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PLANS LAID FOR A UNITED CHRISTENDOM

WORLD MEETING AT LAUSANNE NEXT YEAR

UNITED Christendom is still the watchword of the hour in ecclesiastical circles, especially those of Protestantism; and Catholicism is also sympathetic and friendly to the theme. One of the latest suggestions bearing upon this question is to be noted in a recent issue of "The New York Times," which reads:

"Almost all the churches of Christendom with the exception of the Roman Catholic and Unitarian are preparing to meet at Lausanne, Switzerland, next August in a 'World Conference on Faith and Order' to discuss the possibility of church unity throughout the world.

"Plans for the international church gathering took definite shape yesterday at the Yale Club, where a group of church leaders decided to raise \$200,000 next month with which to defray the expenses of such a conference. A program for the conference was formulated at the World Conference on Life and Work, held in Stockholm last year.

"The subjects for discussion finally decided upon include 'The Call to Unity,' 'The Church's Message to the World-the Gospel,' 'The Nature of the Church,' 'The Church's Common Confession of Faith,' 'The Church's Ministry,' 'The Sacraments,' 'The Unity of Christendom,' and 'The Place of Different Churches Within.' The Right Rev. Dr. Charles H. Brent, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Western New York, explained yesterday that the Roman Catholic Church had, through officials at the Vatican, expressed its friendly interest in the project, but declined to take part, while the Unitarians were outside the conference because participation was limited to 'all churches which accepted the fact and doctrine of the incarnation of Christ.'

"Bishop Brent said he believed discussion at the conference would be absolutely frank and straight forward without creating bitterness. 'As the Stockholm conference discussed practical problems, the Conference on Faith and Order will discuss matters of belief and theory,' he said. 'It will, however, make a distinction between controversy and conference. It will simply attempt to get other people's views, not to argue them or deny them.

"I do not think such a conference can achieve church unity. You cannot create overnight what it has taken 1,000 years to destroy. We are meeting on the assumption that you have got to get together in thought before you can get together in action. If nations are striving to co-operate, why not the churches?' he asked.

"Bishop Brent expressed his relief and satisfaction that the project, which originated sixteen years ago, was at last approaching fruition. He said he was greatly pleased by yesterday's business meeting, over which he presided as Chairman of the Business Committee.

"A distinguished group of churchmen of various denominations was present to discuss the \$200,000 conference fund. They included the Rev. Dr. Peter Ainslie of Baltimore, representing the Disciples of Christ; the Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Boynton of Newton Centre, Mass., Congregationalist, the Rev. T. Albert Moore of Toronto, representing the United Church of Canada (Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist); the Rev. Dr. M. G. Scherer of New York; Lutheran; the Rev. Dr. Arthur J. Brown of New York, Presbyterian, and the Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman of Brooklyn, President of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

"There are to be nearly 500 delegates to the Lausanne conference, many of whom have already been named. They will represent both Orthodox Catholic and Protestant churches, including eighty-two denominations in thirty countries."

The thought of the union of all the Protestant systems is in keeping with the times. For years past the financial and political worlds have made great progress in the direction of uniting their forces. Great combines of wealth, the result of merging smaller organizations into fewer and larger ones, have increased their power many fold in recent years, giving them almost unlimited control of the world's commercial interests. Likewise, especially since the World-war, the sentiment has been rapidly growing in favor of gathering together and uniting the world's political powers by what is familiarly known as peace treaties, the League of Nations, etc., the purpose of which is ostensibly to make the world safer, and proof against war and for its further uplift. Similarly, the various bodies of Christendom, laboring under the impression that they unitedly represent God's instrumentality for saving humanity, and for overpowering evil in its myriad of forms during this age, are directing their efforts increasingly toward the unifying of all their organizational forces in order to fulfill their supposed purpose. But all these proceedings, as the instructed child of God well knows, is not according to faith, but according to the wisdom of this world. Yet what is being done in Christendom along the line of federation and union of ecclesiasticism is in fulfillment of prophecy, concerning the last days; and in addition to marking one of the important signs of the times, it marks the last futile effort of men to bring in the age of peace and good-will. This, as the Scriptures clearly teach, is to be brought about by the coming of God's Kingdom and its establishment under the whole heavens in the hands of Christ and His Bride.

PERILS OF THE LAST TIMES

"In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." -- 2 Tim. 3:4.

"THE LAST times" and "the last days" are evidently synonymous expressions and are terms that designate the close of the reign: of evil and the introduction of the reign of righteousness. Associated with this period is the idea of a Harvest, when the results of the Age will be manifest, in the sense that throughout the Age there has been a general growing and commingling together of true and imitation Christians. And this period in the end of the Age is to make manifest these classes, and finally the Lord's approval and disapproval revealed to, all.

The Divine testimony, as Bible students are generally aware, is very explicit with regard to, the general conditions prevailing in Christendom in the last days; instead of the world being Christianized and brought to God, the diverse condition will prevail. It will be a time of great peril-peril to the Lord's people-peril for those who have undertaken to follow Christ. It will not, however, be so much of a perilous time for humanity in general, who are not in the present life an trial in the sense of being fully responsible for their present conduct. Although the predicted trouble with which the Age closes will seem to the world to be a dreadful peril, a great calamity, it will shortly after come to be recognized in its true light as the wholesome rebuke of the Lord, resulting in a blessing in disguise, and preparing humanity for the experiences of the Millennial Reign.

Apostasy and Worldliness of Last Days

It is quite clearly recognized that the only ones who are now on trial for life or death are such as have been released from Adamic condemnation by obedient faith in Christ's finished work. It is to these that the perilous times described by St. Paul and others, will be times of severe testing. The Apostle's prophetic description very probably was intended to relate in an important sense to Christendom in general. The whole course of the so called Christian world will be turned aside from the high standard that might have been expected. Men will be traitors. As long as it will be of advantage to them to perform a contract they will do so; when not advantageous they will not fulfill the contract. It will be a time when every man's hand will be lifted against his neighbor. Selfishness will be rampant. Each will do what will be to his own interest, regardless of obligation. There will be manifest headiness and selfishness and self-conceit. Men will be "leers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This condition is to be a sign of the end of the Age.

Every thoughtful person must perceive that this condition of things is prevailing now. Whenever a contract is found to be unsatisfactory-whether it be a marriage contract or a business contract-the dissatisfied contractor is liable to break the agreement. This party to the contract then assumes the attitude of defiance.

Faith Rapidly Departing

We find headiness of spirit in the world everywhere -- a loss of respect for authority. No doubt there has been **too much respect** for authority in the past. Now the pendulum is swinging to the other side, and there is no respect for authority. This condition has been brought about by a lack of reverence for God-the inevitable result of loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. As people lose faith in the Bible, they lose faith in God, and become more selfish and more self-willed. This state of affairs has to some extent been brought about by false doctrine, error; the people having been mistaught concerning God.

Many modern teachers have been seeking to put away what they have considered as absurdities of religious thought, and in so doing have largely done away with the Bible. Students of the Divine Word recognize that the inconsistencies .of the teachings of the past are really not in the Bible, but represent the "tradition of the Elders," and wrongful interpretation of the Bible. But the Christian world, losing what confidence it has had in God, is in the state of mind to say, "Let us drink and be merry"; no one understands about the future; the professed teachers are confused. Everything has come about through scientific processes .of nature. Let us enjoy the present. Let pleasure be our aim in life. This spirit pervades Christendom; they are lovers of pleasure more 'than lovers of God.

The progress in human affairs, such as inventions, the applications of steam and electricity and the use of all manner of scientific devices, has opened up many new avenues of pleasure and has created opportunities many fold for the natural mind to be entertained and enjoy the pleasures of life. In the perfect state all of these possibilities of pleasure would work additional blessings, but not so in the present depraved state. Men without God are inclined to go pleasure-mad. And thus we see the whole world a crowding, seething mass, hurrying on to get as much as possible or more than their share of the cup of pleasure.

The Consecrated Involved in These Perils

We believe we are not amiss in understanding that the Lord's consecrated people are involved in this description of the last days, as well as Christendom in general. And the state of things described above -- the conditions of our day, etc. -- make it a perilous time for the true Church. It may be asked, Would not the Church under these circumstances on the contrary be more than ever led to love God? and would this not make all more vigilant and put them on guard and keep them from danger? The reply is, that present conditions have not resulted that way to all the Lord's children. It is to be observed that some of God's people are becoming more and more overcharged and immersed in the world, in its pleasures and schemes. The spirit of the world surges all around them and it is with more or less difficulty that these realize that the world is astray and altogether abnormal in its ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to receive considerable of the mind of the world, even though they are spirit begotten. There is no question that the worldly spirit, as the Apostle suggests, has seriously affected the Church. Consequently some of the Lord's people would thus come into special peril at this time because of the neglect of their covenant with the Lord. Others would, solemnly remember that covenant and would watch and pray, and so make progress. The Lord's faithful people will keep their word and be firm for principle and true to their contracts, even when these prove disadvantageous to them. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord and it is manifest that such as are living close to Him are for this reason developing in mind, and heart. But alas, they are few.

One of the perils, which the Apostle mentions, is that of a traitorous disposition,. This signifies lacking in truthfulness and sincerity. This disposition is to be noted even amongst many professing to know the truth concerning the Lord and His Plan. Many are 'not true to their profession as brethren in Christ. The spirit of the brotherhood in Christ is one of longsuffering, unity and love. The disposition of contention,, strife, intolerance and division, the unbrotherly spirit, represents so much that is untrue to the profession of real disciples of Christ. This spirit frequently leads to the disfellowshipping of one another on very slight pretext in connection with items that are non-essential and comparatively insignificant; whereas, a larger and broader spirit of tolerance would avoid all such unhappy results. The spirit of the faithful disciple is well set forth in St. Paul's admonition, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."-Eph. 4:1-3.

Headiness and Teachers of New Light

Another trait mentioned by the Apostle, characteristic of brethren in the last days, is that of headiness. It is the spirit of self-conceit, self-importance -a disposition to think more highly of oneself than is appropriate to the

true disciple. There were constant warnings given to the early Church with regard to the dangers of this evil. It has been in evidence in the Church all along through the Age. It is the spirit of Nicolaitanism, of lordship, the disposition on the part of brethren to set themselves up as leaders, authorities, and lords over God's heritage. It is unmistakably an evil disposition and in direct opposition to the spirit of our Master, which was that of meekness, humility and the keeping down of self.

The disposition to headiness is seen to be very prevalent in the Church of the last times, as much so as it has been at any time throughout the Age. It is from this source that some of the severest tests and trials have come upon the Lord's people. How important it is that every disciple of Christ shall keep before the mind the traits and characteristics of the true teacher; as another has remarked, all efforts that have really been successful from the Divine standpoint in assisting the true Church are due to "the exercise of that lowly, humble spirit, shown by Saul when he was about to be chosen king over Israel. This spirit was expressed by Samuel when rebuking Saul for his departure from God in, this respect." -- 1 Sam. 15:17.

As a result of the spirit of the times many leaflets, papers, and pamphlets fill the mails and are circulated far and near. Many of these writings come before our attention. Most of them claim to have the "new light," the special message for the hour. Nearly all of them contain the inference that they have been heaven-directed and that it is on pain of losing the crown or going into the Second Death that any refuse to accept their interpretations. Some of these present teachers claim wisdom by which they are able to: expound secrets hitherto unknown, such as the exact date or time when this, that or the other event will take place; claiming by a fine analysis and exposition of the types and symbols of the Bible that they can determine the exact date of the Church's glorification, just when the Armageddon trouble will commence, how long it will last and just when it will end, and the exact time when the Kingdom will be established, etc., etc.

"The Meek Will He Teach His Way"

We are frequently appealed to by the friends to help them decide what position they shall take toward such remarkable yet uncertain- claims and interpretations. In reply to this, we can only say that it is not our province, nor have we the time to enter into an exhaustive examination and criticism of all -the teachings that are being propagated in these days. We have no quarrel nor controversy with those who feel that they are called upon to announce the various messages and interpretations that are to be found in our midst. We have constantly appealed to the brethren in what is presented in these columns, to be true Bible students themselves, to seek through humility, self-abandonment and prayer, to be possessed of that disposition that the Lord will be pleased to guide into right directions, according to His promise: "The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way." All of us as followers of the Lord Jesus and as children of God are counseled to study and think for ourselves and to exercise our own personal discretion as to what we are going to receive as Truth and what we shall reject as error and uncertain doctrine-to "prove all things." Earnestly seeking to be filled with the spirit of a sound mind, every child of the Lord will desire to be sober in his thinking, not hasty to accept interpretations and conclusions merely because they may have in them that element that satisfies curiosity, nor will the sober spirit be content to lay hold of 'that which is merely novel and new. Manly conflicting, visionary, and conjectural. teachings that are spread about today have much in them of that which is novel and new and are calculated to appeal to the mind that is looking- for that sort of thing. It should be sufficient in these times to merely remind the brethren of how for years past this class of uncertain interpretations has been prevalent and year after year has witnessed the complete collapse and failure of predicted occurrences and dates, so that by this time we should know that "secret things belong to God" and that as long as we are in the Age of faith and God's people are called upon to walk by faith and not by sight, we should not reasonably expect that the Lord

would reveal to any one in advance such matters as those which involve the precise moment of the Church's change, the exact end of the present order of things, and the establishing of the Kingdom.

"Do Not Many of You Become Teachers"

We can not do better in these days than to give earnest heed to the apostolic admonition concerning the importance of sound doctrine-established Truth. Sound doctrine is doctrine or teaching that is well established, well proven by plain and definite statements of the Word of God. Sound doctrine does not need the fanciful speculation that so frequently comes from the study of types and symbols. We are not in any sense disparaging sober and proper study of types, parables, and symbols, but surely we are not to attempt to prove as Truth any or all theories by a mere inference or what we think to be the meaning of a certain type or parable. Let us be sure that we have a definite "Thus saith the Lord" for what we accept as positive Truth, on the basis of which we are willing to launch zealous activities. St. Paul's admonition to Timothy is most timely and we earnestly commend it to all the brethren in connection with what comes before their attention in these days for consideration and acceptance: "Continue thou in the things which thou has learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

On the subject of leaders and teachers in the Church, we are frequently reminded of the Apostle's admonition: "Do not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a severer judgment [severer testing and trial." (Jas. 3:1.) Evidently the force of the Apostle's admonition is that the office of a teacher in the Church represents a solemn responsibility and that brethren should be exceedingly careful how they seek this office, that it may not be in any disposition to gratify pride or ambition, or to lead away disciples after themselves; but that they shall desire the office of teacher as a result of the impulse of the Holy Spirit; solely because they wish to assist fellow brethren in the Christian life and to glorify their Divine Master in the end. Any, therefore, assuming the prerogative of teacher from any other motives would surely meet with tests that will bring to the surface what are the springs and purposes that actuate them.

Humility and Self-Renunciation

In view of the volume of inspired testimony relating to the end of the Age and the perilous times at hand, we ask with the Apostle, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" What a time it should be for all the faithful to soberly and humbly analyze and inspect their hearts! What a time of heart-searching and investigation it should be for all those who are hoping for an "abundant entrance"! Surely it is manifest to all the consecrated, watching class that the secret of security at this time, as it has ever been, is that of humility and self-renunciation and close fellowship with the Lord, which all experienced Christians know involves heart devotion and loyalty to the will of God. And this thought is so well expressed in the prophetic words that were calculated to comfort the Church of the last times: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Let none of those who have cast their lot in with the Lord and who have earnestly desired a share in the goodly heritage, as joint-heirs in His Kingdom, permit any of the deceptions or illusive bubbles of the present time to beguile them of the promised reward-glory, honor and immortality.

"WHO SHALL SEPARATE US?"

"Rock of my strength! to Thee my soul is clinging,

Assailed, by doubt, beset by care and fear;

Smiling through tears, and in my sorrow singing,

I hear Thy welcome voice, 'Be of good cheer.'

"What though my foes break out in bitter taunting,

What. tho' their curses crown my humbled head?

Yet, while their insults they at me are flaunting,

Jesus stands near, and says, 'Be not afraid:

"Who shall divide me from that deep affection

Felt by the loving Father for His own?

Who shall disturb me under His protection,

Resting in GØ, and trusting Him alone?

"If God be for me, who can be against. me?

Who shall condemn, if He my soul. approve ?

Since Christ in heaven makes intercession for me,

How can I doubt the fulness of His love?

"Not all the angel hosts that have existence,,

Not all the powers of darkness and of death,

Not lapse of ages nor the bounds of distance,

Can pluck me from the resting-placé of faith.

"Not pain or trouble, sorrow or affliction,

Famine or peril, nakedness or sword,

Can rob me of that heavenly benediction,

The Love of God in Jesus Christ my Lord."

THE PATHWAY OF LIFE

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."-Deut. 30:14, 15.

THE Bible is the one Book of all the literature of the world that deals satisfactorily in every way with the great question of life and death. Our Father in Heaven foreseeing the fall of man into sin and the resulting consequences of death, with all the accompanying trials, sufferings, etc., anticipated in advance the longings of our race for deliverance out of the hands of the great enemy after learning many valuable lessons under the experiences of evil. He foresaw the struggles of humanity to burst asunder the bands of death and to attain that state and heritage that was originally contemplated in man's creation-eternal life in all the blissful surroundings of Paradise.

As It Shall Be in Future Times

We have seen in His revelation how during the various stages of this Divine Plan of the Ages God has repeatedly given forceful reminders of His ultimate design to satisfy the normal longings of all the willing and obedient of our race for life and for fellowship with Him. One feature or another of His purpose has been called to our attention in a pictorial way-certain characters and special dealings with these presenting to us in type what He purposed to work out on a grand scale in subsequent times and seasons. Accordingly, Jehovah, as He chose the Jewish nation and separated them from all the other families of the earth to be a peculiar people, gave

to them what was supposed to be a message of life, but owing to imperfection and degradation resulting from the fall, it proved to be a way of death-thus none were found to be justified by the deeds of the Law Covenant. The happy thought about the whole matter is that the infinite wisdom of God enabled Him to foreknow this result also. And while there was this constant manifestation of the failure of ancient Israel to secure life by obedience to the Law, God was making repeated statements both by picture and prophecy of another arrangement, of another age, and a new Law Covenant by which would surely be made possible the realization, of all the good desires and longings of the righteous.

It was therefore clearly portrayed in the Law and the Prophets that when that glorious dispensation should come in the fullness of time there would be a return of Divine favor to God's ancient people: "After (those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them with the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." -- Jer. 31:33, 34.

Under that blessed arrangement of the New Covenant, to be established in the hands of the greater Mediator, the Christ, the great Prophet, the desires and intentions of the heart, accompanied with the best endeavors of the flesh, will be accepted, even though the latter be imperfect for a time, and require the blessed influences of the "times of restitution," to bring them to perfection. Moses' prophecy looks down to this time, grasps the new situation, sees Israel turned to the Lord with new hearts, enabled to keep his Law perfectly; it will not be too difficult for them, but new and plain and possible.

We Now Receive by Faith

That this is the proper thought to be attached to the prophecy of Moses, as found in Deut. 30, is shown by the Apostle Paul. (Rom. 10:4-10.) He applies these words to the Church during this Gospel Age, as in contrast to the conditions of the Jewish Age, which had just closed. The Gospel Church enters into privileges and opportunities of mercy and grace through Christ now, in advance of Israel and the world in general. It is the privilege of the spiritual Israelite now, beforehand, by the exercise of faith to realize in himself acceptance with God, justification by faith; to realize further that the merit of Christ covering all his imperfections, which are not of the heart, continues him in this justified relationship with God, notwithstanding the imperfections of his flesh and of his works-for we "are not under the Law but under grace." To those who can now exercise the faith, all the blessings that will come to the world in the Millennial Age are possible-and more. To such these greater blessings are not hidden, but may be seen with the eye of faith. To such they are not far off -- pertaining to another age -- but are possibilities of the present time, through the operation of faith. Such, having the ear of faith, are not saying, We cannot know the mind of the Lord, for He is afar off in heaven; who shall bring us a clear; definite statement of His will? These already have this declaration of the Divine will in the Person of Christ, in His teachings, personally and through the Apostles. Neither will such say, Christ indeed has come, has died, has gone into the sleep of death; who shall now bring Him forth that He may instruct us? For with the same eye and ear of faith they both hear and see that He is no longer dead, but is risen, glorified, empowered of the Father, and that He ever lives to be the blesser and High Priest for all those who approach the Father through Him.

What then is this message which can thus be heard with the ear and recognized by the eye of faith? The Prophet as well as the Apostle declares that it is possible for us to have this salvation, and ever-present power within us, in our hearts and in our mouths. The Apostle declares that this which Moses prophesied is the Gospel which he preached, which we have received; namely the confession of the Lord with our mouths and faith in Him in our hearts.

Belief and Confession

It is noteworthy that both the Prophet Moses and the Apostle Paul state the matter in the same manner; first, the confession with the mouth; second, the belief in the heart. This form of statement is probably not of accident, either. The confession with the mouth is the first outward evidence given of a faith in the heart; and indeed it seems to be a part of the Divine arrangement that all confession of the truth is necessary to a full appreciation of it. True, we cannot properly confess what we do not believe; hence a belief must have precedence to a confession, but the confession is necessary to the expanding, enlarging and completing of faith in the heart. Who ever thinks that the light he has received in his heart can be maintained without a public confession of it is deceived, and hence it is declared, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The righteousness started by faith cannot go on and reach the completion which will mean eternal salvation unless it be accompanied by acts of faith, most prominent of which is the confession of the lips.

We would like to impress this feature of the Divine truth upon all the Lord's dear people everywhere; realizing that many are weak, puny, sickly, in their spiritual health, because of their failure to follow the Lord's direction -- to declare courageously and as wisely and lovingly as possible -- what great things the Lord hath done for our souls. It is not sufficient that we confess the first blessing received, though that is necessary before we receive additional blessing. But each blessing as received should be promptly confessed, to the praise of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. This is the law of spiritual development. This is the command to the spiritual Israelite. If he is not obedient, that which was nigh, in his heart and in his mouth, will ere long become far off to him -- the eye of his understanding will cease to see clearly; the ear of faith will cease to distinguish plainly and he will gradually go further and further away from the glorious privileges which are ours, as New Creatures in Christ under the law of love.

Life and Good; Death and Evil

But all those who experience a proper measure of grace and love in the heart as a result of the goodness and mercies of God through Christ are impelled not only to present their lives living sacrifices, but additionally, they inquire, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" Such realize that the least they should do is to openly confess the Lord, to proclaim to all with whom they come in contact not only what He has done for them personally, but what He has purposed to do for all who will hear and obey His message of Truth and grace.

To spiritual Israelites, who have been begotten of the Spirit, adopted into the family of sons of God, and made prospective joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, the message is the same that it will be during the Millennial Age to the world of mankind; namely choose life or death. His Word does not declare that God has set before us

eternal blessing or eternal torment! Not so; His Word is most explicit; the rewards are life and death. Thus our Lord positively announced, "He that hath the Son hath life; He that hath not the Son shall not see life" -- and those not seeing life, of course could not experience eternal torment. Nevertheless, this proposition of life or death is a very serious one; much more potent in its influence than any other, because we can believe it; because we can see its reasonableness. How reasonable it is that God should declare to His spiritual Israel of this Gospel Age that if, after they come to know Him, taste of His good Word, experience the power of the Age to come; after they have had .the eyes of their understanding opened; after they have heard, seen, appreciated, the Divine Plan -- if after all this they, do not love the Lord their God, and trust Him in their hearts, and sufficiently, too, to confess Him with their mouths, they are unworthy of eternal blessing which He has to give their lack of appreciation of Divine mercy means their unworthiness of life!

How reasonable, too, is this declaration as respects the world of mankind during the Millennial Age! Life and death will be the alternatives set before them also. The great Prophet, the Christ, Head and Body, as representative of the Father and of His Law, will make matters very clear, very plain, to all those who, when they know the Lord's goodness, have any desire or appreciation thereof. But they too must learn to acknowledge the Lord in their lives, in their hearts, and to confess Him with their mouths, else they will be unworthy of the future life. The difference between the two classes--we of the Gospel Age, they of the Millennial Age will not be as respects the question of life and death. The penalty in either case will be Second Death; the reward in either case will be eternal life. The difference in the reward will be that the faithful overcomers of spiritual Israel will be granted joint-heirship with their Lord on a higher plane of life, sharing with Him His glory, honor, immortality; while the faithful of the world, though, blessed. in lower degree with a restoration of human perfection and life, will, nevertheless, be blessed fully and completely up to their very highest ability to appreciate and desire.

Reaching Forth to God's Standards

The essence of this command, now applicable to the Gospel Church, by and by to -be applicable to restored Israel and all who, under the favorable conditions of that Millennial Age, will be accepted as the children of Abraham, is the Law of Love

"I command thee this day to observe the Law of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways and keep His statutes, and His commandments and His judgments." It is the correct thought that love to God must be from the heart-voluntary, in order to be of the kind which He desires and will appreciate. "He seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Why, then, does Moses say, "I command you"? Why does the Lord command love, through the Prophet, since a commanded love would not come up to the standard of voluntary love?

We answer that the Lord sets before us the standard of love necessary to be attained if we would enjoy the blessings which He purposes to give. He commands, in the sense of laying before us plainly and distinctly His only terms of life eternal. As we have already learned under the guidance of the Spirit, love is a matter of development and begins with a kind of duty love, which gradually growing out as we grow in grace and in knowledge, expands into gratitude, then into admiration, and finally ridding itself of all dross and selfishness, becomes pure and fervent love. The Lord is pleased if in our hearts He sees this endeavor to approach in truth the way of, life which He has opened through the death of His Son. He is pleased to note our expansion and

development under the light of His favor. He is pleased to grant us the covering of the Lord Jesus' merit, and to reckon to us perfection, and to adopt us from the very beginning of our love and consecration; and He will be pleased when we have finished our course, when we have attained the mark, when we have come up to the standard He has set-perfect love-to grant us the blessing of life eternal, which He cannot grant upon any other condition.

Noble Examples of the Past

These things, really intended for spiritual Israelites, were spoken to natural Israel, as were all the prophecies of the Old Testament. Hearing, Israel heard but did not understand, as now it is our privilege to understand, because we are of the "house of sons," adopted and begotten of the Spirit; whereas, they were of the "house of servants," for "Moses verily, as a servant, was faithful over all his house; but Christ as a Son, over His own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." To the extent that any natural Israelite comprehended even in part this Law of Love, and endeavored to grasp it, in that proportion he was blessed, notwithstanding the fact that he was under the Law and bound by the Law, and thus a servant and unable to become a son. We see noble illustrations of these faithful ones of the past, in Moses himself, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, and all the prophets, whose faithfulness the Apostle records, as having been pleasing to God, and who shall have corresponding rewards, although they will not have the reward that is promised to the Church -- "they without us shall not be made perfect." - Heb. 11:39-40.

In Moses' last message, he cautioned his brethren concerning any disposition to leave the Lord and accept instead other gods. His words are specially applicable to spiritual Israelites, and we do well to give them earnest heed. We are already by faith in this blessed condition; we have heard the words of eternal life. We already have entered the Canaan-rest condition by faith in our Lord. We, therefore, are in danger from the besetments of our own flesh, and from the besetments of sin abounding and from the Adversary -- in danger of making other gods, and turning our hearts away from the proper center of their affections, either to the god of wealth or the god of fame or the lesser gods of the family circle and home, or to the most ignoble of all, self. We are not to be drawn away by any of these from our loyalty to God, nor to render worship or service in any sense to any of these. To do so would mean to turn away from the hopes and joys and blessings now ours. To resist these temptations, and to abide in the Lord's favor, on the other hand, will mean to continue in the joys and blessings and rest of our present state of grace. Thus the Lord sets before us the blessings and the curses, the advantages, and the disadvantages, the right course and the wrong course, life and death.

Choosing the Better Part Now

Our choosing of life and blessing and righteousness and God are not merely the choice of a moment; the daily trials and testings of life prove whom we love and whom we serve. Let us examine our hearts and our daily course of life, and note for what we are spending our energies, what fills our affections, what "satisfies our longings as nothing else could do." To the extent that we find the Lord the center of our lives, our hopes, our aims, and His will the ruling law in every affair of life, in that same proportion we find joy and peace and blessing, and growth spiritually. If we thus, under present conditions and trials and oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil, separate from them and cleave to the Lord, we are choosing the better part, the part of blessing, choosing life, and we shall live and shall inherit the goodly land of promise, the Millennial Canaan, and there be joint-participants with our Master in bringing God's promised blessing to the world, that they also

may hear and know and obey His voice, and cleave to Him, and thus have life, and inherit the other, the earthly, features of the Abrahamic blessing.

It is in vain that we say we love the Lord if we do not seek to do those things pleasing in His sight. He is not seeking those who merely give outward allegiance, but those who at heart love Him and His righteous arrangements. He is satisfied, indeed, to accept us at the beginning, largely upon our professions of faith and devotion, under the robe of Christ's righteousness, knowing that in our imperfect development we could not love perfectly; but He expects *us* to grow in grace, knowledge and love, and only by so, doing can we abide in His love, and only by abiding in His love can we hope to attain the glorious things which He has in reservation only for those who love Him.

THE SECOND PRESENCE OF OUR LORD

CHRONOLOGICAL AND PROPHETIC SIGNS (Continued) - PART III

"Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."-1 Thess. 5:4, 6.

ANOTHER chronological line that stands related to our subject, the Second Presence of Christ, is that of the ending of the six thousand years of man's history. The point has been quite generally conceded by prophetic students that following the six thousand years of man's toil, labor, and weariness under the conditions of the curse, there would be ushered in a thousand-year period of rest-six one thousand-year days to be followed by a seventh thousand-year Sabbath day. While this deduction is not based upon any specific statement of Scripture, there are strong inferences in its support. Thus Brother Russell summed up the view that other leading expositors had set forth, as follows: "The Bible contains no direct statement -that the seventh thousand [year] will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reason able foundation. The law given to Israel, the typical people, appointing that six days of labor and weariness should be followed by one of refreshment and rest from their own works, seems fitly to illustrate the six thousand years in which the whole creation labors and groans under the bondage of sin and death (Rom. 8:22), in a vain endeavor to extricate itself, and the grand Millennial Day, in which the weary and heavy laden may come to Christ Jesus, the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and through Him find rest, refreshment and restitution, in which, through the merits of His precious blood, they may find repentance and remission of sins. On the typical seventh day He inquired of the impotent man, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' and in answer to his faith and obedience, gave him strength to take up his bed and walk. (See John 5:6-9; also Matt. 12:10, 13; John 7:23; Luke 13:11-16; 14:1-5.) So, during the antitypical Sabbath, the Millennium, it will be declared to all theta world that 'whosoever will' may have life and health eternal if he will take the steps of faith and obedience." Vol. II, "Studies," pp. 39, 40.

The End of Six Thousand Years

A careful calculation of the various time periods that go to make up the great chain of the chronology of man's history has .led to the conclusion on the part of many careful Bible students, that six thousand years of human

history, including the period in Eden before sin entered, lie in the past. There is a difference of opinion, however, as to the exact time of this ending. One writer of note, "Sylvester Bliss, author of a very valuable 'Analysis of Sacred Chronology,' computes the age of the world at Christ's birth at 4120 years," which makes the six thousand years end around 1880. Another able chronologist, R. C. Shimeall, in his "Age of the World," reckons the six thousand years as ending 1868. Another author, the Rev. C. Bowen, "whose estimates and tables were adopted by Dr. Elliott and affixed to his exposition of the Apocalypse, computes the age of the world at the Savior's birth at four thousand one hundred and twenty eight years." According to this the six thousand years would run out in 1872. Still other writers have found the six thousand years to end in 1862 and 1866. Dr. Seiss, summing up his own conclusions on the matter, says, "If, then, we be allowed to correct Usher and Jarvis, by [these] more recent investigations, we have the concurrent testimony of these half-dozen learned and received chronologists, that the six thousand years from Adam shall be fulfilled within the present [nineteenth] century -in less than fifty years [from 1856, when the statement was made]."

While we, along with others, up to recent years had accepted the conclusion that the six thousand years ended around 1872, yet, as presented in these columns of late, discovery is made, of what we believe to be valid and sound testimony indicating that the 1872 date is incorrect; the discrepancy being noted in connection with the commencement of the seventy years of servitude of the Jews to the kingdom of Babylon, resulting in nineteen years shortage, making it necessary on this end of the chronological system to add that number of years, reaching approximately to 1891 or 1892.

God's Great Sabbath at Hand

Though we may not be able to definitely determine the precise year when six thousand years of man's history ended, owing to some possible uncertainties as to the exact length of some of the Old Testament periods (notably the period of the Kings), the evidence is sufficiently conclusive that six thousand years of human history are approximately thirty-four years in the past, and that we are now living in the beginning of the seventh thousand-year day the early part of which we would reasonably expect from prophetic testimony to be devoted to the work of preparing for the establishing of the Kingdom of God.

But let it be borne in mind that the six thousand years above mentioned include man's experience in Eden before sin entered. If we undertake to reckon six thousand years since the exclusion from Eden, under the conditions of the fall, we are utterly at a loss for specific testimony inasmuch as the Bible is absolutely silent on the question of how long our first parents were in Eden before the disobedience. Some have reckoned, it as probably two years; some have estimated it as probably seven years; and some have gone so far as to say it was a period of forty years. We will not attempt to offer any conjecture on this point inasmuch as whatever we would say would be merely a guess and, therefore, unworthy of credence. Being without any positive means of determining the length of the time between man's creation and expulsion from Eden, it becomes impossible to fix the exact date when the Millennium, or seventh thousand years from Adam's banishment from Eden actually began. As the period of man's innocence in Eden must have been a comparatively short one; the inference would be a most reasonable one that if six thousand years from the fall are not already in the past, their end can not be very far in the future.

The Reasonable Deduction

Again the fact is impressed upon us that the information we have on the chronology of the world's history does not enable us to fix the precise date of our Lord's return; nor the date when all the Church shall have been changed to heavenly glory. The most to be gained from this particular line of information is an awakening to the realization that we are approximately at the great turning point in man's history, and should accordingly be led to carefully observe if the divinely predicted events are transpiring which give evidence that we are in the period of the Second Presence of the Lord. The reasonable deduction would be that whether we reckon the seventh thousand year Sabbath as due to commence at the end of six thousand years from man's creation, or whether it be considered as commencing at the end of six thousand years under the curse, we have already entered into the period of Christ's official presence, in consideration of the testimony already examined, which clearly teaches that our Lord will be secretly present, at least for a brief season, in advance of the establishing of His Kingdom and the commencement of His reign proper. But nothing in this particular line of testimony regarding the six thousand year period enables us to fix unequivocally, and without doubt, the exact time when the presence of Christ was due. It is only in an approximate sense; and we can only give emphasis to the thought that transpiring events are what we are to be looking for as indications of His Second Presence. Again, we read the Master's words: "When ye shall see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads [not that the Second Advent is drawing near, for it will have already taken place, but] for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) As the Savior uttered no prediction containing a time element, we would reasonably conclude that the evidences by which He intended us to be guided in our conclusions are the transpiring events of our time.

Christ's Presence and the Parallel Dispensations

In this examination of the chronological testimony bearing upon the time of our Lord's Second Presence, it is appropriate and may be to our profit to review briefly the subject of the parallel dispensations. Chief of these is that of the Jewish Age 'paralleling the Gospel Age; the Jewish Age being reckoned from Jacob's death to our Lord's crucifixion, A.D. 33, just previous to which time He presented Himself to the Jewish nation as King; His official Advent being reckoned from three and one-half years previous-at the age of thirty, when He began His ministry. It was thought that this period was 1845 years, and that doubled, to A.D. 1878, marked the corresponding event in Christ's Second Presence, when He was again present as King. And as in A.D. 33 He declared to the Jews that their house was left unto them desolate, so it was claimed that in 1878 there was a similar rejection of Christendom; the further deduction based upon this thought being that Christ became present three and one-half years prior to 1878, corresponding to when He reached the age of thirty and began His ministry. Then in that same connection it was assumed that as there was a period of three and one-half years subsequent to A.D. 33, the last half of the seventieth "week," during which special favor was continued with fleshly Israel, so it was alleged that there was a period of three and one half years following 1878, reaching to the autumn of 1881, during which there was special favor to spiritual Israel or Christendom. Further, that as about thirty-three years later or A.D. 70, marked the end of the Jewish Harvest, the complete fall of the, Jewish nation, and the destruction of Jerusalem, so thirty-three years added to 1881 brings us to 1914, at which time it was thought the Harvest of the Gospel Age would end, the fall of Christendom occur, and in fact the entire present order of things pass away. The failure of these predictions has led to an earnest and prayerful examination of the parallels and to the discovery of their invalidity and weakness.

No Time Limit to Harvest

First, what was thought to be 1845 years from Jacob's death to A.D. 33 is now seen to be at least nineteen years in error, inasmuch as the discrepancy noted in connection with the period of the Kings and the seventy years' servitude, shortens the Jewish Age nineteen years, making the period 1826 years long. If we attempt to apply this as a double or as a parallel of the Gospel Age, starting with A.D. 33, we reach the year A.D. 1859, instead of 1878. We discover no event in connection with 1859 paralleling the events of our Lord's First Advent. It would seem sufficient to say that these parallels that made the Gospel Age and its Harvest the same length as the Jewish Age and its Harvest, were not based on any statements of Scripture, but were purely inferential. The lapse of time and the failure of expected events have proved that this inference was not well founded. It is well known that Brother Russell himself discovered this fact and so expressed himself in an article entitled "The Harvest is Not Ended," published about two months before his death. He made the pointed and significant statement: "Our expectations must not be allowed to weigh anything as against the facts. The fact is that the Harvest work is going grandly on; it is not ended by any means We may expect that quite a good many will yet be gathered to the Heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here." In that same connection he explained that the time feature of the Harvest was based upon inference, and that he no longer regarded it as sound. He said:

"Our readers will remember that the basis of our expectations respecting the Harvest time was the parallelism between the closing of the Jewish Age and the closing of the Gospel Age Our mistake was along the very line that we pointed out. Time and again, we reminded our readers that the parallelism between the Jewish Age and the Gospel Age could not include anything belonging to the New Dispensation. The parallels affected merely the nominal Jewish house there and the nominal Christian house here We should not have looked for parallelisms between the starting of the Gospel Church and its experiences, and the starting in this Harvest time of the Heavenly Church and its experiences: These are no part of the parallel. The parallel belongs to the nominal Jewish system, which went to destruction [in the year 70 A.D.], and the nominal Gospel Church, which is now [1916] going [not gone] to destruction.

"We imagined that the Harvest work of gathering the Church would be accomplished before the end of the Gentile Times [or as expressed by him at other times-the Gentile lease of power]; but nothing in the Bible so said. Our thought was purely an inference, and now we see that it was an unjustified one." -- Z '16-263, 264.

Harvest Work Still Going do

More than ten years have passed since these words were published and the nominal systems are still in existence. There is evidence that there is a Harvest work still going on and it is most apparent that Brother Russell stated the truth, that the time parallel of the Harvest both as it related to the gathering of the true Church and the destruction of the nominal system had failed. We must of necessity give up both as well as all conclusions that are related to and founded upon supposed parallels. The fact that the Church is still in the flesh and that there is every indication of a sifting and harvesting work going on, and the fact, too, that the fall of Christendom did not occur, prove that the Harvest did not end in either 1914 or 1918.

What is true of the time parallels of the Harvest is also true of the time parallel of the length of the Jewish and Gospel Ages. The lapse of time has proved that this also must be abandoned for the reason as taught by the Savior, that the Harvest time includes not only the gathering into the Heavenly Garner, but the symbolic burning of the tares as well.

In our review of the Chronology, dealing with the question of the parallel dispensations, we have pointed out what seems to us to be a reasonable and interesting inference concerning how there has been a fulfillment of the predicted "double" of disfavor to fleshly Israel. We have reference to the prophecy of Zechariah and referred to by our Lord: "I declare that I will render double unto thee." - Zech. 9:12.

In looking for a reasonable and harmonious application of the matter, it is discovered that, reckoning the Jewish Age commencing with Jacob's death and extending to A.D. 70, the full end of the Jewish favor, we have a period of approximately 1864 years. Then commencing at that point, A.D. 70, the "double" or period of disfavor of equal length, brings us to approximately 1934, at which time there might reasonably be expected some pronounced manifestation of the end of the period of disfavor.*

*For a more complete examination of this point, see the May 15th, 1926 issue of the "Herald," pp. 164-166.

Christ's Presence and the Harvest

As bearing further upon this interesting subject of the Harvest, we may profitably consider in this connection some additional questions: May not our disappointment in the forty-year Harvest be overcome by a proper understanding of the instructions God gave in the Law to Israel, as recorded in Leviticus 23? Did He not there indicate that the length of the Gospel Age Harvest would be a period of fifty years, in the following manner: "The "Feast of Weeks" was reached by counting seven Sabbaths following the offering of the sheaf as a wave offering (Verses 9, 10), and on the fiftieth day they were to "bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: . . . they are the first fruits unto the Lord, etc." Does not the fifty days represent fifty years of Harvest in the end of the Gospel Age? and would not the offering of the two wave loaves represent the glorification of the Church at the end of the fifty-year Harvest? And still further, May we not determine the beginning and ending of this fifty-year Harvest by recognizing that Brother Russell had complete charge of the Harvest Work and by reaching the conclusion that he did not really enter upon such work until 1878? And may we not therefore reckon the Gospel Age Harvest as commencing in 1878, counting fifty years and reaching the end and the complete glorification of the Church in the year 1928? Would not this application of the matter correct all of our difficulties respecting the subject of the length of the Harvest?

In reply to these questions: We do not believe that any of those typical proceedings recorded in Leviticus 23, teach what is implied in the above questions. There is nothing in these pictures, so far as we are able to see, that relates to any Harvest period, either of the Jewish or Gospel Ages. The idea of a Harvest or a gathering of the ripe fruit of the Age is not contained in the picture at all, as we see it. The fact that the two wave loaves which were said to be the first fruits unto the Lord, had come from gathered grain; does not necessarily teach the resurrections of the Church in the end of the Harvest; the principle or lesson of a gathering, sifting, and shaking time is entirely absent from this picture. Nor is there any hint or suggestion here respecting either the change or the time of the change and glorification of the Church. The purpose of this picture, we believe, is altogether different from what is suggested in the above questions and was intended to foreshadow the "first fruit" or first results of our Lord's death and resurrection; in other words, the acceptance of the Church at Pentecost. It was

not necessary to wait until the end of the Age 'before these consecrated believers, the Church, should be regarded as the "first fruit." There were those already in the waiting attitude prior to Pentecost, and ready for the blessing of adoption. They, therefore, immediately became the "first fruit" in connection with the Pentecostal blessing, which is the fulfillment and the only fulfillment that we see, of the Levitical type concerning the offering of the two wave loaves as the first fruit. We cannot in this connection, however, attempt to go into an exposition of these Levitical types, but will content ourselves with an allusion to the interpretation given by Brother Russell, which, to our understanding, covers the matter in a way that is entirely satisfactory. He said:

"The two wave loaves offered on the fiftieth day, Pentecost, represented the presenting of the Church before God and its acceptance through the merit of the great High Priest, indicated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Church really is but 'one loaf' (1 Cor. 10:17), the two loaves representing the same thing as the two goats presented on the day of Atonement. It indicated that, although all presented were: acceptable to God through Christ Jesus, He yet knew that all presented would not come up to the condition of faithfulness to the end. The two loaves represented, therefore, the two classes of the consecrated, the overcoming little flock and the 'great company' of the consecrated servants of God who do not make the high calling theirs, by overcoming the world as they might and should do."-Z '98-68.

Some Interpretations Not Sustained

Finding therefore no foundation for a fifty-year Harvest of the Gospel Age in the Levitical pictures nor elsewhere, we believe there is no substantial basis whatever for endeavoring to locate the Harvest between the years 1878 and 1928. As for the thought that the Harvest of the Gospel Age being under the supervision of any one personage, we know of nothing in the Bible bearing out that thought; Jesus said nothing about this in the parable of the Harvest. With regard to the idea of Brother Russell commencing the Harvest in 1878, he clearly points out in his own account of his early ministry, that he was very active in the study and impartation of the Truth all along through the early 70's. He tells of how he came to accept the teaching of some other Christian leaders concerning Christ's Second Presence. He along with others diligently engaged in the ministry of the Truth as fast as he saw it some years prior to 1878. Brother Russell did not organize a work and movement and commence a Harvest work apart from others at any time in the year 1878. It was not until July, 1879 that the "Watch Tower" was started and a separate movement organized apart from some with whom he had been previously co-operating. The claim therefore that 1878 should mark the beginning of the Harvest period is altogether without sufficient basis for acceptance. And while we freely acknowledge and maintain that there are splendid evidences that the Harvest work of the Gospel Age has been in progress for some years past, and consequently may be regarded as strong evidence of Christ's presence, yet, there is not in any of the data pertaining to the Harvest or the parallels, any information, so far as we are able to see, enabling any, to fix the exact year when the Lord's presence began.

The Great Jubilee as a Factor

Still another chronological line that has been regarded by many as closely related to Christ's Second Presence is that of the Jubilee instituted in ancient Israel. Many Bible expositors are in agreement that the Jubilee was intended to be a picture of the great one-thousand-year Jubilee of the emancipation of the human race. Earnest endeavor has been made by Bible students to determine when this grand Jubilee would commence. The principal basis for such calculation has been found in 2 Chron. 36:21, which reads: "To fulfill the word of 'the Lord by

the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years,"* From this statement the inference is drawn that the original number of Jubilees that God intended Israel to observe was 70. Allowing 49 years to each jubilee cycle, the entire number of 70 Jubilees would make up a period of 3430 years, which, reckoned from the entrance of the land by Israel, about B. C. 1556, would reach unto approximately A.D. 1874.** According to this reckoning the great Jubilee would be due to begin chronologically at that time: The assumption furthermore growing out of this matter being that as the great Jubilee is supposed to be synonymous with the period of Christ's reign, the Second Presence of Christ should be reckoned as due at the beginning of the great jubilee year.

*Some expositors have taken the position, on the basis of what seems to be valid reasoning, that the 70 sabbaths mentioned in the Chronicles as the full number to be observed do not refer to the Jubilee year at all, but to the 7th year or septenary sabbath; in view of the fact that the word Jubilee is not mentioned in that connection but merely the word sabbath. Thus the argument is urged that the Jubilee year is not concerned at all in the 70 mentioned. There is this to be said, however, on the point to the contrary, the Jubilee was also a sabbath year. It was also a year of rest and cessation from tilling the soil and other forms of labor. It could, therefore have been the Jubilee sabbath that was meant in the sacred record. Though in the absence of specific reference to the Jubilee, it would seem only reasonable that we rest the matter as an open question.

**For a mere extended review of the subject of the Jubilee, see. the May 15th, 1926 issue of this journal, pp. 167-174.

This may be regarded as indeed a rational assumption, because surely the presence of the One who would be the great Emancipator of that time would properly be expected to be in evidence somewhere in connection with the beginning of the great Jubilee. Accordingly, from one standpoint it may constitute one of the strongest reasons for associating the year 1874 with the commencement of our Lord's Second Presence. However, as the Scriptures do not impart definite and specific information with regard to the presence of Christ as it has to do with commencement of the great jubilee, and as there are possibilities that His presence in that connection might take place either prior or subsequent to the chronological beginning of the jubilee, we believe that none should feel justified in saying that we are able to fix or definitely determine from the subject of the jubilee, the precise date when Christ's Second Presence began. But it would be a reasonable procedure for all faithful watchers to look about them in these days for external evidences and indications that the preliminary features of the grand jubilee are already in process of being enacted, especially in consideration of the various other chronological testimonies which are open to the observation of all the faithful virgin class.

(Continued in next issue)

"HE WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD"

"And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God."-Josh. 14:9.

NO HIGHER aspiration can any of God's creatures on earth entertain, as they approach the evening twilight of life, than that of receiving the Divine commendation, of being assured that God is delighted and His name honored in the record that is left. Such was the brilliant career of the faithful Caleb. How grand the testimony: "He wholly followed the Lord." And the words have special force and weight in Caleb's case, because by nature he was not of the children of Israel, but only by adoption into the tribe of Judah. He was of the seed of Abraham, but through the rejected son Esau. The lesson of his faithfulness and reward is, therefore, of special force and weight to us who by nature were children of wrath, members of the worldly class of humanity, whose natural disposition was typified in Esau whose little faith in the promises of God, and greater appreciation of the good things of this world, led him to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Many of us who now rejoice that we are counted in as Israelites indeed, justified by faith, sanctified by the truth of the people of God, sharers in the great inheritance—realize that many of us once loved the things of this present life none than the things of the life to come, and were disposed to grasp the tangible things of the present rather than to sacrifice these in the interest of the future glories and blessings of the Divine promise.

A Heart Surrendered to God

The value of that sublime statement concerning Caleb: "He wholly followed the Lord," is appreciated all the more when it is remembered that for any man to wholly follow the Lord during the circumstances of the evil order of things that has prevailed since sin entered the world, signifies that he must be a man of great faith, a great believer in God. Additionally, that he must have a heart thoroughly surrendered to God and brought into subjection to His holy will. The sacred records of the ages clearly reveal that it is not without painful difficulties and bitter warfare that any have maintained this state and attitude toward the Lord until the close of life. The great adversary of God and man, always alert and active in opposition to God, has ever sought to thwart the purposes of the godly and such as have set the seal that God is true and who have accordingly wholly followed Him through life. The statement about wholly following the Lord is a remarkable one, too, when we recall that of the number who have received commendation and approval of the Lord in the past, very few of them have wholly followed the Lord all the days of their life. The records show that the trend of their life has been to wholly follow the Lord, but there were times when they deviated at least for a brief space from the path of honor and rectitude and from wholly following the Lord, and consequently have suffered measurably the rebuke of the Lord. But because being found loyal to Him at heart, and because the purpose all along through life was to do His will and please Him, such have developed character and have had His approval in the end.

But we are having under discussion one of whom it is said, "He wholly followed the Lord," which represents a most wonderful testimony. This must mean that Caleb was one who took no part in any of the murmurings of Israel against the providence of the Lord; that at no time during the reverses and the hardships of the journey from Egypt to the Land of Canaan did he turn in rebellion against God, or even sympathetically share in the wayward course of the masses of the Israelites who perished in the wilderness. As is familiar to all students of the sacred page, one of the finest exhibitions of the faith of Caleb is to be noted in his conduct as one of the twelve spies reporting the Land of Canaan. He, along with Joshua, taking the viewpoint of faith and trusting implicitly in the power and promises of Jehovah, made certain in his own mind and as far as it was possible in that of his brethren, that they were able to enter Canaan and to possess it.

Satan Cannot Pierce Shield of Faith

Here truly was an exhibition of how this noble character of ancient times stood on the blessed ground of faith in the living God -- "that faith which fills the soul with the most joyful confidence and courage." He consequently reaped according to his faith for God always honors the faith which trusts and wholly follows Him. "This is a most weighty principle, 'According to your faith, so be it unto you.' Let us remember this. God delights in faith. He loves to be trusted; and He will ever put honor upon those who trust Him. On the contrary, unbelief is grievous to Him. It provokes and dishonors Him, and brings darkness and death over the soul. It is a most terrible sin to, doubt the living God who cannot lie, and to harbor questions when He .has spoken. The devil is the author of all doubtful questions. He delights in shaking the confidence of the soul; but he has no power whatever against a soul that simply confides in God. His fiery darts can never reach one who is hidden behind the shield of faith. And Oh! how precious it is to live a life of childlike trust in God! It makes the heart so happy, and fills the mouth with praise and thanksgiving. It chases away every cloud and mist, and brightens our path with the blessed beams of our Father's countenance.

On the ether hand, unbelief fills the heart with .all manner of questions, throws us in upon ourselves, darkens our path and makes us truly miserable. Caleb's heart was full of joyful confidence, while the hearts of his brethren were filled with bitter murmurings and complaints. Thus it must ever be. If we want to be happy, we must be occupied with God and His surroundings. If we want to be miserable, we have only to be occupied with self and its surroundings. Look, for a moment, at the first chapter of Luke. What was it that shut up Zacharias in dumb silence? It was unbelief. What was it that filled the heart and opened the lips of Mary and Elizabeth? Faith. Here lay-the difference. Zacharias might have joined those pious women in their songs of praise, were it not that dark unbelief had sealed, his lips, in melancholy silence. What a picture! What a lesson! Oh that we may learn to trust God more simply! May the doubtful mind be far from us! May it .be ours, in the midst of an infidel scene, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Caleb's Goodly Heritage Amongst Enemies

It was with becoming confidence in the promises of the Lord that Caleb rehearsed to Joshua the story of the spying out of Canaan. He reminded Joshua of how Moses had promised that particular part of Canaan he had trod upon in spying out the land to: be his own possession, his heritage. He showed how this promise had fully entered into his heart; that not only had he the faith which enabled him to make the good report as to the possibility of Israel, under the Lard's favor, taking possession of the land of promise at once, but the same faith was with him afterward; he believed the Word of the Lord through Moses respecting his ultimate inheritance in it. The same promise and faith had been with him and actuated him during the wars of Israel in taking possession of the land, and now he still had full confidence that God would accomplish all the 'promises of Moses through the new leader Joshua. He was not unmindful of the fact that Hebron, which was the portion promised him by Moses, was not yet conquered; that it was in possession of the Anakim giants, and that there would be serious battles to be fought before he could take full possession. His confidence was, however, that the same God who had made him the promise in the beginning, who had kept him thus far and who had fulfilled the promise up to this time, would be with him still and 'give him the victory over the entrenched' and fortified enemies in Hebron.

Entrenched Enemies of the Flesh

How well this illustrates the progress of the spiritual Israelites who in the present time, by faith, are living the new life in the land of promise, battling with the enemies and overcoming them in the name and by the power of the Lord! They look back to the beginning of their experiences and rejoice that the Lord has kept them and blessed them in all spiritual things up to the present, and in proportion as they realize this they have faith to look forward into the future and to see the final outcome--see themselves victors in their contests even with the strongest and most entrenched enemies of the flesh--its giant passions, customs, etc. Amongst these enemies of spiritual Israelites, living high up in the mountain of fastnesses, giant in form and thoroughly fortified, are religious customs, traditions of man, nominalism, sectarian pride and ambition and love of show. But the same grace of God which was sufficient to enable us to gain the victory over the common sins, in the valley, is able still to give us the victory over all these enemies of the new mind, the New Creature, and to bring us off conquerors and "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" and bought us with His precious blood. But as faith was necessary at every step of the journey--to spy out the land, to enter in, to fight the battles, so the same faith increasing as it has progressed, is necessary now for our final victory and our entrance into the full promised inheritance. Doubtless, the same condition in some respect will be true during the Millennial Age to the world also; At first the requirement of the Kingdom will be obedience in outward form; but ultimately the requirement will be the full submission of the heart to the will of God ere the restitution class will reach full perfection and enter upon the inheritance of everlasting life at the close of the Millennial Age. That this is the proper conception is evidenced by the symbolic picture in Rev. 20, where we have portrayed the world's future trial. A special and crucial test is to be permitted in the close of that Age -- a test that will search deeply the hearts of all who will have ascended up the highway of holiness to perfection and life; and as the symbolism shows, under the pressure of that trial some who have been outwardly obedient and will have apparently been loyal at heart will fail and thus disclose the fact that their hearts were not sufficiently sincere, obedient and consecrated; and consequently lose the favor of God altogether. How important it is that those who are now on trial for the high and responsible office of the future Age shall make every effort to have clean and sincere hearts, thoroughly loyal to the Lord and to the principles of His own glorious character.

We Too Should Have Grace of Sympathy and Compassion

It is pleasant in passing to note the generous language of Caleb in respect to the ten other spies who were with Joshua and himself, and who brought back the evil report. Here would have been a fine opportunity for an ignoble man to have spoken evil of those associates and to have endeavored to glorify his own faithfulness and that of Joshua in contrast with the unfaithfulness of the ten. But no; generously he passes over their wrong conduct in as mild language as possible, and so far from denouncing them, or reviling them, he speaks of them as "my brethren." The spiritual Israelite must have this same disposition, only with us it should be still more pronounced than with Caleb, because we, having been anointed with the Holy Spirit and through this anointing having been taught many of the "deep things of God," may well judge ourselves by a standard much higher than any with which Caleb was acquainted; surely spiritual Israelites have much advantage every way over natural Israelites. When ever, therefore, we hear those professing the new life and large attainments of grace speaking evil of their brethren, we are to remember the word of the Lord, that revilers shall have no part in the Kingdom of God; we are to remember that it is written of our Lord that "when He was reviled He reviled not again"; we are to remember that evil speaking is classed by the Apostle as amongst the works of the flesh and of the devil, and the conduct of Michael, the archangel, is held up before us as a shining example of propriety, in that he did not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee"; we are to remember too the Apostle's specific declaration that evil speaking against others is a part of the filth of the flesh from which we, as the Lord's people, must be cleansed if we would be acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord; and that revilers "shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." -- 1 Cor. 6:10.

Surely the essence of this lesson to the spiritual Israelite is that in order to inherit the good promises of God, we, like Caleb, must have faith in God and a corresponding obedience, that of us, as of him, the Lord will write, "He wholly followed the Lord:"

LOVE ONE ANOTHER FERVENTLY

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." -- 1 Pet. 1:22.

THE Scriptures associate the thought of a cleansing of the heart with that of the development of the character of love. How Logical and proper this is! Love and selfishness are in direct opposition one to the other. They cannot dwell together: Whatever measure of selfishness is retained in the heart will stand as a barrier to love. Evidently there is something of this thought in the Apostle's language above. The purifying of the soul would relate to the cleansing of the mind and purposes of the heart for the removal of selfishness that love might burn the more fervently; further, the adjustment of the intentions and motives that they may be pleasing to God. Such purification will be manifest in the outward life and conduct.

We purify our souls -- that is, our souls are purified (have been purified if we are saints) -- by obedience to the Truth through the Spirit; which implies that it is necessary for us to know the Truth, not that we must know all truth, but that truth relating to the subject of God's arrangement for our escape from the condemned state, and our acceptance into the Divine family. When we presented ourselves in spirit and in truth, through faith, our sins were forgiven; we were accepted as New Creatures in Christ; our souls were purified; we were started in a new career.

The Apostle proceeds to say that, having had this glorious transformation of character, through the knowledge of and obedience to the spirit of the Truth, we have learned to love the brethren with an "unfeigned love," a love that is genuine, without pretense -- not merely an outward profession, to have a smile upon the face or to give a cordial grasp of the hand, but that through this spirit we have recognized that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to the dear Redeemer, and are seeking to follow His leadings, are "brethren," regardless of race or color or education or poverty or homeliness. We have reached the point where our hearts are so full of the Spirit of the Master that we can truthfully say we love all the brethren with a love which is sincere and not at all feigned.

Having progressed thus far in the good way, the Spirit of the Lord reveals that there is yet an advance step of love, and states what next we must do in order to keep our hearts pure: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." We must not only regard them as brethren and give them, "unfeigned love," but should recognize the principle underlying our relationship to the Lord and their relationship to the Lord; how they, like ourselves, are New Creatures in Christ; and this should give us great sympathy and a desire to do everything we can to encourage them, to help them.

Disinterested Love -- Strange and Intense

This love is different from the other love -- brotherly love. It is disinterested love; so warm, so intense, that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. This love is the kind exemplified in our Heavenly Father. While we were yet sinners He loved us. So, the love of Jesus is unselfish, pure, benevolent; a love which undertakes to do good for us for our own sakes, not from a hope of getting anything from us.

The Apostle proceeds to say that we should not only have this love, but that we should have it with fervency; warmth, ardor; not with a semi-indifference, but with a real interest in each other's welfare -- the rich as well as the poor; the educated as well as the ignorant. Our love should go out to these as we see any lack in them that we could supply -- rendering assistance of any kind; using always, of course, discretion, for our love learns to be wise, - and to take into consideration our motives while we endeavor to do them good.

We are admonished to see to it that this is our own experience; not merely that it is a principle which we recognize but that we should give heed to ourselves that this should be accomplished in us, in our own lives. It would not be natural to have that benevolence of mind which would practice forgiveness of those who trespass against us. But when we think of the fact that the whole race is fallen and degraded through heredity, it should make us sympathetic; if some are more depraved, we *should* have the more sympathy for them. As we think sympathetically along those lines, our sympathetic Love will increase; as we practice sympathetic love, the New Creature develops.

Our Lord Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." Set this standard before you. Our love for the brethren might, at first, be merely obedience in following this command; but as we follow on, obeying the Divine command, our love increases; our sympathy expands. The Apostle says we must see to it that we do not neglect this. If we fail to heed this admonition we are not of the kind that the Father is choosing; for the Apostle also tells us that He predestinated that all those who shall be members of the Body of Christ should be copies of Him; copies in having unfeigned and fervent love.

Strength in the Lord Proportionate to Knowledge of Him

No one can grow strong in the Lord unless he" grown also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for His Truth are evidenced by their zeal in the study of His Word, and whose favor with God is manifested by their being guided more into the deep things of God.

Nevertheless, the weaker ones of the household of faith are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord. And just here the Apostle offers another word of counsel, saying "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." - Rom. 15:1.

If this spirit prevails among the members of the Lord's Body, the members will all have a mutual love and a mutual care one for another -- a care which seeks to encourage and strengthen all that is good and to discourage all that is unbecoming, and a love which throws its mantle" over a deformity and endeavors to conceal a fault, rather than to expose the weaker brother to reproach of others.

For such self-sacrificing love how necessary is the spirit of humility and gentleness and patience and faith! How forceful are the Master's words, "Except ye be converted [from the spirit of the world to the Spirit of Christ] - and become as little children [in meekness and teachableness], ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." -- Matt. 18:1-6

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WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."-Eph. 6:10.

GLORIOUS is the privilege of being admitted into the fellowship of God and of being made a co-worker together with Him! How supremely happy must be the heritage of all the holy ones of the heavenly host, uncontaminated by sin and its influences and the infirmities of the fallen state, with nothing to mar or hinder the blessed sunlight of God's presence!

With humanity here upon the earth under the present circumstances all is different: Sin and selfishness now mar everything; and creation as a race on this planet, separated from God and holy influences, know nothing of His fellowship and the precious influences of His love and care; they are entirely oblivious to the sweetness of service as coworkers together with Him. But still there is a happy outlook; God has not abandoned His creation to corruption and ruin. He has told us of His gracious purpose to once more let in the light of His favor and to lift from the earth the shroud of darkness that has so long hidden His face from humanity. The long promised morning is to come; the age of light and life for all the willing and obedient coming forth from the tomb at that time. -- Psa. 30:5; John 5:28, 29.

Spiritual Joys and Spiritual Convicts

But even now in advance of the dispelling of the darkness and before God visits earth's creation with His favor, He speaks peace to some through His dear Son, and those who respond obediently experience the great deliverance from the blight of the condemned state. Such may now come to God and enter His presence. Though still in the world of ruin and death, and though they have not yet experienced the complete deliverance, they are accorded the privilege of His fellowship and of becoming co-workers together with Him. Thus since the advent of the Savior and the introduction of the dispensation of the Spirit; a faithful remnant of humanity, which is termed in God's Word "the Elect," have throughout their days, from the time of coming to Him, enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of communion with God, of walking and working with Him and of enlisting all their powers, time and opportunity in accordance with His gracious will. Yet on account of the prevailing darkness in the present evil world and the subtlety of the Adversary, and because God's children now possess the treasure of light, the blessing of His Spirit, in very imperfect and weak vessels, the life of fellowship and communion with God is associated with many grave dangers, difficulties, conflicts.

The calling and election of such as enter the Lord's presence in this Age, being to a spiritual inheritance, their labors, their experiences and conflicts, as well as their peace and joy are those of the inner man, of the Spirit within; they are of a spiritual character. God's favors to these and His protection are along spiritual lines against spiritual enemies and spiritual difficulties. Thus the Apostle refers to the conflicts and struggles of the Spirit when he says: "For we wrestle not against flesh and 'blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12.) Again: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do [perfectly] the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17.) Referring to the peace and joy of the Spirit, we read again: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:4, 7.) The New Testament abounds with messages setting forth the workings of the Spirit and the spiritual experiences of such as enter relationship with God and work together with Him.

God's Special Work With the Church

Having seen in our study of the Divine Plan that God's purpose in this Age is not for the conversion and the reclaiming of the world now, but is for the choosing out of humanity a Bride for His Son, and having seen that those who will compose this distinguished company must be of choice character, there is but the one conclusion, namely that God's special work in this dispensation is with and for these. This is a most important work. His Word tells us that, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) Comparing Himself to a fruit-vine and His followers to branches in the vine, Jesus said: "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." "Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." -- John 15:2, 8.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit all the Apostles dealt comprehensively with this subject of fruit bearing, of Christian development, the subject of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian Church was admonished to add various qualities or ingredients that go to build up and strengthen character: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:8.) Everywhere in the Apostolic teaching is the thought of the cleansing of the Church, the sanctification of the Church and her transformation, that she may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

But wherein does the Christian work together with God? Answer, in all this God's work mentioned foregoing, every member of the Church has his part. In fact, God does not work with those who do not co-operate with Him. "Work out your own salvation," says the Apostle, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here then, is our work; it is that of heeding His voice, of heeding the instruction of His Word; that of daily applying the Word to the life. It is a constant work of faith and of the Spirit by which a transformation, a change of character is effected, and we become copies of the likeness of His dear Son. Finally, it is the work of developing the New Creation to be the qualified joint-heirs with Christ for the blessing and deliverance of humanity in the future Age.

The First Great Step

In order to properly commence such a life there must be the great humbling of the heart and soul before God in the beginning, in turning away from sin and surrendering all to Him. This is forcefully stated by the Psalmist: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51:17.) If this first step or stage commencing the Christian life is thorough, if the surrender to God is complete, if self-will is broken and the natural pride of the heart humbled in the dust, the foundation is well laid for a successful life of working together with God, the spirit of such as have had this experience is well expressed by the poet

"Higher than the highest heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered
'None of self and all of Thee.'"

Yet, as is well known, it is one thing to make the right start, to lay this good foundation, and another thing to build thereon; to preserve all through life the humble, brokenhearted attitude and to go forward successfully in the work with God-that work He wishes us to engage in with Him.

One may indeed have made the full surrender, have made the right start in the first place, but in the course of the conflicts, cares, trials, and tests of life he has not run well. The old self in a measure is revived; self-will and the old natural pride of heart little by little crop out; the flesh is indulged; the world has its part in the life, there is a kind of working for God, but little of working together with God. Instead of the meekness and lowliness of heart and waiting always to know (rod's will, human, fleshly energy, pride and ambition, enter largely into the plans, labor and service that are rendered. As a result such an one is -not holding fast to the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. The spiritual life and health are impoverished; the life of fellowship and communion with God is far from what it ought to be.

Why Others Fail

Again it is to be observed that the effects of the initial experience of conversion and consecration are not as deep or as far-reaching as they should be; the vessel is not as completely broken and emptied of self as it ought to be and consequently the dominion of the Spirit of God in such a life is seriously interfered with. The disposition of such an one is again defined by the poet

"Yet He found me; I beheld Him

Bleeding on the accursed tree;

And my wistful heart said faintly,

'Some of self and some of Thee.'"

It is just as impossible for one of this kind to be satisfactorily working together with God as the other case mentioned. There is a positive antipathy between the life of holiness and full surrender, and the life of partial self-indulgence. As we read: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (Jas. 1:8.) To such there comes the solemn admonition: "Purify your hearts ye 'double minded.'" -- Jas. 4:8.

But no matter which of the above descriptions or examples of attempts to work together with God may come under our observation, the results are the same; and such lives are constantly meeting with problems, trials, and discouragements with which they well know they have not strength to cope. And how few spiritual Israelites when they get into spiritual difficulties realize that it must, in some sense of the word, be traceable to the Lord's providences! ! How few of them properly look to see to what extent their spiritual adversities, weaknesses, coldness, alienation from the Lord, etc., are due to the permission of some kind of idolatry in their hearts! Not an idolatry, probably, that entirely ignores the Lord; but one which, while thinking favorably of His spiritual blessings and victories of the past, simply wonders at His disfavor of the present, and fails to recognize that it is impossible to serve at the same time both God and Mammon; that God's favor and close communion and protection cannot be expected while we permit in our hearts a rival reverence for wealth or fame or human institutions and creeds, or self or family to any degree or extent.

Victories Few, Defeats Many and Disastrous

Another, writing along these lines of the successes and failures, victories and defeats of the Christian life, has summed up the experience of a large number of the Lord's people in the following impressive manner:

"All of God's children, I am convinced, feel instinctively, in their moments of Divine illumination, that a life of inward rest and outward victory is their inalienable birthright. Can you not remember, some of you, the shout of triumph your souls gave when you first became acquainted with the Lord Jesus, and had a glimpse of His mighty saving power? How sure you were of victory, then! How easy it seemed to be more than conquerors, through Him that loved you! Under the leadership of a Captain, who had never been foiled in battle, how could you dream of defeat! And yet, to many of you, how different has been your real experience! Your victories have been few and fleeting, your defeats many and disastrous. You have not lived as you feel children of God ought to live. You have had perhaps a clear understanding of doctrinal truths, but you have not come into possession of their life and power. You have rejoiced in your knowledge of the things revealed in the Scriptures, but have not had a living realization of the things themselves, consciously felt in the soul. Christ is believed in, talked about, and served; but He is not known as the soul's actual and very life, abiding there forever, and revealing Himself there continually in His beauty. You have found Jesus as your Savior from the penalty of sin, but you have not found Him as your Savior from its power. You have carefully studied the Holy Scriptures, and have gathered much precious truth therefrom, which you have trusted would feed and nourish your spiritual life, but in spite of it all, your souls are starving and dying within you, and you cry out in secret, again and again, for that bread and water of life which you see promised in the Scriptures to all believers. In the very depths of your hearts, you know that your experience is not a scriptural experience; that, as an old writer said, your religion is 'but a talk to what the early Christians enjoyed, possessed, and lived in.' And your hearts have sunk within you, as day after day, and year after year, your early visions of triumph have seemed to grow more and more dim, and you have been forced to, settle down to the conviction, that the best you can expect from your religion is a life of alternate failure and victory, one hour sinning, and the next repenting, and then beginning again, only to fail again, and again to repent."

The Promises of Triumph

It is of course not the scriptural thought that the victorious Christian life is one of perfection in the flesh; nor one in which there is no uprising nor cravings of natural fleshly propensities. But surely the triumphant life must be one in which there is victory over sin in some important sense. There must be a subduing of sin in our members; there must be that self-mastery, a keeping of the body under, else the admonition to live the overcoming life were in vain, and the promise to the overcomer is meaningless. The above writer continues:

"Did 'delivering us out of the hand of our enemies,' mean that they should still have dominion over us? Did 'enabling us always to triumph' mean that we were only to triumph sometimes? Did being made 'more than conquerors through Him that loved us,' mean constant defeat and failure? Does being 'saved to the uttermost' mean the meager salvation we see manifested among us now? Can we dream that the Savior, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, could possibly see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied in such Christian lives as fill the Church today?

"When Paul was telling to the Ephesian Church the wondrous truth, that Christ had so loved them as to give Himself for them, he went on to declare that His purpose in thus doing was, 'that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

"When Paul was seeking to instruct Titus, his own son after the common faith, concerning the grace of God, he declared that the object of that grace was to teach us 'that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;' and adds, as the reason of this, that Christ 'gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

"When Peter was urging upon the Christians, to whom he was writing, a holy and Christlike walk, he tells them that 'even hereunto were ye called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps : who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth;' he adds, 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.'

"When Paul was contrasting in the Ephesians, the walk suitable for a Christian, with the walk of an unbeliever, he sets before them the truth in Jesus as being this, 'that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts! and be renewed in the spirit of your minds ; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'"

In the Power of His Might

In consideration of the Divine call to live a life of sanctification, and in view of the promised grace to enable the called one to work together with God in its accomplishment, it must be admitted that all failure to attain success is due to the neglect of the Lord's instruction concerning the secret of working with Him. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," is the sum of the Divine counsel on this subject: Those lacking faith to rest their case with God, those struggling in the strength of their fleshly energy, cannot triumph in the life of holiness and godliness. Here again is revealed the all important office of the Holy Spirit. To be strong in the Lord surely signifies to be strong in the power of His Spirit: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," says the Apostle, but that strength must be laid hold of by faith. It is the strength which His Spirit affords. The Lord may permit defeats and failures for the very purpose of causing us to turn to Him more fully to find out the secret of success-that it is in self-renunciation and in being filled with His Spirit.

"Repent and Do the First Works"

The Savior's admonition to the Church at Ephesus contains the elements of wisdom that many today could profitably hear and need: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2:5.) This is an admonition to go back over the life and note what it was in the beginning that drew out the soul's fervent love, and led to bring all to the altar and to zealously enter upon a life of ardent devotion to the will of God. Consider again and know what it was that led up to this experience. If you find that along through the years faith has grown dim, your hope of glory is not bright, and you know little or nothing of the promised full assurance of faith, "repent" renounce that condition and in humility seek the favor of God in His way-"Do the first works." And what were those works? There can be no doubt that they were the works of the Spirit, because they are the only works that are pleasing to God. Christ's advice is do them again, which means a return to the former happy attitude of full surrender to God and receive again of the power from on high, by which alone any are enabled to do His works, or to work together with, God.

As in the beginning the light of truth was seen and laid hold of by faith, and as the truth revealed God's character of love and His gracious purpose to bestow unspeakable gifts and mercies upon all obedient believers, and as this revelation of things drew upon our gratitude and led to the dedication of all to Him, so again let there be a revival of this condition in the soul and a drawing nigh to God, that the former blessings of peace, joy, faith, hope; and love may once more be the heritage.

A Life of Watching Unto Prayer

The successful working with God is then to be a continual heeding of His Word of counsel; a constant walking with and leaning upon the Lord: It will be found to be a life of watching-unto prayer, for the Spirit of God so instructs : "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6:18.) The daily experience will be one of feeding upon the Divine Word of wisdom and instruction. As the manna was the daily food of Israel so the heavenly manna' of God's truth is the nourishment whereby the Christian goes from strength to strength. He is enabled to work with God. Service, work indeed there will be in behalf of others, especially in behalf of fellow members of the Christ; and all opportunities will be used to let the light of the knowledge of God shine out to others; proclaiming of the message to all who have ears to hear. But increasingly through the years the faithful disciple of Christ and child of God will realize that his special mission at the present time is to work with God in respect

to his own personal life of devotion, holiness and sanctification, in order to a preparation for membership in the class of whom, it will yet be said: "His wife hath made herself ready."

TAKING HEED TO OUR WAYS

"I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." -- Psa. 39:1.

IT WILL be conceded by all people of experience that the trend of the mind, the thoughts entertained, have much to do with our words-what passes in conversation. Whoever, through the power of the Lord's Spirit, therefore, possesses a proper control of the thoughts of the heart, will govern himself in this important direction. If our ways please the Lord, if our ways are ways of righteousness and holiness and love, then out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak to the edification of the hearer. The ways being right, the utterances will be right. Humanity generally loves themselves and avoid saying anything bitter, unkind, about themselves. But the man who hates his neighbors will have very little difficulty in saying something bitter or unkind of them.

Though the tongue is one of the most useful members, yet it is necessary to put a bridle, a restraint, a controlling influence upon it; that influence must be the Holy Spirit. With the tongue we may honor our God or we, may blaspheme Him. When in the presence of the wicked, we need to be still more on guard than with the righteous; for with the former the tendencies and thoughts are toward evil. When with the wicked or in their presence we are in contact with a degrading influence. At such times, some of sympathetic disposition may find special difficulty in bridling their tongues; but it is better to do so than to speak of even good things to the wicked, as we would feel at liberty to do with the righteous. The Lord has suggested, "Cast not your pearls before swine, . . . lest they turn again and rend you."

The warning of the Scriptures is not against the tongue itself, but against the power we exercise against others by the use of our tongues. Probably every person of experience will fully agree with the statement that the tongue is potent in its influence beyond any other member of the body, for either good or evil.

The Tongue Often a Power for Evil Among the Lord's People

As the bit in the horse's mouth will control his strength; and as the small rudder of a vessel will direct its course; so the tongue, and the pen, its representative, may influence large numbers of people for good or ill. How important, therefore, is the tongue! And how much more frequently do we find it employed as an agency for evil than for good; to pull down rather than to build up the faith; to implant seeds of discord and discontent rather than those which will produce righteousness and peace! While this is specially true in the worldly, it is also true among God's people; and each should remember that to some extent he is a teacher, and day by day is either forwarding or hindering the cause of truth, righteousness and peace.

In the unregenerate world there is a "fire" causing no end of burning of wrath, envy, hatred, strife, and everything that defiles the fallen passions and desires. No wonder the Apostle declares that, figuratively, gehenna -- the Second Death. Its burning tends to bring, not only its owner, but others to destruction.

As imperfect beings we may not always be perfect in word and deed, for notwithstanding our best endeavors we sometimes seriously err in our conduct; yet the perfect mastery of our words and our ways is to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort. But, nevertheless, for every evil word we must give an account in this our day of judgment.

We Should Daily Render Our Accounts

If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian we discover that our words have in any way been dishonoring her that, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous" (1 John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace. There we may explain to our Heavenly Father our realization of our error, our deep regret at our failure to honor His name and His cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge; but that it may be blotted out by His gracious provision for our cleansing, through Christ, humbly acknowledging that in His precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merit of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise, the idle words dishonoring to the Lord, will condemn us, and we shall be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be self-injury, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is that by setting a bad example to others we stir up evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1) Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become agents of retributive Justice to teach us the lesson of self-control and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others.

It is often the case that the Lord or the Adversary is blamed for sending trials, which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes. Those who fail to locate the root of the matter in themselves pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge [and correct] ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord [largely by the experiences through which our own faults. put us], that we should not be condemned with the world." --1 Cor. 11:31-32.

The Tendency of Human Nature is to Blame Others

But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God or by the Adversary, the natural tendency is to blame someone else, and to think that our lack of patience, our hasty word or act, was the fault of another. The Apostle says, "Every man is tempted [tried] when he is drawn away by his own lusts [desires] and enticed." How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought, "If everybody else had as reasonable and generous a nature as I have, our family or Church gathering or community would be a

veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved, let us examine ourselves, let us be very humble lest the thought of self-congratulation and self-satisfaction which we may consider in our hearts, even if we do not utter them aloud, bring our condemnation.

"If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye [what merit is there in it] ? (Luke 6:32-33.) It is only when we "endure grief, suffering wrongfully," that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer far it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God; for even hereunto were ye called." (1 Pet. 2:19-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our sufferings are for righteousness' sake only, and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our own inherited or cultivated faults. In view of the fact that we now stand before the bar of Judgment, which, if we are truly the Lord's people, we will endeavor more and more fully to realize, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" -- 2 Pet. 3:11.

Holy Thoughts Produce Holy Words

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 1:27; 4:8) Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall speak the words of truth and soberness, and honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, subduing the tendencies of our fallen nature, and "having our conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may; by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." -- 1 Pet. 2:12.

Surely we can not hear all these deeply solemn instructions and admonitions along the lines of governing thoughts and words and deeds without recognizing that the doing of these things is inseparably associated with the development of character and is a part of the process of discipline by which we are now acquiring the image of God's dear Son. What a daily rendering up of accounts to God there should be then with every one of His children! If this is properly done and if we seek His grace for greater overcoming power with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God, through Christ, having the testimony of His Holy Spirit with our spirits that we are pleasing and acceptable to Him.

THE SECOND PRESENCE OF OUR LORD - PART IV.

CHRONOLOGICAL AND PROPHETIC SIGNS (Continued)

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." -- Luke 21:28.

DURING the past fifty years in particular the signs and evidences have multiplied indicating that we are living in the close of the reign of evil; that we are drawing near to the great change due to take place in connection with the fall of the empire of evil and the rise and establishment of the Kingdom of God. There is general

harmony among prophetic students on this point. The sum of this matter is briefly and well expressed by Mr. Guinness

"The lapse of six thousand years of history, and the science arising from four thousand years of astronomical observation, as well as the light afforded by the fulfillment of nine-tenths of the predictions of Scripture as to historical events, enable 'the wise,' or the godly students of the works and Word of God, to understand in these days His revealed purposes as regards the times and seasons of the redemption of our race, as earlier students could not do. To encourage us to such studies we have the definite promise that 'the wise shall understand' in the time of the end much that was, for kind and wise purposes, hidden from earlier generations."

Striking Evidence of Declining Days of the Age

As we have seen in our study of chronology and prophecy, especially that contained in the Book of Daniel and in Revelation, nearly all of the prophetic time periods relating to the reign of evil, have run their course and have reached fulfillment. The great fourfold metallic image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the fourfold beastly empires of Daniel's vision are substantially in the past. Only the dissolution of the last fragments remain. In both of these prophetic pictures there are presented the rise, decline and fall of the two great overshadowing apostasies that have exercised such a wide influence in the affairs of mankind during the past sixteen centuries. They are those of Mohammedan and the Papacy. In the light of history fulfilling prophecy, it is discovered that the rise and decline of both of these great systems are now facts of history; and in consideration of all that is going on in our day, their complete overthrow and destruction must surely be matters of but a comparatively brief time. Another interesting word from Mr. Guinness is to the point here

"The great week of 'the [seven] times of the Gentiles' is the life-time of the fourfold image, and of the four wild-beast empires of Daniel-Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; the last in its two stages, first pagan, and secondly Papal. The four pagan empires did actually, as a matter of fact, last half 'seven times' (lunar), i.e., 1260 lunar years; and the second half of the great week has been occupied by the rise, culmination, and decay of the Papal empire of Rome."

No more striking evidence can there be that we are living in the declining days of the Age than this which is derived from a careful comparison of prophecy and history together with the progress of events of the present time. But while there are these well established proofs that we are living in the last times, not all of them would be regarded as signs or proofs of Christ's presence, although there is a close relationship. For instance, long in advance of our time earnest students of Scripture saw considerable of the significance of sacred prophecy, sufficient to enable them to know that by far the greater part of the reign of evil was in- the past; but this they could see without necessarily having proof of the Lord's Second. Presence. Even St. Paul in his day said, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." He was probably speaking from the standpoint of the six great one thousand year-days constituting the night time of evil; and recognizing that he was then in the beginning of the fifth, he could see that the night was largely in the past and that the great sabbath, or seventh thousand year-day was approaching.

What the Prophetic Time Periods Teach

In looking for evidence of the presence of Christ, before reaching any conclusion as to His presence, we must find something of a definite and specific character. Whether it be chronological evidence or evidence deduced from fulfilled prophecy of events, it should contain those elements of proof and substantial facts in order to furnish grounds for acceptance. Prophetic time periods evidently intended to reach down to the era of the Lord's Second Presence, must be seen to have already ended, or nearing their end; and prophetic testimony describing events associated with Christ's presence, must be seen to be in process of fulfillment, if we are to have a reasonable basis for our belief that Christ's Second Presence is an accomplished fact.

In the preceding articles of this series, we have reviewed a number of the chronological lines and prophetic time periods and have found what we believe to be strong testimony in support of the conclusion that this is the time of Christ's Second Presence. For instance, the reasonable deduction that six thousand years represent the period of the reign of evil and are wholly in the past, or approximately so, gives strong support to the inference of the presence of Christ, since the seventh great day is to be peculiarly His day, and is termed "the day of Christ." His presence would be logically expected at least a brief space of time prior to the full dawn of that day.

Again finding that the lease of power to the Gentiles, covering a period of 2520 years, was due to run out in 1914-15, and that the Gentile times would seem to reach the full end of their course by 1934, the reasonable conclusion once more is that the presence of Christ would be due some time prior to this final end, inasmuch as there is definite testimony stating that the presence of Christ will have to do with the running out of Gentile dominion and the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world.

Another line of prophetic testimony which has been considered is that of the last time period mentioned by the angel to Daniel—the 1335 year-days. It seems evident that the full end of this period could not yet have been reached for Daniel was told that the end of those days would see the deliverance of his people and that he himself would stand in his lot. (Dan. 12:12, 13.) The fact that Daniel's people have not yet been delivered and that Daniel himself has not come forth from death and stood in his lot, would seem sufficient evidence that we have not yet reached the full end of those days. But discovering that their termination appears to be in the near future and that their ending would seem to mark the commencement of the new era, the presence of our Lord is necessarily implied, for the reason already stated—that various Scripture testimonies present the thought of our Lord being present during those culminating events and just prior to the inauguration of His Kingdom.

The Lesson in Jesus' Reply to John

We are now to consider more particularly some of those prophecies descriptive of the events of Christ's presence, believing that in some respects the evidence based upon fulfilled events and occurrences will be regarded by many as the strongest and most satisfactory basis for belief in the presence of Christ.

We are reminded here of how after John the Baptist had been imprisoned for a time he sent messengers to Jesus inquiring: "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" Jesus did not attempt to go into the details of chronology, in reply, nor attempt to expound any prophecies that would locate an exact date when His first presence as the Messiah began. He could have, if He had chosen, taken up the subject of the seventy symbolic weeks of Daniel's prophecy; He could have pointed out how the exact date of His presence was there indicated at the beginning of the last or seventieth week; He could have traced matters further and shown just when His

death and resurrection would occur, and how for three and one-half years subsequent thereto special favor would be extended to the Jews, and how about thirty-three years later, in A.D. 70, the great tribulation would befall Jerusalem and their city be destroyed. None of these things did the Master attempt to explain. The reply that Jesus sent to John contained the very essence of wisdom: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." (John 7:20-22.) What is the lesson? Answer, Jesus cited the outward sins and manifestations represented in His wonderful works. These He wished John to regard as the evidences of the presence of Messiah then.

The Jews Overlooked Signs at Jesus' First Advent

May we not from this draw the general lesson that the Lord would not have us be so much concerned about exact dates when this or that may occur, nor be curious with regard to the precise time when His presence began, nor even concerning the exact moment when the last members of the Church shall have passed beyond? And may we not further draw the conclusion, that in the end of this Age, at the Second Presence of our Lord, He would once more call our attention to the signs all about us plainly indicating the end of the Age and the fact of His presence? Again He said, "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." (John 14:29.) On this point Mr. Guinness goes on to say:

"Our blessed Master, when reproving the Jews for not recognizing Him as their Messiah, blamed them for not understanding the signs of the times. They wished Him to give them a sign from Heaven, something wonderful, something supernatural, something miraculous. He refused and said: 'O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. And He left them, and departed.'

"Did He object to their wishing for signs? No; for He gave such in abundance to His disciples and to the multitude, and He appealed to the witness borne by these signs to His Messiahship. He objected to their refusal to discern the signs that abounded on every hand in the shape of fulfilled prophecy, chronologic and otherwise, gracious miracle, and moral and spiritual revelations. He objected to their craving for the supernatural, the sensational, instead of taking to heart the abounding signs that were actually present.

"He subsequently gave signs of His Second Advent in glory to His disciples, and charged them, saying, 'When ye see these things begin to come to pass lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.' After His resurrection He upbraided the two disciples on the road to Emmaus for not believing all that the prophets had spoken of the Christ-His sufferings as well as His glory. It is evident therefore that He wishes His people to study and comprehend prophecy, and to be alive to every true sign of the times."

One of the Great Signs of His Presence

In reply to the great question of the disciples: "What shall be the sign of Thy presence?" Jesus stated in the following language what may be regarded as one of the most, if not the most significant sign of His presence, "And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing

them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on for after those things which are on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Here Jesus calls attention to what is so generally to be observed on the pages of prophecy, namely that the present order of things is to pass away during a time of general tumult, confusion, and trouble upon the nations of the world, otherwise referred to symbolically as the day of God's wrath. The deduction seems a most reasonable one, that our Lord Jesus is to be God's active agent in the administration of these judgments upon the present order of things just prior to the establishment of His Kingdom. In the Book of Revelation our Lord is pictured upon a white horse, going forth as a victorious Conqueror, and the results of 'the conquest are presented-the complete overthrow of the empire of evil.* (Rev. 19:11-21.) That this is the last great struggle between light and darkness, truth and error, and that it will result in the complete collapse of evil in every form is evidenced by the fact that immediately following this great conflict the Revelator, in his Apocalyptic vision, sees the new Conqueror enthroned and the Kingdom established. (Rev. 20:1-4.) The conclusion of the whole matter is that earth's new Ruler will have been officially present for a time mustering the hosts of this battle of the great day.

*See "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Vol. II.

Looking about us for indications of this prophecy in process of fulfillment, there is what we believe to be substantial evidence. The unhappy state of the governments of the earth at the present time, surely fulfills before our eyes the Master's description, "the distress of nations with perplexity." It is true of course that all along in the past there have been those times when the nations have been in distress and in perplexity, but there is nothing in the history of the world that could at all compare with what is in evidence at this time. It has taken the circumstances of the last days to fulfill this prophecy of Jesus. It is akin to the one by Zephaniah: "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour out upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy." -- Zeph. 3 :8.

The Nations Assembled in Last Days

Another, writing upon this matter, has very ably summed up the above prophecy of these last days:

"The gathering of the nations in these last days, in fulfillment of the above prophecy [of Zephaniah] is very notable. Modern discovery and invention have indeed made the remotest ends of the earth neighbors to each other. Travel, mailing facilities, the telegraph, the telephone, commerce, the multiplication of books and newspapers, etc., have brought all the world to a considerable extent into a community of thought and action hitherto unknown. This condition of things has already made necessary international laws and regulations that each of the nations must respect. Their representatives meet in Councils, and each nation has in every other nation its ministers or representatives. International Exhibitions have also been called forth as results of this neighboring of nations. There can no more be that exclusiveness on the part of any nation which would bar every other nation from its ports. The gates of all are necessarily thrown open, and must remain so; and even the barriers of diverse languages are being easily surmounted.

"The civilized peoples are no longer strangers in any part of the earth. Their splendid sea equipments carry their business representatives, their political envoys and their curious pleasure-seekers to the remotest quarters with ease and comfort. Magnificent railway coaches introduce them to the interior lands, and they return home laden with information, and with new ideas, and awakened to new projects and enterprises. Even the dull heathen nations are arousing themselves from the dreams of centuries and looking with wonder and amazement at their visitors from abroad and learning of their marvelous achievements. And they in turn are now sending their representatives abroad that they may profit by their new acquaintances.

"In the days of Solomon it was thought a marvelous thing that the queen of Sheba should come about five hundred miles to hear the wisdom and behold the grandeur of Solomon; but now numbers even of the untitled travel over the whole world, a great portion of which was then unknown, to see its accumulated wealth and to learn of its progress; and the circuit of the world can now be made with comfort and even luxury in less than eighty days.

Preparing For Retribution

"Truly, the nations are 'assembled' in a manner not expected, yet in the only manner in which they could be assembled; namely in common interest and activity; but alas! not, in brotherly love, for selfishness marks every step of this progress. The spirit of enterprise, of which selfishness is the motive power, has prompted the construction of the railways, the steamships, the telegraphs, the cables, the telephones; selfishness regulates the commerce and the international comity, and every other energy and enterprise, except the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of benevolent institutions: and even in these it is to be feared that much that is done is inspired by motives other than pure love for God and humanity. Selfishness has gathered the nations and has been steadily preparing them for the predicted, and now fast approaching retribution -- anarchy -- which is so graphically described as the 'fire of God's jealousy' or anger, which is about to consume utterly the present social order -- the world that now is: (Pet. 3:7.) Yet this is only speaking from the human standpoint; for the Prophet ascribes this gathering of the nations to God. But both are true; for while man is permitted the exercise of his free agency, God, by His overruling providence, is shaping human affairs for the accomplishment of His own wise purposes. And therefore, while men and their works and ways are the agents and agencies, God is the great Commander who now gathers the nations and assembles the kingdoms from one end of the earth to the other, preparatory to the transfer of earth's dominion to Him 'whose right it is.' -- Immanuel."

Men's Hearts Failing Them

This gathering of the nations referred to, by Zephaniah and the distress of nations which Jesus indicated to be one of the signs of His presence have come about simultaneously; the distress being more or less a result of the gathering. Increase of knowledge combined with selfishness has brought about this great distress of the nations in modern times. Financial, social and political troubles are greatly distressing every nation of the earth, and as they are assembled together and their interests more or less commingle and interlock, what affects one great nation in these times affects the other. The result is great and many international disorders and complications which, as the daily Press reveals, are baffling the skill and wisdom of the world's wisest statesmen. Hence the fulfillment of Jesus words: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

Fulfilled in These Days

Jesus spoke of the "sea and the waves roaring" in connection with this sign. The language is, of course symbolical and surely relates to- "the restless masses of humanity, curbed, but not fully restrained, by the laws and regulations of society. Every one has heard something of this 'roaring' for the past twenty years, with occasional stormy outbreaks dashing like tidal-waves against the earth (social order) and seeking to swallow it up. Restrained for a time, these waves are gathering weight and force; and, as prophetically shown, it is only a question of a few years until all the mountains (kingdoms) are 'removed and carried into the midst of the sea,' in anarchy. -- Psa. 46:1, 2.

"And it is as men begin to realize that the sea-roar and unrest is due largely to the wane of superstition and of ecclesiastical influence, and as they more and more see the powers of heaven (sectarian creeds and systems) shaken, that their hearts are failing them for fear -- in apprehension of the things coming upon the earth (society); but the strenuous efforts now being made to re-establish and unify sectarian power and influence, will be in great measure successful only for a short time; for it will surely disintegrate completely."

Here then is the sum of the matter: Our Master distinctly taught that His Second Presence would take place prior to the downfall of the present order (Matt. 24:37-39); it is elsewhere set forth that the overthrow of Satan's empire occurs as the result of Christ's official activities as earth's new Ruler. (Rev. 11:17-18; 2 Thess. 2:8.) Looking around us today we have precisely the circumstances and state of affairs throughout the world corresponding in nearly all details with the prophetic description and hereby are furnished one of the most powerful and striking signs that these are the days of the presence of the Son of Man.

Signs in Sun, Moon and Stars

A further sign mentioned by the Savior is found in the words "the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." -- Matt. 24:29.

As we have heretofore seen "the sun as a symbol represents the Gospel light, the truth-and thus Christ Jesus. The moon as a symbol represents the light of the Mosaic Law. As the moon is a reflection of the light of the sun so the Law was the shadow or reflection beforehand of the Gospel. The stars as symbols represent the inspired teachers of the Church-the Apostles. The heavens, as already shown, represent the ecclesiastical powers of Christendom. A combination of these symbols is found in Revelation 12:1."

The idea then is that in connection with the Lord's Second Presence there would come a very severe shaking time in the ecclesiastical heavens in Christendom: There would be a general apostasy in these last times resulting in the darkening of the Gospel sunlight by many errors and strong delusions; and 'the Mosaic Law would be "regarded merely as a meaningless and barbaric ceremony of blood. Then the teachings of the God-ordained twelve stars of the Church (the Apostles) will also fade from view- cease to be recognized as proper guides or light."

Thus it is in the symbolical heavens "the professedly spiritual class that the sign or evidence of our Lord's presence will first be apparent. Some will 'see' the fulfillment of the prophetic declarations respecting this day of the Second Presence, in the marvelous unfolding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, and will recognize it as one of the signs of His presence. (Luke 12:37.) The judgment of Babylon, Christendom, social and ecclesiastical, is another sign that the judge has come, and is reckoning first of all with those to whom as stewards He committed His goods. (Matt. 25:19; Luke 19:15.) 'Judgment must begin with the house of God;' and it means confusion and consternation among the Doctors and Chief Priests of the present time, as they attempt to- reconcile their doctrines, practices and faiths, as it did to the Pharisees and Priests and Doctors of the Law at our Lord's first presence -- even though the presence was denied then, as now.

"But as at the first presence the humble Israelites indeed, whom God accounted worthy, were not confused, but enlightened, so that our Lord could say to them, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them,' (Matt. 13:17) so now in the Second Presence of the Son of Man, the opening *up* of the Divine Word, the discernment of the Divine Plan showing as well the Divine times and seasons; and the confusion upon 'Babylon' are satisfactory proofs of the presence of the King."

(Continued in next issue)

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God." -- Isa. 61:10.

THE Word of the Lord contains many testimonies declaring the solicitude of the Heavenly Father for the peace and happiness of His trusting children; testimonies that apply to them even in the present life. The unbelieving mind cannot see this; such look upon the portion of God's as a hard and difficult one and upon God as a severe Master, void of the qualities of a kind Father, and without concern for the happiness of His children. This viewpoint, however, is only because the natural man in his present state of darkness and unbelief cannot discern or receive the things of the Spirit of God; inasmuch as they are spiritually discerned; but those illuminated by the Spirit and taken into the confidence of God, have meat to eat that the world knows not of; and their hearts rejoice and their joy no man taketh from them.

The worldly minded looking for instance upon the life of one such as St. Paul of great talent and opportunity and who, might have attained an exalted station in the world's affairs, would say that he wasted his talents and allowed himself to be a poor man all his days, homeless, friendless, knocked about and persecuted -- a sort of religious fanatic; but the Apostle Paul viewing the matter from the standpoint of his spiritual discernment, said, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4); for he was one of that anointed body who, like his Lord and Head, could say, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad." -- Acts 2:25, 26.

Present Joys of Hope and Faith

So the Psalmist bids all the anointed body rejoice, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful -in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." -- Isa. 61:10.

This blessed joy, which so wonderfully lifts the soul of the faithful believer above all the vicissitudes of the present life, is, as the Prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. Earthly things are .ill so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centered in God and to whom He has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values; they see that all of its joys are both transient and unsatisfactory and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God and for hearing the call of God and making .our calling and election sure. In thus making the proper use of the present life -- walking in the path of life which God shows us through His Word -- we have the present joys of hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal; knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at His right hand -- the chief place of favor.

Joys of Walking in the Path of Life

But while the fullness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-2) and be in His presence and at His right hand (in His chief favor), there is a fullness of joy in the presence and favor .of God which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our little earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realize the presence and favor of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience and loving service, we draw near to God. "If a man love Me," said our Lord Jesus, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." -- John 14:23.

In such company as this, can any Christian fail utterly to realize some measure of joy in the Lord? No, if his faith grasps the promise and holds it, the realization of joy in the Lord is sure to follow, and the more firmly his faith lays hold up-on the promise, the more he will realize its fulfillment, and the more fully will his joys abound; for in the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy, no matter what may be the conditions and circumstances.

In the blessed realization of this experience and the assurance of faith which it gave, in the midst of all his labors, St. Paul exclaimed, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love .of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." -- Rom. 8:33-39.

Based on Acquaintance With God

It was this strong persuasion, this confident faith, of the Apostle that gave him such joy in the midst of all his tribulations. His faith laid hold upon the promises of God with a strong and steady grasp, and love and gratitude impelled him to prompt -obedience to the will of God and ardent zeal in His service; and evidently the Lord's promise was fulfilled to him in the abiding presence of Father and Son with him at all times and under all circumstances.

This blessed privilege is ours also, if by faith we enter fully into the Lord's will and favor. And with a blessed realization of the abiding presence of our Heavenly Father, and our Lord Jesus at all times, and of their love and favor, and a faith that lays hold of all the exceeding great and precious promises of God, what soul may not rejoice and be glad, even in the midst of deep sorrow or great tribulation? In the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fullness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance more, drawing near to Him in prayer, in the study of His precious Word, in meditation upon all His goodness,. His providential care, the marked manifestations of His grace in our own individual experiences, and His precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you," (James 4:8) He will manifest Himself to you and take up His abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all His children should be happy in Him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Beloved, let us not be content to live beneath our privileges. Let us appreciate the favor of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches, of Divine favor are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and place ourselves in position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope.

"Why should the children of the King

Go mourning all the day?"

"Children of the Heavenly King,

As we journey let us sing."

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH"

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." -- Jude 3.

THE Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must be essentially lovers of peace, inasmuch as their Lord and Master is designated the Prince of Peace, and they together with Him have been chosen of God to be His instrumentality of finally bringing peace on earth, good will to men. We recall, too, that Jesus pronounced His special benediction upon the peacemakers: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Back of all effort to live a life of peace and encourage the same among all with whom one comes in contact, must be the spirit and power of love in the heart; for is it not the love of God, the love for fellow-brethren and fellowmen that prompts to a life of peace with all? Nevertheless, under the circumstances of the prevailing darkness and reign of evil, God's children in defense of their position and the will of God may appear to be the very opposite of peace lovers and peacemakers; for they are admonished to "contend earnestly for the faith." Yet the Apostle warns that the servant of the Lord must not selfishly contend, or do anything in the spirit of strife; it must be only as prompted by a sense of duty, as a true representative of God.

The contention which the Scriptures reprobate is that of selfishness -- contending for place, for power, for our friends, against some one else's friends, for our ideas against those of others. And the implication is given that those who are thus contentious will never enter into the Kingdom; for this contentious spirit indicates a wrong attitude or condition.

It is one thing, however, to be inveigled into something or to be overtaken in a fault, and quite another thing to contend along selfish lines. Amongst the Lord's people, even in the Apostles' day, there was a tendency at times to fight each other rather than to fight the Adversary and the spirit of the world and the weaknesses within themselves. The organs of destructiveness and combativeness, which would serve a Christian soldier in good stead if directed against his own weaknesses and blemishes, are sadly out of place when, ignoring his own weaknesses, he merely becomes contentious with the brethren -- often over nothing or over questions whose importance he exaggerates because of his contentious spirit. Such should remember the scriptural statement that "he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." -- Prov. 16:32.

The Apostle Paul reprehends that misdirection of Christian energy which "bites and devours" one another and warns against it as tending to the destruction of all that is spiritual amongst the Lord's people. Not that the Apostle favored slackness as respects the important principles of Divine Revelation, for he showed always his determination to contend for righteousness; as one instance of this we recall his own words regarding his rebuke of one of the other Apostles, older in the Christian faith than himself -- "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

Commendable Contention

But while all of the Lord's people should be on guard against the spirit of contention watching closely lest anything be done in a biting and devouring manner, instead of manifesting patience and long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love, yet they have enlisted as New Creatures, spirit begotten, to walk after the Spirit, and they must continually recognize this fact and keep watch that they are always walking in line with the spirit of the Truth; and our text tells us of a contention which is not only proper, but necessarily for all who are walking

in this way. They are to "earnestly contend for the faith" -- for the Word of God, for the promises which God has made, for the good things for which God has arranged.

The necessity for this course lies in the fact that this world is no friend to grace; no friend, therefore, to the people of God. Selfishness, which is the spirit of the world, lies on the side opposite to the Holy Spirit of love; and our own selfish interests are in line with the world in general. Consequently no one could properly contend for the faith with a selfish motive, for the "faith once delivered unto the saints" would forbid such a motive and condemn it at once. One reason, undoubtedly, why the Lord has permitted His cause to be in disesteem and subject to the attacks of the world, and particularly of evil spirits in the world, is that He desires to have for His people in this "little flock" a tried people, a people of character. Character implies such fixity of purposes and intention that the individual would fight a "good fight" against every influence tending to lead away from the Lord's Word and the Lord's brethren.

The world and its course are in opposition to the ams; therefore, we must contend against the depraved, selfish arrangements which prevail at the present time. It is possible for one to be contentious in religious matters, and to "earnestly contend," and yet such a course be not contending "for the faith once delivered to the saints." One might be contentious for some personal 'theory of his own rather than for these principles of righteousness which the Bible inculcates.

Sometimes it might seem like contention for the faith once delivered to the saints for one person to argue with another on scriptural subjects, and yet his real motive in so doing might be pride. Pride is a part of selfishness; therefore in contending for his own ideas one might be cultivating pride. The contention which God would appreciate is that earnest desire to have whatever God's Word teaches. We must not contend with the tongue, improperly, nor speak slanderously. In all of our contentions we should manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit-gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love. Thus the proper contention would not partake of anger, hatred, malice or strife.

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

"For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." -- 1 Cor. 3:17.

HOW precious is the thought, how great the condescension of our God in thus honoring His chosen ones who believe and trust in Him and are fully consecrated to His will and service. "Ye are the temple of the living God;" and "ye are not in the flesh [in the old carnal condition], but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9.) And if the Spirit of God dwell in us, it is to sanctify and glorify these temples of His, that even now we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The figure of the temple as applied to the Church is derived from the place of worship that was established and known by that name in ancient Israel, from the days of Solomon onward until the time of Israel's rejection, at our Lord's First Advent -- their last temple being destroyed in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70; since which time there has been no reconstruction of the temple, nor any re-establishment of their worship as in the days of old.

The Glory of the Lord in the Tabernacle and Temple

The usual Hebrew term applied to the Jewish temple was heykal, which signifies a royal residence. It was often qualified by the term kodesh, sanctuary, to indicate its sacredness as the visible dwelling place of Jehovah. among His people. The same significance also attached to the movable tent or sanctuary of Israel, the tabernacle in the wilderness. The idea thus visibly expressed was that God was in the midst of His people, as He said, "And there will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." -- Exodus 29:43-45.

In fulfillment of this promise, as soon as the tabernacle was finished, the glory, of the Lord filled- it, as we read: "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys." -- Exodus 40:33-38.

So also at the dedication of Solomon's temple there was the same. Divine recognition of this more permanent structure: "So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, even the silver and the gold and the vessels did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." -- 1 Kings 7:51; 8:10, 11.

The idea conveyed by the several accounts of this glory of the Lord, as it appeared in the Tabernacle, in the Temple, on Mount Sinai, and as it guided and protected Israel in coming out of Egypt, is that of exceeding brightness, enveloped, and usually concealed, by a thick cloud, from which, on special occasions, it shone forth. Thus we read, "And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." -- Exodus 24:16;17. See also Exodus 19:9, 18, 19; 40:34, 35.

Pictures of the Grander Temple

But the tabernacle and temple of God, built by Divine direction and under the Divine supervision, and thus honored with the visible, typical manifestations of the Divine presence and glory, were only types of that grander tabernacle, not made with hands, of which fleshly Israel could have no conception, and of that holy temple which should by and by eclipse the grandeur of the earthly temple with all the gold and precious stones that adorned it. Let us, then, look away from, or rather, let us look through, the typical temple of God to its antitype. The Apostle tells us that the Gospel Church, both individually and collectively, constitute the antitypical temple: "For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Considering the matter first in its individual application, we hear St. Paul say to the consecrated people of God, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? . . . Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Lev. 26:12.) Thus every faithful, consecrated child of God in whom God, by His Holy Spirit, dwells, is a temple of God, a royal residence of the King of kings, a holy sanctuary, this high privilege being ours through Christ, who first redeemed us by His precious blood, and thus made us eligible to the call of God to be thus sanctified and set apart wholly to His use -- "for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

It was to this that our Lord also referred, saying "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him The comforter which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:23, 26.) Thus each individual ' saint becomes "an habitation of God through the Spirit," a holy temple, a royal residence.

Destroying the Temple of God

It is in this view of our relationship to God that Paul would impress upon our minds the sanctity of these temples of the Holy' Spirit, saying, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy." That is, if, after he has been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, through the enlightening and guiding influences of that Spirit, has tasted the good Word of God and the powers [privileges of Divine instruction, etc.] of the coming Age, he should stifle all these blessed influences, refusing to be further led of the Spirit of God, and turn again, either suddenly or gradually, to the spirit of the world, such an one is destroying his spiritual life -- destroying the temple of God, which was holy and consecrated to God. And if such an one should hope thereby to have his portion in the coming Age with the restitution class, let him quickly undeceive himself, for the judgment against all such is, "Him will God destroy." The Lord has "no pleasure" in any who "draw back" from such high privileges. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation We are not of them who draw back unto destruction, but of them which believe to the saving of the soul." -- Heb. 6:4-9; 10:38, 39.

It was in allusion to this same thing that our Lord, addressing His disciples, said, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it;" and that Paul also said, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Luke 17:33; Rom. 8:13.) It is to those who appreciate the sanctity of these temples of God that all the blessings of Divine grace belong; for God shall dwell in them and walk in them, and His glory shall be manifested *in* them and to them. It is their blessed privilege, in reverent humility, to realize the condescending favor of God in recognizing them as His temples, and making His abode with them, and to profit by all the hallowed influences of His presence and favor. And if indeed these bodies of ours be the temples of the Holy Spirit, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? And how ought these mortal bodies to be quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in us? -- quickened into active and diligent service and to the bringing forth of all the fruits of holiness. -- 2 Pet. 3:11; Rom. 8:11.

Ye Are God's Building

But while the saints are thus individually the temples of God, they also collectively constitute the great temple in which Peter likens each individual to a living stone, and Christ to the chief or foundation corner stone, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Paul also refers to this same thought, saying, "Ye are . . . of the house of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [the foundation of hope in which they trusted, and which they pointed out to us Jesus Christ [He] being a foundation corner stone of it; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple for the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." -- Eph. 2:20-22.

The fact of the chief corner stone being also the foundation stone of this building, as well as the "headstone," the crowning glory of it, as suggested by the prophets (tech. 4:7; Psa. 118:22), calls to mind the form of the Great Pyramid whose top stone is the chief corner stone, and whose internal structure corresponds so perfectly with the Tabernacle and its symbolism. And further, if Christ be the chief corner stone, the top stone and also foundation, as He surely is (1 Cor. 3:11), the manifest suggestion is that the foundation of this building of God is laid in the heavens, not on earth, and that all the other living stones built upon this foundation are drawn and cemented to it by heavenly and not earthly attractions. Yes, "ye are God's building"- "ye," both individually and collectively, consecrated sons of God, who have become the habitation of God through the Spirit, ye are the temple of God. Howbeit, though now it is but a tabernacle in the flesh, and though in this tabernacle we often groan, being burdened, we know that when this tabernacle is destroyed we have a building of God, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." -- 2 Cor. 5:1, 2.

What Tongue Can Tell or Pen Portray?

Though the Church, like a tabernacle in the wilderness, is now a habitation of God, owned by Him and blessed by His presence, and filled with a large measure of His glory, yet enveloped, as it generally is, by clouds of trouble, etc., which hide the glory from others, except as occasionally manifested, it is not always to be a moving tent with its glory concealed. By and by her glory will be manifested without the enveloping cloud-"She shall shine forth as the sun." (Matt. 13:43.) The Prophet Isaiah joyfully anticipates that blessed time when the finished temple of God shall displace the present tabernacle, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to, thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." -- Isa. 60:1-3.

What a hope is thus set before the faithful ones, who, as living stones, come to Christ to be built upon this foundation! From the eloquent imagery of prophets and apostles we catch the inspiration of that holy joy which shall be fully realized when all the living stones of the glorious spiritual temple of God shall noiselessly come together without the sound of a hammer-in the first resurrection, and when the headstone shall crown this glorious building of God, amid shoutings of "Grace, grace, unto it." (Zech. 4:7.) What tongue can tell or pen portray the glory to be revealed-in the saints-by and by, when the sacrifices of this day of atonement (the Gospel Age) are all over? and what plummet can sound or line measure the wealth of blessing that will flow to redeemed humanity from the glorified temple of God?

Earnest of the Inheritance

But, aside from this inspiring theme, let us return to the thought which the Apostle would impress upon the minds and hearts of all God's people; namely the sanctity of the temple of God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

If the Spirit of God does not dwell in us, then we are not of the class addressed: "for if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And those who have that Spirit are led by it in the paths of righteousness and truth. And not only so, but those who have and who are led, by the Spirit of God have therein an earnest or pledge of their future inheritance as the sons of God, as the Apostle tells us, saying, "After that ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of -our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." -- Eph. 1:13, 14.

Yes, our present Divine recognition as sons of God is the surest evidence we can have of His recognition when we shall have finished our course. If today we have His manifest approval and fellowship, and if these mortal bodies are quickened into loving, active zeal both to know and to do the will of God, we may also look forward with joyful anticipation to that blessed time when we shall see the Lord and be like Him.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Loving greetings in the name of our Lord and only Head, Jesus!

Through the kindness of some friend I received the "Herald" for several months, but was fearful of reading it at first, because we have been instructed for years that the I.B.S.A. is the only channel of truth on the earth. But as I saw the sweet Spirit of Christ manifested in the "Herald," as well as the grace of tolerance practiced, I soon gained confidence and a knowledge that the Lord's true people are scattered all over the earth and not only to be found in one organization.

Also read "Light after Darkness," and thank God that the Truth is coming forward, slow but sure. I lacked the sense of justice in 1917, or else I would have been with you then. I, like thousands of others then, being young in the Truth, did not think that we must hear both sides, when trouble arises in the Church.

May God continue to bless your labor of love toward His saints; you may not have many great and wonderful visible works to show, but acceptable works of Faith, which do, not please every man, but surely the Lord.

Enclosed find, \$- for subscriptions to the "Herald."

With sincere Christian love,

Your sister in the one Body, M.F.M. -- Colo.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Head! From time to time I am mowed to write expressing my gratitude to our Heavenly Father for the "meat in due season" which He is supplying through the "Herald." But mindful of the fact that you are very busy serving the Lord's brethren, I have refrained from imposing upon your added correspondence.

However, the last two issues of the "Herald" are so full of spiritual food -- what with the annual report, with its simplicity but comprehensiveness, and the article on "Satisfaction with Divine Guidance" -- I could not restrain the impulse any longer. For, strange though it may sound (considering the close proximity of my residence), on account of adverse circumstances, correspondence is my chief source of fellowship. . . .

Realizing that in humility is the strength of your usefulness; it is *my* earnest prayer that you be kept as humble and unostentatious as you have been for the past eight years.

Your brother by His Grace, R.A.M. -- N.Y.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed please find a small contribution to your funds. I have been a member of the I.B.S.A. since 1917 and to the best of my ability have contributed to its funds. I have been away from the Class in for some years and was considerably astonished to find the Class divided, and our honored Elders, as it were, cast out from the Society. Still more was I surprised to find, chat some few of the Class who had been seeking for years to obtain chief position and leadership in the Class by unworthy means, elevated to the positions coveted by them and our dear humble-minded, zealous, leaders turned out. I have tried in vain to solve this mystery. How is it that these saints are having such a hard row to hoe? And the ones whose dispositions were not conducive to brotherly love, order and peace, have triumphed.

If you have read the "Tower" for September 15th, you will understand what is in my mind at this time. I do not want to be found fighting against my Lord and Master, and yet I cannot accept the Society's dealings with the dear brethren mentioned, nor same of the articles lately published in the "Tower."

Faithfully yours, A. W.-Ont.

Dear Brethren:

Please allow me to say how much I enjoy reading Part II Prophetic Signs of "The Second Presence of our Lord." This subject I have studied much, and am very much interested in, not when my Lord did come, nor how He came; but know His Work that's done, and see the same.

I see my Lord's work in all progress on earth and in other ways. I'm waiting, watching and praying, in joy and peace; Glory to God: I ask for your prayers all the household of faith have mine.

Yours in Christ, G. M. G. -- R. I.