futurists believe that the Jews will be deceived by a false Messiah. It will not be our purpose to consider this interpretation of this notable week except to say that it is largely based upon their understanding of who the person is that is referred to in the words, "In the middle of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." The Futurists understand this person to be the Antichrist, and that the Jews will be deceived into thinking him to be the true Christ, their Messiah. The Historical interpretation is that the person mentioned in this verse is the true Christ, and that the causing of the sacrifice and oblation to cease was accomplished by His sacrificial death in the middle of the seventieth week at, His First Advent. This latter interpretation seems clearly to us to be the correct one.

Furthermore, in this utterance, it seems to us, lies hidden the secret that opens to view the whole chronological problem of the seventy weeks. This week of years stands not only pre-eminent among the seventy, but amongst all the weeks of the world's history. It included in its wonderful events the ministry of Christ, His death, resurrection, and ascension, the establishment of the Church by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the early proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews of Palestine. The last half of the week was the period in which the special favor was shown to the Jews as a people. This favor was the invitation to them to enter into a covenant with their Messiah -a

covenant of sacrifice to follow in His steps, to attain joint-heirship with Him in His Kingdom.

THE END OF THE SIXTY-NINE WEEKS

Coming now to calculate the ending of this chronological prediction we would remind the reader again of the fact -- a fact that should not be overlooked -- that no matter what year in history we decide to be the one in which the commandment went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem, if we reckon in solar years, the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, cannot possibly be made to end at the beginning of Christ's ministry, which must have occurred in the autumn, when He reached the age of thirty, for the reason that the commandment was given in the Jewish month Nisan, which, of course, was in the spring. The Scriptures also state that this occurred in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, but give us no data for fixing the exact year. We are therefore dependent upon the secular historian to discover the year B.C. in which this occurred.

In searching the records of the historian we discover that "Artaxerxes I, surnamed Longimanus, the second son of Xerxes, ascended the throne in 465 B.C., his long reign extending to 425 B.C." (*International Encyclopedia*.) In the *International Bible Dictionary* we read: "Artaxerxes Longimanus . . . reigned from 464 to 425 B.C." The twentieth year, according to the first authority would be 445 B.C., and according to the second 444 B.C. The latter date is the one most generally accepted today as the correct one. Indeed, under the heading *Nehemiah*, the *International Encyclopedia* also makes the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to be 444 B.C. Sir Isaac Newton, summing up an exhaustive examination of this matter, says:

"After Artaxerxes, reigned his son Xerxes two months and Sogdian seven months; but their reign is not reckoned apart [by Ptolemy] in summing up the years of the kings, but is included in the forty or forty-one years' reign of Artaxerxes; omit these nine months, and the precise reign of Artaxerxes will be thirty-nine years and three months. And, therefore, since his reign ended in the beginning of the winter B.C. 425, it began between midsummer and autumn 464."

Thus, according to Ptolemy, Artaxerxes' twentieth year would be 444 B.C. It will be proper, however, to say that two writers are quoted by Albert Barnes as fixing 454 B.C. as the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. These are Usher and Hengstenberg.

Our Futurist friends see clearly that it is absolutely impossible to make the sixty-nine weeks or 483 solar years which the Scriptures plainly state begin in the month Nisan, end in the fall, and on this account end these years at Christ's death in the spring. They say it is at this point that the prediction, so far as it relates to the First Advent ends; and that

the last or seventieth week will only begin to count when the Gospel Age is ended.

A REASONABLE INQUIRY

Holding with all writers of the Historic school that the middle of the seventieth week marks the exact date of Christ's sacrificial death, and believing that the angel Gabriel was sent to fix not the approximate but the exact time of that greatest of all events of redemption, we find it necessary to discard solar reckoning, and instead employ the lunar scale. It will easily be seen that sixty-nine and a half weeks is 486 1/2 years. Therefore 486 1/2 years must end at Christ's death. The consensus of opinion is that Christ's death occurred somewhere between 28 and 33 A.D. If we reckon 486 1/2 solar years from 444 B.C., they will end at a time much beyond the date given by any Scripture expositor as marking Christ's death. It would seem that this fact has influenced many to conclude that 444. B.C. is too late a date for the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and hastily conclude that the eminent astronomer and chronologist, Ptolemy, must be wrong, and that the seventh of Artaxerxes must be the date of beginning. It does not seem to us proper to reject the testimony of this most reliable of ancient historians and chronologists. Instead of doing this, we inquire, may it not be possible that lunar reckoning is the one that solves the problem, since there will of necessity be an error of six months, whatever year we may choose, whether the seventh or the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, if we reckon according to solar time.

This is a most reasonable inquiry because all the notable events of redemption history are typified by Jewish ceremonies, sacrifices, and feasts, and are all fixed by lunar measures. The whole period of our Lord's ministry was occupied in fulfilling the Levitical types, which were calculated on the lunar scale. "The feasts of the Lord, representing the history of redemption, were connected with certain days of lunations and phases of lunar fulness; as the Passover with the tenth and fourteenth days of the first month; the feast of unleavened bread with the fifteenth day of the first month; the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles, with the first, tenth, and fifteenth days of the seventh month. Lunar measures were the chronological wheels measuring the intervals of the Levitical calendar."

RECKONED ACCORDING TO LUNAR .TIME

The date assigned for our Lord's death by the earlier writers, that is, those who lived the nearest to its occurrence, is that of Nisan 29 A.D. It is also quite generally believed, and seems clearly to be taught in the types of redemption, that, this event occurred on Friday. As we have already noted, the year of our Lord's passion must lie somewhere

between 28 and 33 A.D. "In all these years," says Mr. Guinness, "there is only one in which the fourteenth of Nisan [which according to the type marked our Lord's death] coincides with a Friday, the year 29 A.D.; and this is the year in which the death of Christ is placed by Lactantius, Augustine, Sulpicius, Origen, Jerome, and Tertullian." Brown in his work, *Odo Saclarum*, says, that "the consular date assigned almost with one consent by the Latin Fathers is the year of the two Gemini U.C. 782 -- A. D. 29.

There are two things in connection with this prediction that cannot be successfully disproved. The first is that calculating the 486 1/2 years on the solar scale from the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Nisan 457 B.C.), they end in the fall and not in the spring of 29 A.D. The second is that calculating from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Nisan 444 B.C. on the lunar scale they do end in Nisan 29 A.D., the month in which Christ was crucified. Continuing, Mr. Guinness makes the following statement:

"This chronological prediction was fulfilled [within six months] on the solar scale from the first edict of Artaxerxes, and on the lunar scale to a day from the second. A simple calculation shows this. Seventy weeks are 490 years, but sixty-nine and a half weeks are only 486 1/2 years; this is therefore the number of the years predicted to elapse between Artaxerxes' decree and the death of Christ. Nehemiah commenced his journey to Jerusalem in accordance with the decree given in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, during the passover month, the month of Nisan, B.C. 444; and, as we know, our Lord was crucified at the same season, the Passover, A.D. 29. From Nisan, B.C. 444, to Nisan, A.D. 29-472 ordinary solar years only elapsed, not 486 1/2. *But 472 solar years are exactly 486 1/2 lunar.* Hence sixty-nine and a half weeks of lunar years, from Passover to Passover, did extend between Artaxerxes' decree in the twentieth year of his reign, and the crucifixion, or 'cutting off' of 'Messiah the Prince,' A.D. 29, and the prophecy was accurately fulfilled, even to a day, on the lunar scale."

AN EXACT CHRONOLOGICAL PREDICTION

Christ's death occurring in the middle of the seventieth week, together with the fact that His ministry began when He was thirty years of age, is evidence that His ministry lasted just three and a half years. It also settles the matter that the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 lunar years, ended when He began His ministry at the age of thirty. His death occurring in Nisan, also establishes the fact that the anniversary of His birth was six months earlier, which would be in October three and one half years prior to His death, thus perfectly harmonizing the angelic declaration that there would be exactly sixty-nine weeks or 483 years elapse until Messiah the Prince. He became the Messiah when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at Jordan in the beginning of His ministry, in the

autumn. The last half of the week or the three and one half years which followed His death, relate to events in connection with the special Jewish favor, prior to the offering of favor to the Gentiles.

In the language of another, we ask, "Who but He who foresees the end even from the beginning, could thus have foretold the exact time of Christ's crucifixion five hundred years in advance? Let the date of Daniel be placed as late as any [higher] critic has placed it, we still have a prediction and that of the most exact chronological kind."

The concluding words of the angel Gabriel are, "And for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The Revised Version renders these words, "And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate, and even unto the consummation and that determined shall wrath be poured upon the desolater, "

These words should be interpreted in connection with those of verse 26, "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." The meaning seems to be that after the Messiah has been rejected, "cut off," both Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, and this would be as a consequence of that act. This we know is what followed the rejection by the Jews of the Messiah, as predicted also by our Lord just before His rejection. In the year 70 A.D. the Roman armies under Titus laid siege to the city, captured it, and against the wishes and orders of their leader, and the Roman Emperor, the beautiful temple was razed to the ground, and in a short time after, the Jews were banished from their land, which has been under the control of the Gentile powers even up to the present time.

FULL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPHECY MET

Josephus records very particularly the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and unconsciously not only sets a seal upon this prediction but also upon the peculiar expression: "And the *people* of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." He concludes his account with the words, "And thus, the holy house was burnt down *without Caesar's approbation.*"

Forty years prior to this event, in the middle of the last week, Messiah established a covenant, and caused the sacrifices of the Law to no longer be acceptable. Thus did Messiah cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; in other words, He made all other sacrifices meaningless; and the fact that the veil of the temple was rent in twain at His death, proved conclusively that the old things of the Law Covenant had passed away, and the time had come when they should

say no more in the language of the old Prophet, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord."

Thus far in this interpretation we meet no difficulty. Following the revealing angel's instructions we began our study of the prediction by locating the date when the commandment went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem. We have found that on the solar scale we could not possibly end the sixty-nine weeks or 483 years in the autumn, when Christ began His ministry, and of course the 486 1/2 years reckoned in solar time would end in the autumn, whereas the reverse is required by the prophecy. To insist upon exactness in fulfillment would require then the discarding of solar measurement. We have found, however, in harmony with the requirements of the prediction that by lunar measurement the 486 1/2 years do reach the exact time of Christ's crucifixion. It then of course follows that sixty-nine weeks or 483 lunar years terminate in the autumn at the beginning of Christ's ministry, thus in every feature meeting exactly the full requirements of the prophecy.

WE MEET WITH A DIFFICULTY

However, when we come to the New Testament record we meet with a difficulty. This we must not ignore. The difficulty is that in Luke 3 the statement is made that John the Baptist commenced his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. According to the secular historians Tiberius Caesar began his reign August 19, 14 A.D., one day after Augustus Caesar's death. The fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar would; according to this, be 29 A.D., which would be six months before Christ began His public ministry. This would necessitate fixing the date of Christ's birth about 1 B.C., and as He lived thirty-three and a half years, His death would be in 34 B.C. Now we are informed by Josephus that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. It would seem then that there is a mistake somewhere in these records, because the Herod mentioned is the Herod who sought to take away Christ's life. (Matt. 1.) Christ according to this account must have been born prior to 4 B.C.

We inquire, How are the statements of Luke and Matthew made to harmonize with these records? The following is the only way they possibly can: "The fifteenth year of the sole principate of Tiberius began August 19, U. C. 781 (A.D. 28), and reckoning backwards thirty years from that time (See Luke 3, ver. 23), we should have the birth of our Lord in U. C. 751, or about then But Herod the Great died at the beginning of the year 750 (B.C. 4), and our Lord's birth must be fixed some months at least before the death of Herod. If then, it be placed in 749 He would have been at least thirty-two at the time of His baptism, seeing that it took place some time after the beginning of John's ministry. This difficulty has led to the supposition that this

fifteenth year is not to be dated from the sole but from the associated principate of Tiberius, which commenced most probably at the end of 764 (A.D. 11.) According to this the fifteenth year of Tiberius will begin at the end of U. C. 779." -- Dean Alford, on Luke 3.

A SIGNAL ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

It is of course well known that our Lord was born before the present Christian era. "Our present era for the nativity, or that in popular use, is not of Apostolic or even of early origin. It is that which was fixed upon by Dionysius Exiguus, in the sixth century, and is proved to be erroneous by the fact that it places the birth of Christ no less than four years after the death of Herod -- of the Herod who, when our Lord was born, sought 'the young child to destroy him.'

"Our Lord was certainly born before the death of Herod, and the time of Herod's death is ascertained by means of an eclipse of the moon recorded by Josephus (Antiq. xvii. 4.) Just before his death Herod burnt alive, along with his companions, one Matthias, who had been made high priest, 'And that very night,' says Josephus, 'there was an eclipse of the moon.' The Passover occurred immediately after the death of Herod, and before this came the funeral feast of some days' duration, which Archelaus appointed in honor of his father. 'Such an eclipse of the moon, visible at Jerusalem, as Ideler and Wurm have proved, actually occurred at that time, in the night between the twelfth and thirteenth of March, and according to Ideler beginning at 1 h. 48 m., and ending at 4 h. 12 m. The full moon of Nisan, that is the fifteenth day of Nisan, occurred in 750 A. U. C. (B.C. 4) on the twelfth of April. If, therefore, as we have seen above, Herod died some days before this, and consequently at the beginning of April, this note of time would harmonize most excellently with the date of the eclipse of the moon.'

"Wurm, considering that an astronomical datum furnished a basis superior to all doubt, undertook the praiseworthy labor of calculating all the lunar eclipses from 6 B.C. to 1 B.C., and has tabulated the results. He shows that in the year U.C. 750 (B.C. 4), the only lunar eclipse visible at Jerusalem was that already mentioned, and that in the only other year which can enter into consideration for the year of Herod's death, there was not one." -- Wiesler's *Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels*.

A BETTER COUNTRY

Star of the promised morning, rise!
Star of the throbbing wave,
Ascend! and o'er the sable brine,

With resurrection splendor shine,
Burst thro' the clouds with beams Divine,
Mighty to shine and save:

O Morning Star! O risen Lord!
Destroyer of the tomb!
Star of the living and the dead,
Lift up at length Thy long-veiled head,
O'er land and sea Thy glories shed;
Light of the morning, come!

"ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS"

(Continued from last issue)

Jesus, having already pondered these matters in His own mind, was now seeking all the wisdom He could secure from those who would naturally be best informed on these subjects. Doubtless a part of His inquiry was at what age Messiah could in any measure begin His work, and whether or not the custom of considering a boy the son of the Law at twelve years of age was founded upon anything in the Law or was merely a human tradition. Apparently He would have been glad to have found something in the Law to have justified His entrance upon some department of the Father's business, but found nothing, as this was mere ly a provision of the Talmud and not of Divine authority.

"Other questions also almost force themselves on the mind," says Mr. Edersheim. "Most notably this: whether on the occasion of this His first visit to the temple, the virgin -mother had told her Son the history of His infancy, and of what had happened when, for the first time, He had been brought to the temple. It would almost seem so, if we might judge from the contrast between the virgin -mother's complaint about the search of His father and of her, and His own emphatic appeal to the business of His Father. But most surprising -- truly wonderful it must have seemed to Joseph, and even to the mother of Jesus, that the meek, quiet child should have been found in such company, and so engaged. It must have been quite other than what, from His past, they would have expected; or they would not have taken it for granted, when they left Jerusalem, that He was among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, perhaps mingling with the children. Nor yet would they, in such case, after they missed Him at the first night's halt -- at Sicheim, if the direct road north, through Samaria, was taken (or, according to the Mishnah, at Akrabah) -- have sought Him by the way, and in Jerusalem; nor yet would they have been 'amazed' when they found Him in the assembly of the doctors. The reply of Jesus to the half-reproachful, half-relieved expostulation of them who had sought Him 'sorrowing' these three

days, sets clearly these three things before us. He had been so entirely absorbed by the awakening thought of His being and mission, however kindled, as to be not only neglectful, but forgetful of all around. Nay, it even seemed to Him impossible to understand how they could have sought Him, and not known where He had lingered. Secondly: we may venture to say, that He now realized that this was emphatically His Father's house. And thirdly, so far as we can judge, it was then and there that, for the first time, He felt the strong and irresistible impulse - that Divine necessity of His being -- to be 'about his Father's business.' We all, when awakening to spiritual consciousness -- or, perhaps when for the first time taking part in the feast of the Lord's house -- may, and, learning from His example, should, make this the hour of decision, in which heart and life are fully consecrated to the 'business' of our Father. But there was far more than this in the bearing of Christ on this occasion. That forgetfulness of His child-life was a sacrifice -- a sacrifice of self; that entire absorption in His Father's business, without a thought of self, either in the gratification of curiosity, the acquisition of knowledge, or personal ambition -- a consecration of himself unto God. It was the first manifestation of his passive and active obedience to the will of God. Even at this stage, it was the forth-bursting of the inmost being of His life: 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.' And yet this awakening of the Christ-consciousness on His first visit to the Temple, partial, and perhaps even temporary, as it may have been, seems itself like the morning-dawn, which from the pinnacle of the temple the Priest watched, ere he summoned his waiting brethren beneath to offer the early sacrifice.

SELF-CONSECRATION TO HIS MISSION

"From what we have already learned of this history, we do not wonder that the answer of Jesus came to His parents as a fresh surprise. For, we can only understand what we perceive in its totality. But here each fresh manifestation came as something separate and new -not as part of a whole; and therefore as a surprise, of which the purport and meaning could not be understood, except in its organic connection and as a whole These three subsidiary reasons may once more be indicated here in explanation of the virgin -mother's seeming ignorance of her Son's true character: the necessary gradualness of such a revelation; the necessary development of His own consciousness; and the fact that Jesus could not have been subject to His parents, nor had true and proper human training, if they had clearly known that He was the essential Son of God'

"A further, though to us it seems a downward step, was His quiet, immediate, unquestioning return to Nazareth with His parents, and His willing submission to them while there. It was self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-consecration to His mission, with all that it implied. It

was not self-ex- anxiously inaction but self-submission, all the more glorious in proportion to the greatness of that self. This constant contrast before her eyes only deepened in the heart of Mary the ever-present impression of 'all those matters,' of which she was the most cognizant. She was learning to spell out the word Messiah, as each of 'those matters.' taught her one fresh letter in it, and she looked at them all in the light of the Nazareth-sun."

In response to the gentle chiding of His parents that He had caused them worry, uneasiness, and that they had been seeking Him, Jesus replied, "Why need you have sought Me? Did you not know that I would be somewhere about My Father's house?" We prefer this free translation, in accord with the Revised Version, to the one given in our Common Version. We may be sure that those days spent in the temple, studying the exceeding and precious promises of God's Word, were a feast to that child's expansive and expanding mind. Apparently He had reached the solution of His queries, and determined that it was not in accordance with Divine providence that He should in any sense of the word begin His ministry or public work at this time. In harmony with this conclusion we read that He returned with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them -- did not attempt to begin His heavenly mission. Apparently Jesus kept the whole matter of His mission a secret with himself up to the proper time when He entered publicly at the earliest moment upon His ministry. Undoubtedly this was the course of wisdom; He was not yet anointed to preach, hence had no authority to do so.

"VICTORY OVER THE TEMPTER"

"In that He Himself bath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." -- Heb. 2:18; Matt. 4:1-77,

OF all battles fought and victories won we place that of the controversy between Christ and Satan and our Lord's abundant triumph therein, at the head of the list as being of transcendent importance. The results of that conflict are of the most signal import not only to Jesus personally but to the entire human family.

It was eminently appropriate that in the beginning of our Lord's ministry His real attitude and spirit of loyalty should be put to the test. We read that the Savior immediately following His baptism was led of the spirit -- His own spirit, illuminated by the spirit-baptism which He had just received -- to go apart from John and the concourse of people into quiet solitude, and for this purpose He chose a wilderness place. Mark says He was impelled or "driven" of the spirit into the wilderness. The thought we get is that there was a great pressure upon our Lord's mind at this time. We have noted His study at Jerusalem at

an early age respecting the "Father's business," and how He should go about it. We found the Law instructing Him that it would not be proper for Him to engage in the Father's business until He was thirty years of age, and that in consideration of this fact He desisted and served His parents. The momentous time for which He had been waiting for eighteen years had come. He hastened to present Himself at the earliest moment, that His service should not be delayed; but now, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, instead of beginning His ministry precipitately, He felt that He must know definitely the proper course to pursue: He must not make a mistake at the very outstart of His service; He must know the Father's will, that He might render His service in harmony therewith. Such motives impelled Him to seek solitude for thought and prayer, and for reviewing the various Scriptures which hitherto He had studied and but imperfectly comprehended, but which now began to be luminous under the influence of the Holy Spirit which He had received.

COUNTING THE COST

How proper it would be that all of the Lord's people, when they have made a consecration of themselves to the Divine service, should be impelled by the new mind, the new spirit, to go apart first and to commune with the Father, and to study His Word respecting how they should render their- lives most acceptable in His service! Were this course pursued how many lives would be totally different from what they are; how many failures and changes and turnings, hither and thither, would be avoided! Our Lord expressed the matter in one of His parables, whey. He said that any one taking up His cross to follow Him should sit down first and count the cost -- learn what the Father's will would be, as well as the results to be sought. And if any of God's dear children have neglected thus to seek the right path at the beginning of their consecration, we refer them to the example of our dear Master, who was wise in this as in all things, having not only the spirit of a sound mind, but a sound mind itself, through which that spirit operated perfectly. However, our study of the Divine will need not be so completely alone as was our Master's -- we have "brethren," He had none, being Himself the forerunner. We may profitably take counsel of such as give evidence of faith in and consecration to God, that we may learn the more quickly and the more thoroughly the Father's will concerning us: especially may we have the aid of the words and example of our elder Brother, Jesus. We must never forget, however, that our consecration is to the Father's business, and that brethren can only be really helpful to us as they assist us in understanding the Father's Plan and our part therein: otherwise they might become hindrances by substituting their own or sectarian plans and seeking our consecration thereto.

TEMPTATIONS AT CONSECRATION

Our Lord's temptations may be said to have begun at this point—those temptations in which "He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It was not the boy Jesus, nor the youth Jesus, that was tempted "as we are." And our Lord's temptations after His consecration were not like the temptations which beset the world, but like the Church's temptations. In other words, our Lord was reckoned a new creature from the time of His consecration at Jordan, as we are counted new creatures in Him from the time of our consecration: and it was the consecrated Jesus who was tempted and tried like as His consecrated followers are tempted and tried. We shall see further evidences of this as we proceed to notice the character of our Lord's temptations, and to compare them with the temptations which come to His consecrated "brethren." Many have wondered why their temptations seemed to commence after their consecration to the Lord, rather than before; seemingly they expected that after consecration the Adversary would flee from them, and they should have little or no temptation—totally misunderstanding the Divine arrangement. Such temptations or tests of character as come to the consecrated are not appropriate to the unconsecrated: the present is not the judgment day of the world, but the testing time for the Church.

It would appear that our Lord's temptations progressed throughout the entire forty days, but that the three temptations specifically described were the culmination of that period of testing. We may imagine our Lord in the wilderness solitude, intently thinking over the various prophetic references to Himself, and linking these together, as an architect would first draw the outline of a building and subsequently fill out feature after feature of its internal arrangements. The outline before our Lord's mind from the Scriptures, beyond any peradventure, was the Kingdom. He was to be the King, the Seed of Abraham, under whose gracious government and wise instruction all the families of the earth were to be blessed. This, the profile; was already clearly delineated in His mind, but other features needed to be properly adjusted. How was He to fulfil the type of the Law which represented the priest as giving up his life for the sins of the people? Where would come in the type of the everlasting Priesthood? Where would come in the class of Israelites represented by Rebecca, as He Himself was represented by Isaac, and the Father by Abraham, in the type? And if Israel would receive Him, and become the Rebecca, where would come in the sacrifice, and how? And then other prophecies no doubt pressed His mind for a place in the Plan, namely the declaration that although Israel were as the sand of the sea only a remnant should be acceptable, and how then would the predestinated number of the "elect" be found, to complete the glorious Royal Priesthood; and by what process would the blessing come to all the families of the earth, if

Himself, as the High Priest, and His true followers, as the royal priests, were all to suffer and to die for righteousness' sake, as sacrifices?

SATAN AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

We may well suppose that adjustment and re-adjustment, fitting and refitting, with much reflection and prayer, occupied many of the forty days, and there may have been temptations intermingled with these all; as for instance, questionings respecting the necessity of those features represented in the types and specified in the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ which must take precedence to the glories that would follow. There may have been temptations, too, to deal dishonestly with the records, to "wrest the Scriptures," and thus self-deceived, to choose a way not in fullest conformity to the Divine outline; but we may safely suppose that as soon as such suggestions, one after another, presented themselves, they were promptly rejected, our Lord being fully determined that He would be absolutely obedient to the Father's will and accomplish the work which He had sent Him to do in exactly the manner prescribed.

So intent had been His study, and so earnest His desire for quiet fellowship with the Father and His Law, that forty days were spent under such conditions, and apparently so deeply absorbed was our Lord that He did not even think of food. Nor does this appear so strange to us, when we remember that He was perfect, while we are imperfect, physically as well as otherwise. "He afterward hungered."

It was at the close of this period of Bible study and prayer, when our Lord was weak from fasting, that the Adversary assaulted Him with three temptations.

The word here translated "devil" is *diabolos*, and is used with the definite article -- *the* devil. The Arch-deceiver is thus Scripturally distinguished from the fallen angels, who throughout the Scriptures are spoken of in the plural, designated by another word signifying *demons*. Here, then, is one place in the Scriptures where the personality of the prince of devils is definitely affirmed, and his person and power acknowledged by our Lord Himself. It is not necessary for us, however, to assume that Satan appeared to our Lord in a human form; he -may or may not thus have been personally manifest. If personally manifest, we may rest well assured that he presented himself in his very best appearance, as an angel of light. Indeed, we may well remember that our Lord, in His pre-human condition, had, as the Father's agent, been the Creator of Satan, and we remember that Satan was an angel of very high order, whose sin consisted in an attempt to usurp authority and to become the potentate of earth, by stealing the sympathy, affection, and obedience of humanity, and that on this account he fell under Divine reprobation. We can imagine that a visit from him to Jesus would not be at all inappropriate, as he undoubtedly

knew the facts of our Lord's consecration, and to some extent knew of the work which the Father had given Him to do in the redemption of the fallen race of men. We can imagine Him even presenting himself in a friendly manner, and assuring our Lord Jesus that he felt a great interest in Him and in His work; that he himself had been painfully surprised to note the penalty of sin upon mankind, and the dreadful degradation which had resulted; and that now he would be glad indeed to have something done by which poor humanity might be delivered from its groaning, travailing, dying conditions. As a friend, thoroughly versed in the situation all around, and interested in its success, and thoroughly conversant with the mental moods and foibles of humanity, he was in a place where' he felt qualified to offer some suggestions respecting the very work which our Lord Jesus wished to perform, the plan for which he was now considering.

TEMPTATION TO USE SPIRITUAL FAVORS FOR PERSONAL PROFIT

First, he manifests his personal interest in our Savior by suggesting His weakness from lack of food and the necessity for taking proper care of His physical health if He would do the great and noble work He had undertaken. He reminded Him also of His present power-that He had just been imbued with Divine power, and that He had now full ability to supply His wants, and need only, to speak the word and have the stones turned into food. Thus also, he suggested, He would be demonstrating to Himself the verity of the new power which He witnessed coming upon Him, and had subsequently felt. What, more cunning temptation could be devised than this? Compliance with it evidently meant, not only the relief of His hunger and the strengthening of His physical frame, but additionally it apparently meant the conversion of Satan, who now seemingly was in a repentant attitude, and desirous of co-operating with Him in the undoing of the evil work of the long ago. It was a strong temptation.

Such temptations come also to all the consecrated; not in exactly the same form, nor in the same language, but somewhat similarly-suggestions that the new relationship with God, and the strength which it brings, may be used to some extent at least in creature comforts -- may be utilized for our temporal advancement; may be made to make us shine before men as very honorable and favored of God; may be used to command large salaries, or at least as a means for seeking them, even if never found. We may then all note carefully how our Lord resisted His would-be friend and his worldly-wise suggestions. He flatly refused the suggestion of using His spiritual power to serve His temporal wants. The spiritual gift could no more be used to procure temporal comforts than it could be sold for money to Simon (Acts 8:18-24) ; but without going into details, and without boasting that He was too holy to think of such a sacrilegious use of the power

entrusted to Him, Jesus simply answered the Adversary in Scriptural language, that a man's life was not wholly dependant upon what he should eat, but that obedience to the Word of God would be a surer guarantee of life. And after this manner each of the Lord's followers should answer every question which in any manner proposes the acquirement of earthly blessings and comforts at the sacrifice of the spiritual. To quite a number of the Lord's "brethren" the Adversary has presented this same temptation in this form If *you* follow too closely to the Truth, and permit the Holy Spirit of the Truth to make you very zealous in its service, you will soon have no bread, no food, for the world's people with whom you must deal do not appreciate such things They will discharge you from their employ, or they will cease to deal at your store, or they will dismiss you from being their pastor, or they will withdraw from you their fellowship, their society, etc., and you will starve for all the good things of this present life. The proper answer is that God is able to take care of all who respect His spiritual blessings too much to sell them for a mess of pottage, as did Esau in the type; and that we are convinced that whoever lives according to the Word of God, though he may lose some of the comforts of the present time, will eventually gain the far better, the life eternal with exceeding glory.

Our Lord's positiveness of reply shut off the temptation quickly, and discouraged the Adversary from further proceeding along that line; and so it is with us, His followers; if we are positive in our rejection of temptation it increases our strength of character, not only for that time, but also for subsequent temptations; and it disconcerts to some extent our Adversary, who, noting our positiveness, knows well that it is useless to discuss the matter with persons of strong convictions and positive characters; whereas, if the question were parleyed over, the result would surely be the advancing of further reasons and arguments on the Adversary's part, and a danger on our part that we would be overmatched in argument, for, as the Apostle declares, the devil is a wily adversary, and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Prompt and positive obedience to the Word and Spirit of the Lord is the only safe course for any of the "brethren."

TEMPTING GOD BY UNAUTHORIZED EFFORTS

Disappointed in his first effort, the Adversary quickly turned the subject, not even dissenting from our Lord's judgment in the matter. The second temptation he presented is like all others that came to our Lord and that come to His consecrated followers, namely not a temptation to gross wickedness -- to steal, to kill, etc. -- but a temptation to do the Lord's work in another way than that which the Lord had planned -- the misuse of the Divine powers given Him by endeavoring to accomplish good results in an improper manner.

Satan took our Lord Jesus to Jerusalem and up to the flat roof of one of the wings of the Temple -- not physically, but mentally, just as mentally we can go to various places and do certain things without change of physical location. The suggestion now made was this: I (Satan) can give you a good suggestion respecting a way to bring yourself quickly into prominence before the people of Israel, and you will be pleased with it, because it is a Scriptural way; indeed I have found that it is foretold in the prophecy that Messiah at His coming will do this: and the people will readily recognize it as a fulfillment of the words of the Prophet David. Thus they will embrace your cause quickly, you will become the leader of the people, and your work will go on most grandly. And as I said before, I will rejoice in seeing the prosperity of the work, for I am heartily *sick* of the degradation which I have witnessed for now four thousand years. My suggestion is that you go to the roof of the southern wing of the Temple which on its rear part overlooks the Valley of Hinnom, towering above it six hundred feet, and which also overlooks the court of the Temple, in which there are hundreds of devout Jews; then leap from this eminence, and arise unhurt by the fall. This will demonstrate more quickly than anything else you could do or say that the power of the Highest is upon you, and that you are the Messiah. This, I say, is referred to in the Scriptures which says, "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." -- Matt. 4:6.

Similar are the temptations which Satan presents to the consecrated followers of Jesus: Make a great show before the world and before fellow-men; attract their attention by any means, and not simply by the preaching of the cross of Christ; use the spiritual powers and blessings that you have received for doing some great and striking, smiting work, which will appeal to the natural man, and thus secure quick and great success; do this instead of doing the quiet and less conspicuous work of presenting spiritual things to the spiritual class, which work the vast majority can in no wise appreciate, but will only shun you, consider you peculiar, and which not only will lose you the sympathy of the mass, but will bring you specially the hatred of some of the principal professors of Christendom.

Again our Lord answered promptly and correctly: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Satan would like to have us walk by sight, not by faith; he would like to have us continually tempting God, and demanding some ocular demonstrations of His favor and protection, instead of accepting the testimony of His Word, and relying thereon implicitly in faith. In the light of the unfolding of the Scriptures we see that Satan, probably unwittingly, quoted a passage of Scripture wholly out of its proper meaning and interpretation, a passage which referred, not to the literal feet of Jesus, and to literal stones, and to literal angels, but to the symbolic feet - members of the Body of Christ today, and to the stones of stumbling, doctrinal and otherwise, which are now permitted in the pathway of the faithful, and to the angels or ministers of Divine Truth who in the present harvest time would be commissioned to bear up the feet members with such counsels, admonitions, and expositions of Scripture as would be necessary for them.-Psa. 91 :11, 12.

TEMPTATION TO OBTAIN DESIRED GOOD RESULTS BY COMPROMISE

Satan's third temptation we may presume was presented likewise in a friendly and sympathetic manner, indicative of a desire for co-operation in our Lord's great work. He took Him to a high mountain-not literally, but mentally. Indeed, there is no literal high mountain near Jerusalem, nor anywhere in the world, from which all the kingdoms of the world and their glory could be seen. Satan took our Lord mentally to a very high symbolic mountain (kingdom.) He pictured before Him the immensity of his (Satan's) own power throughout the world, his control of all the nations and peoples to a large extent, and this our Lord subsequently acknowledged when He referred to Satan as "the prince [ruler] of this world." This panoramic presentation of Satan's power and influence throughout the world was designed to impress upon the mind of our Redeemer the thought that Satan's friendship and assistance would be most valuable-nay, almost of vital importance to the success of His mission, and hence that it was very fortunate indeed that at this juncture Satan had called upon Him in so friendly a mood, and that he apparently so sincerely welcomed His efforts and was ready to co-operate therewith.

Satan possibly pointed out to our Lord that Messiah was specially referred to as the King of Israel, and to bless Israel, and he may have admitted that a light of influence would extend to all nations through Him, but the center of his argument would seem to be that he proposed to Jesus a still larger kingdom than Israel. He proposed to Him a kingdom embracing all the nations of the earth, and that He should have the control of all these, and be able to bring in the blessed reforms which were designed of God, only one condition being insisted upon, namely that whatever kingdom or rule or authority

might be established must recognize Satan. The Adversary thus seemed to see what he thought a favorable opportunity for consummating his original plans, for we cannot suppose that his original intention was to gain control of a dying and depraved race, but that he much rather would be the Lord or ruler of a highly enlightened and well-endowed people. He was willing, therefore, to see carried into effect all the gracious work which God had designed, and willing to reform himself and to become the leader of reform, provided only that he should be recognized as having the chief place of influence in connection with mankind. It was after this manner that he wished our Lord to do worship or reverence to him-to recognize his influence and co-operation in the work, and not for a moment can we suppose that he expected Him to kneel before him and to worship him as God.

GET THEE HENCE SATAN

Our Lord's reply to this last temptation shows that it fully awakened Him to a realization of the fact that there was no real reformation at work in Satan's heart; that he was still ambitious, self-seeking, as at the beginning of his downward course; and He realized that to even discuss the matter further with one who had thus avowed his real sentiments would be disloyalty to the Father, and hence His words, "Get thee hence, Satan" -- leave Me; you cannot co-operate with Me at all; My work is in full accord with the absolute standard of the Divine will; I can be a party to no program contrary to this, however alluring some of its features might be in promising a speedy conquest of the world, and a speedy establishment of a reign of righteousness and blessing and an avoidance of personal suffering; I cannot serve two masters; I can only recognize the one supreme Jehovah, as Lord of heaven and of earth, and therefore could not recognize you in any position of authority except as the great Jehovah would appoint you to it, which I know He would never do, so long as you are of the present ambitious spirit. I am operating along the line of the declaration, "Thou shalt worship [reverence] the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

We may readily discern that this temptation of our Lord was but a sample illustration of such as beset His followers all along the Narrow Way, from the same source, directly or through agencies. Satan, through his various mouthpieces, is continually saying to the saints, Here is a more successful way of accomplishing your object than that which you are pursuing, a more successful way than the Lord's way. Bend a little; make compromise with the worldly spirit; do not hew too close to the line of the Word of God and the example of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles; you must be more like the world, in order to exert an influence -- mix a little into politics, and a good deal into secret societies; keep in touch with the fads and foibles of the day, and above all things keep any light of present truth under a bushel -- thus alone

can you have influence and accomplish your good desires toward men. But our dear Master assures us that we are to be faithful to the Lord and to His Plan, and let things work out as best they may along that line; and that we may rest assured that in the end the Father's Plan not only is the best but really the only plan for accomplishing His great designs, and that if we would be associated therein with Him as co-laborers, it must be by recognizing Him as our only Master, and' with an eye single to His approval.

HOLY ANGELS MINISTERED UNTO HIM

Our Lord's utter refusal of every other way of carrying out His mission than the one which the Father had marked out, the way of self-sacrifice, the Narrow Way, was indeed a great victory. The Adversary left Him, finding nothing in Him that he could take hold of or work upon, so thoroughly loyal was He to the very Word and Spirit of Jehovah. And then, the trial being ended, we read that holy angels came and ministered to our Lord -- doubtless supplying Him with refreshment such as He had refused to exercise the Divine power to obtain for Himself. And such we may recognize as being the experience of our Lord's followers: with victory comes a blessing from the Lord, fellowship of spirit, refreshment of heart, a realization of Divine favor that makes stronger for the next trial.

Another lesson here is that temptation does not imply sin. As our Lord was tempted "without sin" so may His brethren be if they follow His example and with purity of heart, purity of intention, seek only the Father's will. Sin could come only through yielding to the temptation. But let us not forget that hesitancy after the wrong is seen increases the power of the temptation. And we may note here that while Satan is a tempter, endeavoring to ensnare us into wrong paths and wrong conduct, God is not so; "He tempteth no man" (Jas. 1:13), and even though He permit the Adversary and his agents to beset His people, it is not with the object of ensnaring them, but with the opposite object, that they may by such trials and testings be made the stronger, developing character through exercise in resisting evil. Let us remember too for our strengthening, the Scriptural assurance that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to resist and overcome: but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape.

To avail ourselves of this provision requires merely faith, and the more we exercise our faith in such matters the more of it we will have, becoming stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might; and thus by Divine grace and under the Master's assistance we may come off overcomers -conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.--2 Cor. 22:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; Eph. 6:10; Rom. 8:37-39

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren

The Lord strengthen you and give you great courage in and for your labor of love.

I hereby send you £_____ as a small assistance. I would it were more but Father knows. We are but a small number in Southern Queensland, and to a great extent isolated from one another by distance. For the Commemoration seven of us gathered at the house of an aged brother and sister. We had a happy gathering, and realized that the Master was in our midst. There is no Class here, but when we can, we gather to speak of His loving-kindness and to gain spiritual gladness.

I am unable to do much as I am very deaf and eyes defective and suffer with neuritis. I am seventy-six years of age, so that almost all I can do is to carry my brothers and sisters to the Throne of Grace and talk to Father about them, and I sometimes write letters to any of the Lord's children who are isolated in the country district, and there are many such. It is a joy to serve in any small way I can, and I enjoy much of the blessings He has promised to those who love Him. He is so good to me and gives me the witness that I am His.

The First Volume of the Revelation came safely and I enjoyed the reading. I have had the assurance of forgiving love, and the witness that I am a child of God for many years, but was not satisfied with the teachings of the Methodist Church to which I belonged. There was always something I craved for by way of intimate knowledge of our heavenly Father's Plan, until 1910, when I first saw Pastor Russell's books, and since then I have enjoyed Present Truth, to my great joy and spiritual benefit. I can truly say as I get older "It is not going down the hill but rising higher and higher." With the HERALD and the REVELATION and the precious Word of God, "I nothing want beside"; that is, nothing but what will more and more reveal His will and His loving kindness toward me and all mankind.

If the Lord will give me wisdom and understanding to walk closely in the Master's footsteps, "and He will," I can trust the rest to Him. "He will choose our inheritance for us." By grace and favor,

Your sister in the One Hope,

Mrs. E. H., Aus.

Dear Brethren:

For some time it has been my desire to write to you, therefore I take this opportunity to give you some news from Finland.

As you perhaps know, the friends in Helsingfors have for several years been publishing a monthly journal named "*Valoa Kohti*" (Against Light). Up to the end of last year there was amongst the brethren several preachers and also one pilgrim. But since last autumn there has appeared different viewpoints. Some of them have taken up with the Universalist belief. At the Annual Convention, which was held in Helsingfors early in January, there was another sifting, after which, of the elder brethren, only Brother Karkinen remained in the same state as before, the others having separated and, as I have heard, associate with the "Universalists."

Here in Wiborg there are very few friends, and at present not a capable speaker. At the end of last year I. was praying to the Lord for some employment in His vineyard,. to which I received answer that I should begin to translate lessons from "THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM" to the journal "*Valoa Kohti*." Since then I have regularly made some translations. Also from the book "THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" I have commenced to translate to the mentioned journal. Knowing that your desire is to serve others, I have neglected to ask from you any permission to do this translating.

Brother Karkinen begs to send for his part and in behalf of the friends in our country their loving greetings, and to tell you that the lessons which have been translated from the HERALD have been of blessing and edification.

With love in Him who loved us first,

U. L., Finland.

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings in the name of our Advocate. For some time now I wanted to write and acquaint you of the joy and blessing that came to my heart and head since I have read Volume I of "THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST"; but I was reluctant to do so, not desiring to encroach on your precious time. However, I cannot longer withhold the impulse.

It is my firm conviction that our Lord has blessed the preparation of the exposition of the visions, and having been blessed by it I desire to extend the blessing to others. I am not in a position to do so financially so I will give my time. To this end I request the following literature.

I am eagerly but patiently waiting for Volume II to feast upon this rich food that remains.

The burden of my prayer is that the Lord will keep you humble; for I perceive that pride and arrogance are the chief enemies of God's servants, and have time and again seriously impaired their usefulness even in our very day. I also pray His richest blessing on the coming Convention and Annual Meeting. With sincerest love,

Yours in the One Hope,

R. A. M., N. Y.

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings in the Lord. Through Brother V. Devasantaham of Madras, I came to know that you have started a journal called "THE HERALD of CHRIST'S KINGDOM." He also sent me some magazines to go through.

Since 1913 I have been in the Truth. I have gone through the six Volumes of "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES" by our beloved Pastor Russell. For three years I was doing no temporal work and I spent my entire time in the Lord's service. In the beginning of 1917 my financial distress forced me to look for a position to keep up my maintenance and my family. Still I am financially very poor. I shall be glad to read the above journal if you would kindly send me the same free of cost, taking me as one of the Lord's poor. I would also request you to send me all the back numbers of the HERALD and a copy of the *Divine Plan* you have published. When I am able, I shall pay you the cost of all this literature. Please send me also a supply of the various kinds of free tracts and booklets you have published for free distribution. I shall very gladly do this work Thanking you in anticipation, and with Christian love and prayers,

Your brother in Christ,

Y. J., India

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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OBSERVATIONS, OUTLOOK AND REVIEW

"IS PROTESTANTISM IN PERIL?"

THE shaking and disintegration of the ecclesiastical heavens predicted for the last days (Heb. 12:26), is manifestly in process before our eyes today, even to those who appear not to be giving heed to the more sure word of prophecy on the subject. Note the following Editorial in a recent issue of the *Boston Herald*:

"There is no concealing the peril of the breaking up of the existing Protestant Church organization. The remark is attributed to the Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Theological Seminary, in a sermon of Sunday last. He predicted 'serious secessions or open rebellion' if the conservatives should undertake by legislation to enforce doctrinal interpretations that would constrain the consciences of the liberals. He declared that no Protestant communion can lose any great number of its ministers and members without being hobbled in its work and limited in its influence.

No doubt the situation in Grand Rapids inspired this sermon. 'The Fosdick case' is now in the hands of a committee of the Presbyterian General Assembly in session in the Michigan city. That case concerns immediately one minister and a single church, the minister famous and popular, the church large and powerful. But the case also brings forward the whole issue between two schools of thought, two temperaments, two theories of the church. We doubt if even in the great political conventions soon to be held feeling will rise much higher, excitement mount to greater intensity, men strive more earnestly, whether to attain victory for their own ideas or to find a common platform on which the advocates of all the varying ideas may take their stand, than will be the case in this church convention the present week.

"Strong as is our hope that conciliatory councils may prevail and that in the near future there shall be no serious split in any of the Protestant denominations, we must not fail to take account of the situation in its full significance."

Leaders in the Catholic Church observing the inroads that are made in the ranks of Protestantism take occasion to fortify their own position with regard to the exclusive right which they claim for their clergy to interpret and to dictate to the people what is Divine truth; and they bring the charge that it is the ignoring of their claim on this point that has led to modernism. Thus the *Catholic Weekly, America*, comments

"The modernists, brought up in Protestantism, have at last revealed to the light of day what was always at the bottom of the Protestant doctrine of private judgment applied to the religion of Christ. Either one is free in these matters, and then there is no revelation, or the Christian is not free to believe what he likes, and then there is no Protestantism."

The foregoing Catholic argument like many of their deductions is thoroughly misleading. No principle is made more prominent in the New Testament than that of the right of private judgment on the part of individual believers. "Prove all things," says St. Paul, addressing the individual members of the early Church; and this admonition sums up

the spirit and teaching of the entire New Testament on this subject. To admit that many who exercise the right of individual judgment have become modernists and infidels does not mean that we must grant that the right of private judgment is wrong; rather, We must look elsewhere to fix the responsibility for the repudiation of the Bible in modern times. Those who today adopt the viewpoint of modernism, infidelity, etc., are doing so largely because in exercising the right of individual judgment they can no longer accept the perversions and the corruption of the Christian faith that have been foisted upon the people so long by the Papacy and also by Protestantism, to a large extent in the darker past. The creeds that have pictured the Almighty as a great monster, and so misrepresented that Holy Name and the Truth, can no longer be approved in the light that is shining in our day. The mistake of the modernist is in classifying the Bible along with the creeds, as being in support of the error of the creeds, and in the consequent discarding of the Scriptures as an inspired revelation of Divine truth.

Thus modernism in the form of Higher Criticism, evolution, human philosophy, etc., is rapidly supplanting faith in the Bible. And all this which we see transpiring is in full accord with the development and progress of the Divine Plan. The exercise of the right of individual judgment does not result in the conversion of multitudes to the true faith now, but it does result in the conversion, sanctification, and preparation of the Little Flock to be Christ's joint-heirs in the Kingdom. By and by when the great Adversary is bound and the darkness is cleared away, all mankind will be free from the bondage of superstition and error and will be called upon to exercise their own wills, the right of private judgment: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." And of that same time the Revelator predicts that: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

THE BIBLE AGAIN CONFIRMED

"UNVEILING OF BABEL TOWERS"

"The oldest traditions recorded in the Bible and the newest archaeological discoveries in the region of the Euphrates have a close and interesting connection. On the earliest chronicles light is thrown by the latest discoveries. It may be only a dim light, but it decreases the darkness in which lay hidden the beginnings of civilizations that are dead, and discloses scenes of human life and action regarding which we had far more guesswork than knowledge. The excavations conducted by Maj. C. Leonard Woolley, on behalf of the British Museum and the Pennsylvania University Museum, at 'Ur of the Chaldees,' the place of Abraham's nativity, whence the patriarch journeyed to Canaan, are uncovering some of the earliest efforts in the

art of building, especially the building of towers and temples, with indications of the deities and their worship. One of the ancient buildings, probably known to Abraham in his childhood, is identified as a temple of the moon god Sin, and its brickwork is said to be of the earliest type dated about 6000 years ago.

"Of more general interest is a ziggurat -- a terraced temple tower peculiar to Assyrian and Babylonian builders -- which is asserted to be a 'counterpart of the Tower of Babel.' Who has seen the original? That distinguished scholar the late Canon T. K. Cheyne wrote that 'in the ziggurat of the great temple E-sagila,' at Babylon, 'we have the true tower of Babel.' In the Borsippa inscription Nebuchadnezzar speaks of this tower, saying: 'E-temenan-ki, the ziggurat of Babylon, I restored and finished.' From a Babylonian tablet the late George Smith has given a description of the building, saying that 'the whole height of this tower above its foundation was 15 gar, or 300 feet, exactly equal to the breadth of the base; and, as the foundation was most probably raised above the level of the ground, it would give a height of over 300 feet above the plain for this grandest of Babylonian temples.' That is not much to show, for the attempt of men to erect a tower by which they might climb up 'above the stars of God,' 'sit upon the mount of the congregation,' 'ascend above the heights of the clouds,' and 'make themselves like the Most High.'

"The structure which is regarded as a sister tower at Ur presents problems respecting its completion or restoration. Though the bricks, well and truly laid, in its lowest courses, may be 6000 years old, those in the upper work, so far as it is preserved, were laid probably not more than 2660 years ago. They date from about 535 B.C., in the reign of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, and are stamped with his name. Whether for completion or repair, the work was crowned by him, as he says on inscribed clay cones found among the debris. This tower on the right bank of the Euphrates, at *Ur*, and the tower on the left bank, farther up the river, at Babylon, may yet have more to tell us about beginnings of worship, art, and industry in those distant Sumerian days of which we have but hints in the book of Genesis." -- Boston *Herald*.

"HARNESSING THE JORDAN"

"Who would look to the river which flows out of the Dead Sea for the stimulus that is to quicken Palestine into activity and start it on the way to success as a 'going concern'? True it is that romance still clings to the Jordan, and that this ancient stream, the most famous in the world, is sure to move the imaginations of men as long as history is studied and religion remains a vital force. Yet when Sir Martin Conway visited the spot a few months ago, he found its valley lands 'pestilential, abandoned to swamps and jungle, undrained, untended

and forlorn.' "Take the scene which he witnessed just north of the Dead Sea. 'A few miserable boats lay anchored off shore; broken boxes, perishing hulls of boats, a rusting boiler, empty kerosene tins, bits of iron, a roofless shed, and behind it half a dozen wrecked lorries and auto cars with unhooded engines in hopeless decay, broken bottles, old shoes and other rubbish, disfigured the margin of the water.' Naturally enough the English traveler thought of how that 'valley of death' might be made to live again and its pestilential conditions cured 'if only the right men came there and were rightly led.' And he foresaw that 'mayhap before many years have passed this home of the hyena, the jackal, and the fox will yield sustenance for thousands of peaceful laboring men as it did in the great days of all-conquering Rome.'

"Exactly how that prediction was to be realized the maker of it had no definite idea. But the technicians have followed him with a plan which promises to change the whole outlook, not only for the Jordan Valley, but throughout Palestine. It is proposed, in a word, to harness the stream whose energy is now running to waste, and no river of its dimensions ever lent itself so completely to a hydro-electric project of this kind. The length of the Jordan in a straight line between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee is not more than sixty-five miles, but the sinuosities of its course make the actual length 680 or more. There are more sudden changes of level in the stream, one a drop of 680 feet, and the rapids thus formed are to be utilized as so much added force.

"Already an organization has been formed, headed by such men as justice Louis D. Brandeis and Federal Judge J. W. Mack, for pushing the undertaking to success. Financed on both sides of the Atlantic, the system will be adequately equipped for supplying current to the colonies long established in Palestine, to the new agriculture which Hebrew enterprise has introduced, and to the numerous industries which have been organized under Zionist auspices. The time seems thus near at hand when, with its gloom and desolation banished, the historic Jordan will have taken a new place in the annals of the Holy Land *as* its chief source of light, heat, and power."

Those who rest their faith upon the prophecies of the Bible are of course deeply interested in every reasonable suggestion as to how the great changes predicted for the land of Israel as well as for the whole earth will be brought about; nevertheless, realizing that earth's future government will be backed by omnipotence, we have no difficulty in believing that all things written by the holy Prophets concerning the restitution of all things, shall be fulfilled and that the earth will yet be filled with the glory of the Lord.

NEWS FROM PALESTINE

OSCAR STRAUS BACK FROM PEACE TRIP MET WITH ENCOURAGEMENT

"Oscar. S. Straus, former Ambassador to Turkey, returned yesterday on the Cunarder Berengaria after a four and a half months' trip to the Near East. He was accompanied by Mrs. Straus and their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Straus.

"The former diplomat went to Palestine at the request of the Federated .Council of the Churches of Christ in America to help restore harmony among the religious sects. The invitation was sent by Sir Herbert Samuel, British High Commissioner.

"Mr. Straus also crossed the Jordan River and had a conference at Aman with Hussein, King of Arabia.

"'King Hussein told me,' said Mr. Straus, 'that he ought to rule over Palestine and Syria, intimating that the United States supported his claims to those regions. I told him he was entirely wrong, as the Balfour declaration regarding Palestine had been approved by a joint resolution of Congress which the President of the United States had signed.

"'I also told him Palestine had progressed more in five years under the British mandate than in five .centuries, under the rule of the Arabs and the Ottoman Empire. Order had been established and every one could walk the high roads without fear. of attack. When I crossed into Transjordan every Arab on a camel, donkey, horse, or on foot that I met had a gun slung at his back. I impressed upon King Hussein that before seeking fresh dominions to rule over he had better show to. the world that he was capable of governing properly the country assigned to him under the treaty.'

"Mr. Straus said Damianos, the Orthodox Greek Patriarch in Jerusalem, was in full accord with the purposes of his mission to Palestine to bring harmony between the seven Christian sects; the Jews, and the Arabs, and gave him a declaration in writing that he would do his best to bring about harmony. The Armenian Patriarch and the Archbishop of Jordania expressed similar sentiments.

"Mr.. Straus said he worked for a harmony that would justly reflect the teachings of the Prince of Peace. 'I mean Jesus,' he said.

"He visited sixty-two Jewish agrarian colonies and was greatly impressed with their development. The colonists were like the pioneers in America, who worked with a Bible in one hand and a plow in the other. He thought the type of immigration was of a high order."

ENDURING HARDNESS AS GOOD SOLDIERS

*"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." -
- 2 Tim. 2:3.*

THERE are many illustrations used in the Bible, and all of them very forceful. The one which represents the Christian as a soldier, has a great deal of meaning. We are not to suppose that the angels in heaven are soldiers, nor that that term would be applicable to them. There is no war, going on in Heaven, but there is a war going on here on earth.

Six thousand years ago our first parents became entrapped, and the whole race was sold under sin -- because the servants of sin and Satan. More and more this influence has prevailed -- not that all willingly surrender to Satan, but that he puts darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus deceives mankind and leads them captive at his will.

All who desire to be in harmony with God would be out of harmony with Satan and sin. And they might at times have resisted these, and have tried to do God's will. But there was no organized undertaking for the overthrow of sin until Jesus came. His mission was to overcome Satan, overcome sin, and to bring everything into full harmony with God's arrangement. Earth, this province of God's great empire, being in a rebellious state, needed to be conquered and restored, and Jesus undertook the work, with Divine backing.

The first step was laying down His own life as a ransom-price for the sin of the whole world, and thus making good for the original transgression. But before taking His power and exercising it in the overthrow of Satan and sin, Jesus, according to the Father's will, began the selection of a Church class, variously styled members of His Body, His Bride, His companions and brethren in the Kingdom, His Royal Priesthood, under Himself as the great Royal High Priest. All those who have heard the Message, and whose hearts have been responsive, who have recognized the wrong conditions here prevailing, and who have felt sympathy for the race that is here sold as slaves of sin and Death -- all these have been invited to become members of this select class.

TERMS OF WARFARE STATED AT BEGINNING

These were informed at the very beginning, that it would be necessary for them to fight a good fight. They were invited to enlist in the army to battle against Satan, and instructed that they should have full confidence that ultimately faith would have its victory. They were also told that they must suffer, laying down their lives as their Head and Forerunner laid down His life -- not living for the world, but contrariwise, accepting His arrangement and living altogether for the purpose of carrying out their consecration with Him.

The final honor to which God has invited them is to a share in His great Kingdom, with His Son. This implies a change of nature to all who have become soldiers of the Cross, followers of the Lamb; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." These are called to forego the rights and privileges of the present time, and by their lives to leave their mark, for a testimony to the world, for the benefit of mankind, and especially for the glory of God and for the calling out of others who might desire similarly to walk in the Narrow Way.

SELF OUR SPECIAL FOE

The warfare that these are called upon to wage is a warfare against sin and the powers of darkness. (Eph. 6:11.) They are pledged to the Lord for right, for truth, for goodness. They are thus to fight the good fight. These soldiers will find, too, that some of their greatest difficulties are right in their own person. They have tendencies toward sin, because of being members of the human family, children of wrath, of sin, even as others. Their relationship to the Lord is as New Creatures.

The New Creature is obliged to fight against and to control the flesh. This is a great battle which each fights for himself. Each soldier may more or less assist and set an example to the other soldiers, but the chief battle is with *himself*. It is a *hand-to-hand* conflict. Although he is expected at all times to be on the alert against the wiles of Satan and the world, yet his special fight is with the enemies of his own flesh. St. Paul himself had taken the shield of faith -wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked-and the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Timothy was a young soldier, and the Apostle was encouraging him with advice. He had already come into the Lord's company, under the Lord's standard.

THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD SOLDIER

St. Paul intimates that any one of us may be a good soldier, or contrariwise, a bad soldier, a poor soldier. We can imagine some soldiers who would be very disregardful of orders, not prompt to obey the command of the Leader. We can see that a good soldier is (1) one who is very much in sympathy with the Captain of his Salvation. He is an intelligent soldier, and sees that he has on the proper armor, that he wears it properly, and that he gets the very best possible use out of this armor. He sees that in his walk he has a soldierly bearing, as a proper representative of the King, and of the great Kingdom so near at hand..

(2) He is not ashamed of his flag, nor of the garment of Christ's righteousness. He is to lift up the standard of righteousness everywhere. He enlists in this warfare, knowing that it means his death -- the death of the flesh, of the human nature. He is to be a good soldier - - not merely outwardly loyal, merely wearing the uniform, but having the full, spirit of the Cause. This means that what ever experiences

come to him he is to receive these thankfully, fully, and be glad to have the privilege of enduring some thing for His Captain and in the interests of the Kingdom to which he has sworn allegiance.

The thought which the Apostle is impressing is that all good soldiers should endure hardness -- hard, distressing conditions, circumstances that are quite unpleasant, difficult. Earthly soldiers are obliged to tramp through water and mud, enduring long, wearisome marches. Sometimes they are short of rations, sometimes obliged to sleep on the ground. Sometimes their battles are waged in the face of great opposition.

So the soldier of Christ is to endure whatever experiences may come to him, under the guidance of his Captain, not only willingly, but gladly, rejoicing that he has been permitted to enter this army of the Lord, knowing that these experiences are working out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." These various hard experiences of the Christian are designed to work out for his good, that he may "lay hold on eternal life," and gain a share in the Kingdom with his Redeemer.

ENTERING THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

"Jesus saith unto him, Follow Me." -- John 1:35-46.

THE great foundational truth upon which rests the hope of all humanity was set forth in the words of John the Baptist when introducing Jesus to two, who became our Lord's first disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God." Undoubtedly the reference was indirectly to the lamb slain at the Passover for the sins of the people, and directly to the Lamb of Isa. 53:4, 5, 10. The day before John had added: "Which taketh away the sin of the world." This great truth of the atonement, fundamental in Christianity, was evidently plain to Christ from the beginning and perhaps was comprehended more or less by the clear-seeing forerunner.

At this point we may regard the selection of footstep followers of Christ as having its beginning, when these two disciples of John turned and followed the Savior. They were not disloyal to the Baptist in turning from him to Jesus, for this is what he wanted them to do. He knew that he must decrease and Christ must increase, and he never showed himself greater than when he turned his followers away from himself to the greater light. It has been truly said that unselfishness is at the heart of true leadership.

The name of one of these disciples is given in the narrative -- Andrew; the name of the other is omitted, but it is presumed that it was John, the writer of this Gospel, whose modesty in such matters is indicated

by the withholding of his name on another occasion also -- when he refers to himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." How beautiful this modesty, how much it endears the character of John to all of us. A less modest man in writing of the matter would probably have told of how he first thought of following Jesus and invited Andrew to accompany him. But we cannot only have much more love for John because of this characteristic of humility, but it gives us correspondingly more confidence in all he has written -that ambition did not warp or color any of his descriptions of the matters recorded by him.

The modesty of the two men is further exemplified by their course of conduct in following the Lord instead of approaching Him boldly and saying, "Sir, we have the honorable distinction of being amongst the most prominent disciples of John the Baptist, and now introduce ourselves to you." On the contrary, they followed quietly, wondering where our Lord resided and how they might have an opportunity without obtruding themselves to become acquainted with Him. Their reverence for Him and their modest opinion of themselves restrained them from improprieties. However, after they had followed the Lord probably a considerable distance on His journey toward His abode, He turned to them, saying, "What seek ye?" or, as we might translate it into the form of today, "Is there anything I can do for you?" Taken by surprise, they merely answered the Master, "Rabbi, we are wondering where you reside." Our Lord answered, "Come and see," and they went with Him and spent the remainder of that day (for this was about four o'clock in the afternoon) in His company. Their queries and our Lord's answers during that afternoon and evening are open for our imagination, for no record is given us. Doubtless they explained to the Lord what they had heard respecting Him from John the Baptist, and made inquiries regarding His future work and Kingdom. We may be sure that our Lord told them only part of the truth, in harmony with His subsequent statement to all of the disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now." -- John I6:12.

There are several lessons here that may profit us: (1) The humility of the disciples in their approach; (2) Their proper ambition to have all that God had provided for them and to make use of their opportunity - .-to progress from being the disciples of John to the discipleship of Jesus; (3) Their seeking in this unobtrusive manner to have fellowship with the Lord and to become better acquainted; (4.) Our Lord's generous reception of them and hospitable invitation to His home; (5) His wisdom in not telling them the whole truth-neither about the heavenly things nor about the earthly trials and difficulties. Meat in due season is the Scriptural order-milk for babes, strong meat for those who are more developed, as the Apostle recommends.

How much need all the Lord's dear followers have for applying these various lessons each to his own heart and experience and practice! How many of us have had a zeal without wisdom, and have fed new beginners with strong meat, which has troubled and hindered them if it did not choke their interest. But we are all pupils, and let us all learn more and more to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, as earnest in showing the pearls to those ready for the sight, as in withholding them from those who are swinish and unprepared.

"WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?"

There is peculiar force in this query, and no doubt our Lord used it with the intention of awakening this very thought in these two who first sought His companionship. It is a good question for each one of us to put to himself, and for us to suggest at a proper time to all others who are manifesting any interest in Present Truth. What are we seeking? What are we looking for? We know what the world is seeking-wealth, honor, fame, ease, etc -- and we know that many who turn toward the Lord still have the spirit of the world. They would like to be the Lord's disciples and still have and cultivate and enjoy the hopes and ambitions that are more or less worldly. It is appropriate that we should give heed to the Master's words as though they were addressed to each of us individually. What are you seeking? Let us answer our Master in our own hearts and in prayer; and before we make answer, let us consider well that it may be a truthful one, for we might indeed deceive ourselves, but could not deceive Him with whom we have to do. It is right that we should seek the Kingdom and that we should know that there is a great honor and glory and dignity associated with it by Divine arrangement, and that thus we should "seek for glory, honor, and immortality." But in conjunction with this seeking of the Kingdom we should remember our Master's words on another occasion, that we should seek chiefly the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

We are to remember that the Kingdom is not to be reached by an unrighteous path, that injustice, iniquity, lawlessness, self-indulgence, selfishness in any form are paths which lead in other directions. We are to remember that the Master by word and by example indicated to us that to live godly in this present time would involve us in a measure of persecution, as it did Him, and that the servant must not expect to be above his lord in the world's favor. Hence to say we are seeking the Kingdom means that we are taking the path leading thereto -the narrow way of self-denial. It means that we have enlisted under the banner of the Lord, with a full knowledge that our loyalty to Him will mean to us opposition from the world, the flesh, and the Adversary, as we seek to be good soldiers of the cross and to endure hardness in fighting against sin. It is those who seek the Lord with sincerity, with honesty, without guile. and without selfishness, who find Him, have

fellowship with Him, and become His true disciples, .and eventually will, have joint-heirship with Him in His Kingdom.

"FIRST FINDETH HIS OWN BROTHER"

One of the two who heard John and followed Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter -- "He findeth first his own brother Simon." The revised version may be understood to imply that both disciples sought their brothers, but that Andrew found his brother first. If, as is supposed, John was the other disciple, we know that he had a brother, James, and that the latter also was brought to the Lord. The particular thought we wish to emphasize here as worthy of special commendation, embodying a proper lesson for us, is the fact that these disciples in beginning the service of the Truth went first to their own brethren. This implies that they had brotherly love in their hearts, as we should properly expect all would have. who would be found worthy to be disciples of Jesus. It implies that they had influence with their brethren along religious lines, which probably would not have been true if they had not been recognized by their relatives as men of character and principle. If, therefore, any of the Lord's people should feel impelled to first go to strangers with the good tidings it would be a less favorable sign as respects the esteem in which they are held. However, let them not feel . discouraged if they have not this favorable evidence to begin with. Let us remember the Apostle's assurance that amongst those the Lord is choosing for His disciples there are not many great, noble, influential -- that they are mainly the ignoble.

The, very fact that the Lord has granted us the privilege of His fellowship is an assurance that there was something in us that He did not despise, and was willing to take over, that He might mould and fashion it by His truth and grace, and finally present it beautiful and irreprovable before the Father through the glorious a change of the First Resurrection. Again, however, let us emphasize the propriety of loving those who are our kin to the extent that we will do all in our power for their assistance. As this is a rule that should prevail amongst brethren, it should also be a rule as between husband and wife, parents and children. If a wife should receive the Truth, her first joy should be, if possible, to bring the matter to the attention of her husband. If a husband receive the Truth it should be his first joy and privilege to bring the matter to the attention of his wife, and so between the parents to the children. The old adage, that "Charity begins at home," is as true of religious charity as of other, kinds. "Husbands, love your wives" -- do all in your power to bless them, especially in their highest spiritual interest, and to bring to them this highest of all joys. "Wives, reverence your husbands" -- appreciate them, and desire that they shall have all of the good things obtainable, and use your best influence for their assistance.

"WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH"

With this message they greeted their brethren, and, as explained in the text, the Hebrew word Messiah corresponded to the Greek word Christ. They knew that for long centuries Messiah had been promised, and that their whole nation, through varying vicissitudes, had been looking, hoping, praying for His coming and for the blessings which He would bring to their nation as their king, delivering them from all evil and exalting them with the power of God to be the light of the world, and thus through them shedding blessings upon all nations. The afternoon spent by these two with Jesus had convinced them that the words of John the Baptist were correct, that Jesus was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is not explained how Peter received the message, but judging him from his subsequent course of conduct, we must assume that he came with haste to see, to know, to judge for himself on the subject. The nature of the evidence given him by Jesus is not related, but he believed, 'became a disciple, received a new name -- an added name. He was Simon Bar-Jona, or Simon, son of. Jonah; now, henceforth, he would be more particularly known as a disciple by the name of Simon Peter, that is, Simon, a stone. Thus early did Jesus indicate His knowledge of the man, recognizing him as one of the living stones for the glorious Temple of the future, as this Apostle himself afterward explained. -- 1 Pet. 2:4, 5.

On the day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and en route found Philip, whom He personally invited to become His follower, and then speedily Philip found Nathanael, known also in the Scriptures as Bartholomew.

This finding of the disciples is described to have been at Bethabara, where Jesus was making His home, and which by the revisers is called Bethany, thus giving the suggestion that our Lord was acquainted with the family of Lazarus and Martha and Mary before He began His ministry, and that it was to this point that the disciples followed Him from the fords of the Jordan, where John had been baptizing. Evidently our Lord tarried in the vicinity of John's mission for a time, there to find some of the most earnest ones whom John's preaching had gathered together.

It will be noticed that the disciples here mentioned all came from Galilee, John and James, Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael. (Judas alone was a Judean.) What were these men doing so far away from their homes? We can only suppose that they were amongst the masses who heard of John and his preaching, and who were so deeply interested in the coming Messiah that they came what was considered in those days a considerable journey, leaving their business that they might hear what John had to say, and join with him

as his disciples in helping to prepare the way for Messiah. How the Lord does use one ministration of the Truth to prepare our hearts for a later and fuller illustration of it! This corroborates the statement of our Lord's prayer to the effect that these disciples were true, God-fearing consecrated men before they came to Jesus. In the prayer Jesus says, "Throe they were and thou gavest them to Me." (John 17 :6.) A lesson to us in this is that if we are faithful and zealous to every portion of truth that comes to us, according as we receive and act upon this we will be prepared for another. Had these men not had the spirit of consecration they never would have left their affairs to join with John in his ministry, and then they might not have been so well prepared to be the honored Apostles of Jesus.

"WHENCE KNOWEST THOU ME?"

The story of the call of Nathanael is a specially interesting one. Our imaginations have little difficulty in filling in the items omitted by the narrative. Philip himself had come within the charmed circle of our Lord's influence, and had realized that it was a blessed privilege to become His disciple and that He must be indeed the long-looked-for Messiah. Full of this confidence he looked for his friend Nathanael, whom he recognized as being of one mind and heart with himself in the desire to serve the Lord and to be ready for Messiah's Kingdom. Finding him his salutation was, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write Jesus of Nazareth, [adopted] son of Joseph." Nathanael was apparently a man of keen intellectual power. He felt that his friend Philip had accepted something too hastily; and that he was being deceived by a pretender, and his prompt objection was, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" As though he had said; "That is a mean city of itself; no great people of any reputation would ever come thence; no prophecies, so far as we know, make any reference to that city. What you tell me of your Messiah rather tends to prejudice my mind against Him."

And so it is today with some of the Lord's true followers who are expecting the Second Coming of the Lord as the great King of glory. When we tell them that we have found the truth on this subject and that the Law and the Prophets all corroborate the fact that we are now living in the harvest time, in the *Parousia* of the Son of Man, they are disposed to sneer at our zeal and enthusiasm and to bid us be very careful lest we be deceived. They ask, Whence comes the message of the *Parousia*, and when they are told that it is. not from the great, the wise, the mighty of this present time, not from the Doctors of Divinity, but from humble sources than the message reaches them, they ask, "What could you expect from such a source?" intimating that rather we should look to the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law today.

Let us answer such doubting brethren as Philip answered Nathanael, "Come and see!" investigate, test the matter by the Word of God. Apparently Nathanael would not go with Philip. The latter may have gone his own way dejectedly, because one whom he esteemed to be a true servant of God was apparently unwilling to hearken and to investigate. But Nathanael had his own reasons for not at once complying with the invitation. He felt that the matter was one of great importance; that it affected not only his own interests but the interests of his friends and of the Lord's cause in general. He must be cautious. He had already heard of Jesus, and had been considering and praying about this very subject before Philip came to him; he had asked to be kept from delusions and snares -- that his judgment might be guided of the Lord, that he might not be deceived by a pretender. He would follow a little later, and, free from all prejudice, would endeavor to judge of the merits or demerits of the case, relying upon the Lord's blessing, which he had sought.

How glad we would be if all our dear friends who give evidence, so far as we are able to judge, of being true, loyal servants of the Lord, were to take the course that Nathanael took to seek the Lord and His protection and guidance, and then to investigate, proving all things by the Word of God! And while we may be sure that though some may not as promptly take this course as did Nathanael, all who are of the truly overcoming class will ultimately take it and ultimately be guided, that they may indeed come in contact with Present Truth and realize the *parousia* of our Lord and His work of harvesting the Church and gathering the ripe grains into the garner preparatory to their shining forth with him in the glory of the Kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth. -- Matt. 13:43

BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES AND EARS

As we notice in this lesson the reception that our Lord gave Nathanael, we are forced to contrast it with the very different reception He gave to some of the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law when they approached Him in a caviling spirit. To these He spoke in parables and dark sayings which He did not expect them to appreciate or to understand, but to such as Nathanael our Lord was most gracious, because knowing the hearts of all He could wisely discriminate. We may not exercise such a liberty, because such a knowledge is not ours; it is for us to be patient and courteous to all, and to do our best to assist all to an understanding of the Truth, whether they shall hear or whether they shall forbear -- convinced, however, that only the Israelites indeed will hear effectually, will receive the call and be profited thereby to the attainment of the prize.

Before Nathanael had quite reached Jesus and those who were with Him, the Master said, in his hearing, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in

whom there is no guile." A wonderful tribute this! No wonder Nathanael was fit to be of the Little Flock and one of the Apostles! No wonder Philip wrestled with him, praying him to come and see. His honesty of heart made him worthy of the blessings of which the mass of his nation were not then worthy. As we read in John 1:11, 12, Jesus "came unto His own and His own received Him not; but to as many as received Him to them gave He liberty [privilege] to become the sons of God." And He helped those who were in the right attitude of heart to receive Him; He assisted their faith and encouraged their confidence, saying to one, as we remember, "Be not faithless, but believing." - John 20:27.

But Nathanael, although he realized that he was an honest, true Israelite, seeking for whatever God had to give to His faithful, was not satisfied with this testimony -- such an expression might be given by another in flattery. He would cross-question the Lord, and he said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" You have made a statement; what is your authority for it? -- I do not know that we have ever meet before. Jesus replied, "When thou wast under the fig -tree, before-Philip called thee, I saw thee." Ah, well did Nathanael remember how he had crept under the low-spreading boughs of the fig-tree and how he had prayed to the Heavenly Father for wisdom and for the proper evidences on the subject of concern.. Here he had the very answer to his prayer. The one who could know about that prayer and could thus answer it and reveal Himself must indeed be superhuman -- all that He claimed, the Messiah. Nathanael's faith operated quickly, and he responded, "Rabbi [Master], Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel."

And is not our Lord's dealing practically the same today? Is it not true that those who now in faith and prayer seek for enlightenment respecting the times and the seasons and the features of the Divine Plan, and information respecting the harvest work-is it not true that these are specially helped of the Lord? that the Truth is made specially clear before their minds? whereas others coming to the subject through idle curiosity perhaps, or with a half faith fear a coming trouble and are desirous of knowing how to escape it, are left comparatively in darkness? Let us who have discerned these beautiful traits and qualities in the class of disciples whom the Lord chose at His First Advent, see to it that we cultivate similar characteristics, and that we expend our special energies to bring the Truth to the attention of others who give evidence of meekness and faith and loyalty to God.

"THOU SHALT SEE GREATER THINGS"

As soon as Nathanael had confessed his faith our Lord assured him that what he had already come to appreciate was insignificant in proportion to the still greater things which as His disciple he would gradually come to know and to understand. And is not this true with us today? The joy, the confidence, the hopes which filled our hearts at the beginning, as we came to recognize the Lord and to have a clearer understanding of the Divine Plan -- have these not continually been added to by the Lord, so that what we first saw and enjoyed seems but small in comparison with the riches of grace and loving kindness and tender mercies revealed to our eyes of understanding. As our mental vision widens we behold lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the love of God surpassing all our expectations. -- Eph: 3:18, 19.

And by faith we can see Jesus as the antitypical Jacob's ladder, as our Lord intimated to Nathanael. As Jacob in his vision saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven and communications carried on thereby, so we, in the light of the Divine Plan now unfolding, see that our Lord Jesus and the Church associated with Him constitute the ladder of communication between God and the world of mankind, which, during the Millennial Age, will serve as the channel of favor by which all the families of the earth shall be blessed-by which the glory and blessing of the Lord shall be brought down to earth, even as now the Elect, firstfruits of His human creatures, are being gathered from amongst men, that they may ascend to God as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord by means of the glorious change which shall come to them in the First Resurrection, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

DIVINE GUIDANCE

GOD has made such ample provision for the guidance of His children that they may be just as sure that they are led by Him as that they are saved.

In order to do this it is needful to apply to every doubtful impression certain searching tests. Are they Scriptural?

Impressions from above are always in harmony with the teachings of the Word. Other impressions may wrest isolated passages to their support, but God's guidance is in harmony with the whole blessed Book. It never leads a person to do contrary to its teachings or to influence others to such a course. On every doubtful point the question, "What does the Bible teach?" should lead to search until that knowledge is gained, and then it should be acted upon. While it is a

book of general principles, it also covers almost every practical point that ever occurs in human life.

Multitudes of impressions from below die of fright at their own images when they are compelled to look in the mirror of God's Word. The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, will pierce the thickest armor in which Satan can mail his deceptive suggestions. Then let every doubtful impression first of all be rigidly examined under the focalized light of all that the Scripture teaches in regard to it.

Are they providential?

"If a leading is of God the 'way will always open for it.' The Lord assures us of this when He says, "When He putteth forth His own sheep *He goeth before them*, and the sheep *follow* Him, for they know His voice.' Notice here the expression, 'goeth before' and 'follow.' He goes before to open a way, and we are to follow in the way thus opened. It is never a sign of a Divine leading when a Christian insists on opening his own way, and riding rough shod all over all opposing things. If the Lord goes before us, He will open all doors for us, and we shall not need ourselves to hammer them down. The Word declares: 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it'" -- *Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*.

This open door of providential opportunity awaits every person who follows impressions from above.

"I will go before thee," declares Jehovah, to all who follow Him, "and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron." Impressions from above find "crooked places" divinely broken, and bars of iron divinely sundered.

The providential openings which thus ever welcome those divinely led are marvelous. God never impresses a Noah to build an ark, or a Solomon a temple, but that means, material, and men await their appropriating faith. He never impresses a Philip to go preach to an individual, but that he prepares the person for Philip's preaching. He never says to an imprisoned Peter "Arise up quickly," but that Peter will find chains providentially broken, and gates providentially burst.

The Peters that are mourning because they can not, on account of providential interpositions, do what they claim God is impressing them to, are not being influenced by impressions from above. This third door to the secret chamber of certainty, in regard to being divinely led, always flies open as by magic before the face of him whom God is guiding.

God never prompts to do impossibilities, therefore His leadings can always be followed. He who is impressed to do something which in the nature of the case he can not do, may be sure that the leading is from some other source than above. Peter Dashaway is often humbled

by the failure of his impressions to meet this simple test. If the way will not open for us to put our impressions in practice, and providential indications are all to the contrary, it is well to bury them. They may die hard, but death should be their doom.

"The Holy Ghost never guides us contrary to the Word. The -Word never guides us contrary to Providence, and Providence does not guide us contrary to the Word or Spirit. So that these three elements of Divine guidance are always harmonious.

"Some years ago a lady was at the altar seeking a clean heart; and Satan was there, and in addition to all the other tests which he brought to her mind, for he may present tests on such occasions, was the following: My wife was speaking to her, and she said, 'There is one thing in my way. Something seemed to say to me, "Will you go to Africa?"' There have been more people that have to *go to Africa* than anywhere in this universe! I had to go to Africa. We all have to go to Africa. Everybody that has got sanctified for the last five years, almost, has had to go to Africa. 'Well' my wife said, 'let us see about it; you know God does not ask anything foolish of, you; tell me your circumstances.' She had a husband and four or five children and a house to care far. Said my wife (who has more common sense than I have), 'Do you think the Holy Ghost will ask you to do a thing that God's providence would not allow you doing? Will God's Spirit run against God's providence? And do you think God will ask you to go off to Africa, and leave your children and husband?' Well, she didn't see how He could. Then said my wife, 'It may be that in twenty years from now God may want you in Africa, and God may turn things so you can go. You just simply say, 'Yes, Lord, I will go when you send me,' and settle it. All God wants is your heart loyalty. God would rather have your perfect heart loyalty than have Africa, or anything else.' She said, 'Yes Lord, I will do anything you say,' and she got through. *That was the end of Africa.* When you want to be divinely led, simply consult God's providence and consult God's Word and consult the convictions of God's Spirit upon your heart, and the Lord, if you are humble and teachable, will see that you are properly led." --
Selected

CONSECRATION

"All things are Thine, no gift have we,
Lord of all gifts, to offer Thee;
And hence with grateful hearts today
Thy own before Thy feet we lay.

"In weakness and in want we call
On Thee to whom the heavens are small;

Thy glory is Thy children's good
Thy joy Thy tender Fatherhood."

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES XXV

DANIEL'S PRAYER AND THE VISIT OF GABRIEL

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."--Daniel 10:12:

CHAPTER ten of the book of Daniel, which forms the subject of this article, is an introduction to the fourth and last of the Prophet's visions. The prophecies of this fourth vision are recorded in chapters eleven and twelve. It is to this portion of the book that skeptics and rationalists have given the most attention in their endeavors to disprove the genuineness and authenticity of the entire book. "So clear and explicit indeed are its predictions [those of the entire book] concerning the advent of the Messiah, and other important events of, times, far-remote from those in which he [Daniel] lived, that Porphyry, a learned adversary of the Christian faith in the third century -- finding that Daniel's predictions concerning the several empires were so universally acknowledged to be fulfilled that he could not disprove the fact of their accomplishment--alleged against them that they must have been written after the events to which they refer had actually occurred. To him they appeared to be a narration of events that had already taken place, rather than a prediction of things future; such was the striking coincidence between the facts when accomplished and the prophecies which foretold them. But this method of opposing the prophecies, as Jerome [who lived and wrote only a few years after Porphyry's death], has rightly observed, affords the strongest testimony to their truth; for they were fulfilled with such exactness, that to infidels the Prophet seemed not to have foretold things future, but to have related things past." -- *Horne's Introduction to a Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures.*

CONCERNING THE AUTHENTICITY

Concerning this particular prophecy, especially that portion recorded in chapter, eleven that relates to the conflicts between the kings of Syria and Egypt, which Porphyry, without giving any proof affirmed must have been written *after* the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175 B.C.) -- it has been indisputably proved that it was translated into the Greek language one hundred years before this noted king of Syria,

Antiochus, was born; indeed, the same is true of the whole book of Daniel. as we have it today; and "that very translation was in the hands of the Egyptians, who did not cherish any great kindness toward the Jews and their religion; and those prophecies which foretold the successes of Alexander (Dan. 8:5; 11:3) were shown to him by the Jews, in consequence of which he conferred upon them several privileges."

It is very generally acknowledged that the Hebrew and Chaldee text of Daniel constituted the original from which was translated the Greek or Septuagint version of the Old Testament. In these days of collegiate skepticism it would be well if our learned (?) professors would read such works on the authenticity and genuineness of the Old Testament, particularly the book of Daniel, as "*Hengstenberg on the Authenticity of Daniel*," or "*Horne's Introduction to a Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures*:" All the various objections cited by modern Higher Critics are centuries old, and have been collected and refuted by the above writers and others who lived a century ago -- writers who not only excelled in learning, but possessed also that which is always essential to a knowledge of Divine things -- humility, reverence, and godliness.

"It is true that in the Vulgate Latin edition of the Bible, as well as in Theodotion's Greek version, which was adopted by all the Greek churches in the East in lieu of the incorrect Septuagint translation . . . there is added in the third chapter of Daniel, between the twenty. third and twenty-fourth verses, the song of the three children, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who were cast into the fiery furnace. The version of Theodotion also introduces at the beginning of this book the history of Susanna, and at the end, the stories of Bel and the Dragon; and this arrangement is followed by the modern version in use in the Greek Church. But in the Latin Vulgate, both these Apocryphal pieces were separated by Jerome from the canonical book, and were dismissed to its close with an express notice that they were not found by him in the Hebrew, but were translated from Theodotion. In a latter age, however, they were improperly made a continuation of Daniel, being numbered chapters 13 and 14; an arrangement which has been followed in all the modern versions from the Vulgate in use among the members of the Romish Church, and sometimes (particularly in the Dublin edition of the Anglo-Romish version of the Bible printed in 1825), with the unjustifiable omission of the cautionary notice of Jerome.

"The narratives of Susanna and of Bel and the Dragon do not exist in the genuine Septuagint version of Daniel, recovered in the middle of the eighteenth century; nor were these Apocryphal additions ever received into the canon of Holy Writ by the Jewish Church. They are not extant in the Hebrew or Chaldee languages, nor is there any evidence that they ever were extant." -- Thomas Horne.

The text as we have it in the King James version is that of the original Hebrew. The date, the third year of Cyrus, given in verse one, is the latest mentioned in the life history of the aged Prophet. In chapter 1:21, it is stated that he continued unto the first year of Cyrus. It does not, however, say that he died then. The statement that it was in the third year of Cyrus that he had the vision we now consider, may be explained to mean that he had at this time ceased to be active in the affairs of government. He must have been at this time nearly ninety years of age, or perhaps older.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPHECY

The chapter opens with a statement of Daniel himself, that at the time he received the revelation he had been mourning "three full weeks"- that for some cause he had set himself apart to engage in a special season of fasting and prayer. It was evidently his solicitude for his own nation, God's chosen people, that caused him to thus give himself up wholly to meditative devotions. It was at a season also; the month Nisan, when the returned Jews were celebrating the Passover at Jerusalem.

Two years had elapsed since the return under Ezra from Babylon, and from what we learn in the book of that name, many difficulties were being encountered and much opposition experienced by the returned captives in building the temple and establishing the worship of Jehovah there. It was in this month, in the beginning of their history, that they crossed the Jordan, and that many other of the great and noted events of Jewish history occurred. We may well believe that all these things combined specially influenced the venerable Prophet to give himself to devotions, and to pray that he might understand more clearly the matters that up to this time had been hidden in the, several visions given to him.

"He does not say whether he had designedly set apart that time to be occupied as a season of fasting, or whether he had, under the influence of deep feeling, continued his fast from day to day until it reached that period. Either supposition will accord with the circumstances of the case, and either would have justified such an act at any time, for it would be undoubtedly proper to designate a time of extraordinary devotion, or under the influence of deep feeling, of domestic troubles, of national affliction, to continue such religious exercises from day to day." -- Albert Barnes

The meaning of the words in verse three, "I ate no pleasant bread," evidently is that during this period he abstained from all those things that he commonly indulged in that would promote his personal comfort. Such a course of life would be expressive of sorrow and grief for some cause. It is a common thing of nature to so act when the mind is overwhelmed with grief or sorrow, especially concerning things

pertaining to God's work. Herein lies the foundation of godly fasting and prayer.

Daniel tells us that this occurred on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, and the place where he was at the time, was by the great river Hiddekel, which river is now known as the Tigris. It seems to have been a quiet retreat selected by him for special devotions and prayer.

DANIEL'S SELF-RENOUNCEMENT REWARDED

It seems evident, also, as already noted, that one cause of these special devotions was his desire to understand more fully the Divine purpose concerning things communicated in previous visions -- things concerning the people of God, his own beloved nation. This seems clear from the words of the revealing angel who appeared to him after the three weeks had expired: "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard." -- Ver. 12.

It has been truly remarked that "we will be more likely to receive Divine communications to our souls at the close of seasons of sincere and prolonged devotions than at other times; and that though we may set apart such seasons for different purposes, the Spirit of God may take occasion from them to impart to us clear and elevated views of truth, and of the Divine government. A man is in a better state to obtain such views, and is more likely to obtain them in such circumstances, than he is in others, and he who desires to understand God and His ways should wait upon Him with prolonged devotion."

Another has thus emphasized Daniel's persistency in prayer to Jehovah for an understanding of the Divine communications which he had previously received: "How long he would have continued this fast had he not received the answer to his prayer, we know not; but his course in continuing it for three full weeks shows that, -being assured that his request was lawful, he was not a person to cease his supplications till his petition was granted:"

THE HEAVENLY VISITOR

Daniel tells us that while beside the great river, while his mind was meditating on the matters previously communicated to him, he lifted his eyes, and was greeted with a vision, or an object that completely overpowered him. Before him stood a being from another world. He speaks of him as a man clothed in linen, and girded with a belt of gold. His body was like the beryl -- like in appearance or color to the mineral of that name which was of a bluish green, prismatic light.. His face was as the appearance of lightning, utterly dazzling to mortal eyes. His eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and feet in color to polished brass; the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. The Prophet was not alone at the time; but who these were that were

with him, whether some of his own countrymen engaged with him in his worship, or others, is not recorded. All we know about this is that he was left alone when he saw the vision; the others were so powerfully affected by some strange supernaturality associated with the occurrence, that, they trembled with apprehension and fled to hide themselves.

It is very evident that Daniel perceived that like others he had seen before, this was a heavenly vision, and in his already weakened condition through his long fast the effect upon him was to utterly deprive him of strength; and cause him to sink into a state next to death; and whether he desired to flee or not, he was unable to do so, but was compelled to remain and receive the Divine communication. The record states that while he heard the first words of the mighty angel, he had at the time fallen into a kind of swoon -- "in a deep sleep," and was lying with his "face towards the ground." Nor would he have been able to rise from his prostrate position, had it not been that he was touched by the angel's strengthening hand, and in an encouraging tone told to rise and stand upright. After he had recovered his strength sufficiently to rise to his feet, he shook with dread, and "stood trembling" at the sound of the heavenly visitor's voice

It is not infrequent that we hear some of God's people express themselves as desiring to have like experiences of the holy Prophets when they saw the visions and heard the words they have recorded for our comfort and hope. One remarks that we do this because "we fail to note what sufferings of soul and body these revelations have come out through them. We think of the glory of what they saw and heard and felt, but overlook the terrible jarrings of all the framework of their earthly nature, which were, the price of these revelations. It is a mercy that we may profit by them without the dreadful experiences which attended the giving of them. Think how Moses did 'fear and quake'; how Jacob at Bethel was thrilled and terrified at the realization of what had occurred to him there; how Isaiah was unmanned and made to cry out as one about to sink into annihilation at the glory he describes; how Paul was blinded, sickened and disabled by Christ's appearance unto him; how John fell down as dead at the voice and apparition which greeted him at the beginning of the Apocalypse; and through what dreadful disturbances of body, soul, and spirit these wonders and revelations were vouchsafed through these sublimely favored men!

"Daniel would have ceased to live to tell us of this vision had not a heavenly hand revived and strengthened him against the overwhelming terribleness of what he beheld. And rather than envying these singularly -favored men, we should be moved to thank God that He has given to us the full benefit of these marvelous disclosures without having to experience the awfulness which the giving of them wrought in those through whom they came."

NOT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

But who was this, heavenly visitant? The description Daniel gives of him is almost like that given of the vision of Christ to St. John in the Revelation. (Chapter 1.) It differs from this 'however in several important features; and these features are such as to show that it was not the pre-existent One that the aged Prophet saw. The effect upon Daniel when he beheld the vision is also in some respects like that experienced by St. Paul and his companions when the Lord manifested Himself to him on the road leading from Jerusalem to Damascus. It is quite evident, however, that this was not the Lord, for in the same connection one Michael is represented in this, as well as in other places in Scripture, as occupying a higher station in the heavenly realm than the one here revealed.

Michael is represented in the vision we are considering as coming to the assistance of this one that Daniel saw. The name Michael signifies, "He who is like God." In Jude we have Michael spoken of as the archangel. The term archangel signifies "head or chief angel" ; and the angel of the vision under consideration speaks of Michael as the first of the chief princes. (See marginal reading on verse I3.) We sometimes hear of archangels as though there were many; but the Scriptures do not so speak. According to the Scriptures there is but one archangel. In I Thess. 4:16, St. Paul states that when Christ shall raise the dead, it will be in connection with- the voice of the Archangel. Connecting this utterance with Christ's own words concerning that event, "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God," we can but identify Michael with our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. In Daniel 12, Michael is called the "great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." It can hardly seem possible that such expressions can have reference to any other personage than the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GABRIEL

There are some features connected with this angel of chapter 10 that seem to identify him with the one who appeared to Daniel in connection with the visions of chapters 8 and 9. In those chapters the name Gabriel is given to the angel. The appearance of Gabriel in those visions, as also the effect produced upon the Prophet in connection with those appearances, seem to identify the one of this vision, with Gabriel. On the occasion of the events of chapter 8, Gabriel was instructed to make Daniel understand the vision; and yet at the close of the chapter it is stated that he did not succeed in causing Daniel to understand; and in this chapter the angel says, "Now I have come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days." It would seem that this was the very information the angel Gabriel had promised to give.

Again we notice that it was Gabriel who was sent to answer the Prophet when he sought by prayer and fasting for God's mercy upon his nation in their iniquity; and it was Gabriel who gave to Daniel the wonderful prediction, considered in our last article, of the First Advent.

This seems to be the special and divinely appointed work of this mighty angel Gabriel. He appears first to Daniel to announce the return from captivity and to fix the exact date of Messiah's Advent and also the date when the great sacrifice for sin would be made by Him. It is he, who in the Gospel of Luke announces to Zechariah the birth of Christ's forerunner, John; it was he who appeared to Mary to inform her that she was the favored of all women -- that she was to be the mother of the long-promised Messiah. Gabriel may be rightly designated the heavenly evangelist, whose mission was to announce the glad tidings of a Savior for the world.

The angel informed Daniel that- from the first day that he -began to chasten himself before God, his prayer was heard in heaven. We have a further confirmation from the angel's words. that Daniel's object in thus chastening himself was that he might understand the visions of the future which the angel had already caused him to see.

A GLIMPSE OF THE INVISIBLE STRUGGLE

Most naturally we ask, Why the long delay? Why, then, if the angel was sent twenty-one days before to answer his prayer, what hindered him so long in reaching the Prophet? The words, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days," are the angel's reply to these questions. This suggests to our minds how much is taking place unseen to mortal vision in connection with shaping the affairs of the nations of this world in accomplishing God's great purposes. In this instance God permits an angel to lift the curtain for a moment, thus enabling us to get a glimpse of what is taking place among the spirits of the power of the air. Indeed, the Scriptures from beginning to end picture the angels as participating, unseen, in behalf of God's people, as also in the Divine overruling in the affairs of human governments. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?"

Among the angels there are both good and bad who are occasionally pictured in the Scriptures in conflict with each other. It seems quite evident that in the instance under consideration *we* have an individual evil angel representing the wicked spirit Satan influencing the ministration of the affairs of the kingdom of Persia, and he, though unseen, was hindering at this time a direct answer to Daniel's prayer. The Prophet (as well as we) was permitted to get a glimpse of this invisible struggle that was going on between the princes or chiefs of holy and unholy angels. The conflict seems to have been to determine

which of these powers was to influence the mind of the worldly monarch, the king of Persia then on the throne, in making an important decision in connection with the affairs of God's people. How closely associated are these invisible struggles, or conflicts, with the answer of God to the prayers of His people.

We have in this instance only one illustration of this among the several recorded in Holy Writ. Daniel, the beloved of heaven, is moved by certain events, seemingly detrimental to the interests of God's people, or seemingly hindering the accomplishment of God's promises, to set himself to pray earnestly about the matter. His prayer is heard by Him who sits on the throne of the Universe. A command goes forth from the throne, for Gabriel, who "stands in the presence of God," to go to Daniel's relief, to reassure him that God is working in His providence to fulfil His promises. However, the earthly king of Persia is being moved by opposing earthly influences. The evil angel who has charge of Satan's interests in the Persian government, is operating to thwart God's purposes. We know that at this very time, the Persian king was being influenced against having his own decree carried out. The unseen powers of darkness were using wicked men to prevent the carrying out of the decree. Gabriel is sent to the royal palace.

"All the motives," says one, "of selfish interest and worldly policy which Satan can play upon, he doubtless uses to the best advantage to influence the king against compliance with God's will, while Gabriel brings to bear his influence in the other direction. The king struggles between conflicting emotions. He hesitates; he delays. Day after day passes away; yet Daniel prays on. The king still refuses to yield to the influence of the angel; three weeks expire, and lo! a mightier than Gabriel takes his place in the palace of the king, and Gabriel appears to Daniel to acquaint him with the progress of the events. From the first, said he, your prayer was heard; but during these three weeks, which you have devoted to prayer and fasting, the [prince of] kingdom of Persia has resisted my influence and prevented my coming. Such was the effect of prayer. And God has erected no barriers between Himself and His people since Daniel's time. It is still their privilege to offer up prayer as fervent and effectual as his, and like Jacob to have power with God and prevail."

ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITHFULNESS AND PROGRESS

"Rouse up, O heart, brooding o'er earth's broken friendships,
Mistakes and griefs. Retrospection truly brings
Relief at times; but to scan too oft life's pages
Brings weariness, sapping strength thou need'st for

The past forget! As a mighty vessel swings
To right her course, while the skies, serene and fogless,
And calming seas, tell no tale of tempests' rages
So thou, O heart, whilst her pennant Mercy flings,
Retrieve the past; and returning calm and sun
Shall not condemn -- only speed thine onward journey,
Forgiving and forgiv'n.

"Fret not, O heart! -- not because of evil doers.
They soon shall cease. When their cup of crime is full
To overflow, then the great and just Avenger,
With girded loins, sword unsheathed and wrath enkindled,
Will tread the press, and his blood-stained hand annul
Their ill kept lease, and shall vanquish all the tinselled
Recruits of sin. But, O heart, heed thy great danger.
Besetting sins, and fair vanities which lull
To fancied safety the listless, thou must fear,
Lest that dread sword thee mark also for its victim,
A reprobate despised.

"Awake, O heart! Hurriedly from drowsy slumbers
Arise, arise! Night is sleeping time, not day.
Press nobly on, heeding not the faithless numbers!
The mid-day glare tempts to quietness and shadow;
Suave lethargy, friendly false, persuades the way
Is soon retraced from the cooling brook and meadow;
But he who turns from the strife and glare, and cumbers
Himself with pleasure's delights, will ne'er essay
The path again; and yet thou, O pilgrim weary,
Foregoing rest, shalt be strengthened with all might
Thy faith, sore tried, shall develop eagles' sight,
And penetrate, past environment, to glory
Unspeakable, where in Heaven's effulgent light,
Thy glorious Leader dwells.

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS

"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it:" -- John 2:1-11.

CANA of Galilee was the home city of Nathanael, one of the latest additions to the number of our Lord's disciples. He was one of six who had now given their adherence to Jesus as the Messiah. Apparently Nathanael had invited our Lord and the other disciples to be his guests at Cana, where a marriage feast was about to be held. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present at the feast, doubtless as a very close friend of the family, as indicated by her knowledge in advance that the wine supply was running short. The customary hospitality of the Jews

on such occasions would make it a serious breach of etiquette not to supply an abundance for their guests, as well as for neighbors and passers by, who, in the name of the bridegroom, would be urged to enter and partake of the hospitalities freely. Jesus and His disciples were amongst the specially invited guests.

Our Lord's mother brought to His attention the shortage of wine, and from this it has been assumed that she anticipated the miracle. We cannot agree to the reasonableness of this suggestion, because it is particularly stated that the miraculous creation of wine *on* this occasion was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. We must suppose, therefore, that Mary's long acquaintance with and dependence on her son had made her aware of his superior judgment and resourcefulness in all events and on all occasions. The matter was beyond her control, and, as was often the case with those in moderate circumstances, the bridegroom had probably spent all that he could afford to expend in preparations. Probably also, in anticipation of our Lord's presence at the marriage feast, a larger number of neighbors called on His account -- to see the stranger of whom they had heard more or less through Nathanael and others.

JESUS SOCIABLE IN THE HOME

This narrative gives us a little glimpse of the social side of our Lord's character, and convinces us that the asceticism illustrated by monks and nuns was not a part of His teaching either in word or example. His consecrated life was lived in the midst of the ordinary social conditions bearing upon any member of a moral and religious community. There is no suggestion of revelry or foolishness in our Lord's conduct, but it is reasonable to assume that He participated in the proper joys and fellowships and social amenities of such an occasion. This was in harmony with His own injunction to His followers, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep."

What every home needs is not only a visit from Jesus, but that it should be His home, His abiding place. It would be a safe rule of life for all of the Lord's followers to desire to go to any place they would have reason to believe the Lord would go if He were again present in the flesh; it would be a safe rule for us to do or say such things as we would have reason to expect that our Lord would do or say were He present in our stead. Blessings, we may be sure, went with the dear Master wherever He went, specially to those who like Nathanael were Israelites indeed, in whose hearts there was no guile.

When we remember that the word disciple means pupil or learner, and that all of the Lord's people are His disciples (though not all Apostles), it gives us a suggestion that each disciple represents the Lord -- that where we go He goes, that we are His representatives or "ambas-

sadors." With this thought before our minds how careful we each should be to properly represent our glorious Lord; to "show forth the praise of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." To this end how we need to pray, not only with our lips but also with our hearts, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Verily "as He was, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not," but our duty on all occasions is just the same: His message is that we shall let our light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father in heaven.

It has been very ably stated by another that "The true Christian learns to make the best of everything and everybody. Even if the water be salt -salt with the tears of sorrow or the bitterness of suffering-the Spirit of Christ within him will convert it into the wine of closer fellowship with the Cross. If the water be clear ,and sparkling -the beauty of an autumn day, the invigoration of stimulating work, the companionship of children, the possession of human love -- he will convert it into a deeper and more satisfying draught of wine, for He will taste in this the rich wine of the love of God."

Again another remarks, "This beginning of Christ's miracles was in deep harmony with the whole tenor and spirit of His mission. Christianity was intended to be the religion of common life, a religion for the market, for the dinner-table, for funerals, for weddings, for those who travel by land or by sea -- not a religion to be found merely in Church, though we do find it there, if we bring it with us -- not else; not the religion of Sundays, though God be thanked for the help which Sunday gives to our week-day, hours. In fact, it was the private life of the world to which Christ came."

"HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER"

Our Lord's reply to His mother's suggestion appears rather cold and harsh, but this is largely the result of the translation. While the word "woman" is a proper translation, it does not give the elegant shading of the Greek original, which would more nearly signify lady. The word is the same, for instance, that the Emperor of Rome used in complimentary address to the Queen of Egypt, "Take courage, O woman." We may be sure that neither by word nor act did our Lord violate the commandment of the Law, "Honor thy father and thy mother." We may be sure that in all His words and conduct He was a very model of the meekness and gentleness, patience, and love which His doctrines inculcated.

The expression, "What have I to do with thee?" would seem more properly to signify "Do not attempt to dictate to me -- I will know what to do when the appropriate time comes." Mary probably was intent upon hiding the fact of the shortage of the wine: Jesus on the other hand recognized that the miracle He was about to perform was less for the assistance of the bridegroom of the occasion than for a great lesson which, through the servants, probably became known to the entire company. Jesus therefore waited until the supply was not only running low but exhausted, until there was no wine, so that the miracle would not be minimized by the admixture of the new with the old.

Mary's word to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," was a further evidence that she was on terms of very close intimacy in that home. The servants properly enough would need such instructions, for otherwise they would not be prepared to take orders from one of the guests. Mary probably had no knowledge of what the Lord would command the servants to do, but, as before suggested, she had confidence in her son's resourcefulness and wisdom, and that as one of the guests whose entertainment had helped to exhaust the wine he would be pleased to take some steps to assist in replenishing the supply.

Here a question arises respecting the kind of wine provided by the bridegroom of which Jesus and His disciples evidently partook, and also respecting the kind of wine which the Lord subsequently produced and of which He probably partook. We know of nothing to indicate that this was merely grape juice unfermented. Everything seems to teach the reverse of this, that it was slightly alcoholic -- the alcohol being produced in the wine through the processes of fermentation; resulting in what is known as "light wines." The remark of the governor of the feast that the wine which Jesus made was better than that at first supplied would, we think, support this theory, but it

would not imply that the people were drunk, intoxicated, and that they had thus lost their taste or judgment.

In our view there is a great difference between present conditions and those of our Lord's time. Those people of a warmer country were accustomed to drinking light wines, in very much the same manner that we today drink water, tea, coffee, etc., and they had no deleterious effects, and the same may be said of the people of some parts of Europe today. Besides, it was in a slower age and amongst people more moderate in every way. In our day, with everything done under pressure and nervous excitement, alcoholic stimulants of every kind seem to be poisonous to very many; it seems to be next to impossible for people to use such stimulants moderately.

It is for this reason alone that total abstinence may be recommended because of the "present distress," because of the increased expenditure of nervous energy and consequent increased danger of inebriety, and not because the Scriptures specially enjoin total abstinence. It is our conviction that if the Lord were present in the flesh today under our present conditions, circumstances, etc., He would rank amongst the most abstemious, because if such abstention were not necessary for Himself, we believe that His love and sympathy for the weak, fallen race would impel Him to avoid being anything like a stumbling-stone in the way of any of them.

WATER-POTS FILLED FULL

In those days they did not have hydrants, pumps, etc., but kept the water for family use in large earthen vessels called water-pots. On such an occasion as this an extra quantity would be needed, and quite probably water-pots had been borrowed from neighbors. They were of different sizes but all quite large, two firkins represented by eighteen gallons and three firkins by twenty-seven gallons, or nine gallons each firkin. It was the custom to use this water supply -- specially for washing the vessels of the household and the hands and feet of the guests, hence they need of so great a supply.

When the proper time came for the performance of the miracle our Lord instructed that water be fetched and that these six water-pots be filled to the brim. This use of the ordinary water-jars would prevent any suspicion of their containing any powders or mixtures that might constitute a basis for the miracle, and the filling of them to the brim would likewise hinder any one from thinking that something was added to the water by our Lord. Besides, the water thus rising to the surface where it could be seen would show its own clearness and purity.

The change from water to wine was evidently instantaneous, for our Lord at once directed them to draw the wine and serve first the

governor of the feast, who would thus have a knowledge of the fresh supply. The latter commented upon the new wine as superior to the first, and remarked to the host that usually the best was given first, when the palate would be the more keen to detect the quality. This was a testimony to the excellence of the wine which Jesus made. We cannot think that at an ordinary feast simple grape juice would be regarded as superior wine, nor on the other hand need we suppose that the wine which Jesus made contained such a proportion of alcohol as would make it injurious to the users.

But there was another reason why the vessels were filled to the brim with the pure water: they were symbolical; they represented the Lord's people in this present time. Water is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of life, the "water of life." It particularly figures or illustrates natural or human life, as; for instance, in Revelation 22:17, where the symbol is given of the Spirit and the Bride during the Millennial Age saying to the world of mankind, "Come, partake of the water of life freely." It represents the restitution work, the revival of mankind from the power of death, the infusion of the restitution life.

OUR TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

In these earthen vessels the water had been considerably exhausted; there was very little remaining in each vessel. So with us as members of the human family, our life forces are well exhausted through the fall. The Jews, as God's favored people under the typical Law Covenant, were justified to a certain extent, but not in the full sense of the word -not justified to life-and the filling up of the water-pots with water to the brim represented or foreshadowed the full and complete justification to life, to all human rights and privileges reckonedly granted to all who become the Lord's followers. As the Apostle expresses it, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God."

But the figure or illustration goes further and shows us the transforming of these justified lives, the impartation of a new nature by miraculous change. The thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds; we become New Creatures.

The change of the water to wine, therefore, represents the change of the justified being, constituting him a new creation in Christ Jesus. As the water will represent the justification, so the wine will represent the superior joys of the Spirit granted to those who through faith and a full consecration attain to the begetting of the Spirit-an adoption into the spiritual family. True, these joys at present are not as real as they will be by and by -- they are joys of hope, of anticipation, which we have in earthly vessels, as the Apostle declares. By and by, however, according to the Lord's promise, a share in the Lord's resurrection will give us the new vessels, the golden vessels, the perfect conditions in

which our joys and favors will be realized and appreciated to the full. There is a hint of this in our Lord's declaration at the last supper that those who would drink of His cup of suffering and self-sacrifice in the present time would by and by share with Him the new wine, the Divine nature and life and joys in the Kingdom.

This discernment of a spiritual signification in the wine is in full accord with the statement of our last verse of the lesson, which assures us that our Lord's miracles, etc., manifested forth-that is, beforehand-His coming glory and the blessings which He will then bestow upon His faithful.

"The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was planned."