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As Men see the Old Age Passing

THE NEW YEAR: A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." - Luke 21:26.

OFT DO we have occasion in these days to recall the words of Jesus as spoken above. They are a part of the Master's great, prophecy If regarding those circumstances and world events that would be associated with His return, the fall of Satan's Empire and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. True to the promises of the Divine Word, the means have been provided whereby the faithful watchers, who are also students of prophecy, might know something of the times and seasons of the various operations and dealings of the Divine program. These times were, foretold by various of the Prophets long ages ago; hence, as the fulfillment of those sacred predictions of ancient times is realized in our midst, it becomes an occasion for the true disciples of Christ, as the Master admonished, to lift up their heads and rejoice for their redemption draweth nigh. But of another class of humanity, the masses in general, unfamiliar with God's purpose to bring this dispensation to a close, our Lord also said prophetically, "men's hearts failing them for 'fear and for looking after those things coming upon the earth."

Without doubt humanity longs for the new and better day to come, even as the Apostle Paul affirms, saying, "the whole creation travails in pain together waiting for the manifestation of the 'sons of God," but not understanding the meaning of present developments in the earth and not comprehending "the Scriptures nor the power of God." Thus, not discerning the significance of the occurrences now coming to pass around them, and not recognizing that the troubles of this

Day of the Lord represent God's method of rebuking humanity and preparing them for the reign of righteousness, men are fearful and filled with foreboding as the Master declares.

Understanding from our study of chronology and of fulfilled prophecy that we are already living in the Day of the Lord, and rejoicing that all things are onward moving, it becomes of unusual and trilling interest to the Lord's people to observe how the march of events has been so pronounced in the recent past that even *the* worldly-minded everywhere today, unguided by the prophetic page, recognize that as the year 1932 opens, the state of affairs in the world politically, financially, and industrially *is* such as to clearly mark the passing *out of this* dispensation; and that daily developments amongst men are ominous of the "silent tread close by of some dread specter of destruction." As an example of this attitude and comprehension on the part of thoughtful men in the world, we quote the following from a writer in "The New York Times," of December 27, 1931:

"We have come to the end of a calamitous year. A paralysis which we do not seem to be able to diagnose has overtaken our machine civilization. In a world that is bursting with goods and that has limitless capacity to produce them; distress and want on a wide scale have appeared like ghosts at the feast. We are hungry in the midst of plenty. We are unemployed in the face of an unparalleled need of commodities. We starve for the very goods our factories are clamoring to produce.

"The year 1931 has seen this creeping paralysis fasten itself with a surer hold on the industry of the world. Fifteen nations, involving more than a quarter of the population of the globe, have been forced off the gold standard. Ten countries have defaulted on their external obligations. Revolution and social disorder have affected nearly half the people in the world. The anxiety that marked the passing of 1930 has deepened. Today the future seems far more uncertain than it did twelve months ago.

"Nightmare that Haunts Our Sleep"

"We are frightened by our imaginings. Western civilization has begun to look furtively around, listening behind it for the silent tread of some dread specter of destruction. It sees the mangled remains of other civilizations stretching from the dawn of history up to its own threshold-civilizations that dreamed of immortality and now are dead. The same pallbearers that carried out Sumeria and all its works were waiting on the doorstep for Tut-ankh-Amen, just as later they waited for the civilizations of Pericles and Augustus. The message that history brings us is that nothing is permanent. Sooner or later there comes to all human institutions the final rap on the door. . .

"This is the kind of nightmare that haunts our sleep as 1931 draws to its unhappy close. Has our industrial civilization grown so complex that no human brains can control it? Is there intelligence enough in the world to find some path out of this jungle of machinery and untamed forces? Even if there were some super-intelligence whom we could trust to guide us, would we consent to follow his leadership? Distraught by many counsels, swamped by the paraphernalia of living,

weighed down by mountains of facts, will we in the end refuse all guidance and perish in the jungle our own machines have created?

"These are gloomy questions and I do not pretend to answer them. In proposing them I am thinking rather of our attitude of mind as we face the new year. It is an attitude of dejection and foreboding . . . I believe this current crisis is far deeper and more revolutionary in character than the dislocations of an ordinary panic. Comparisons of our machine age with other periods in history are difficult to make. Possibly the upheaval of the Thirty Years' War, or the convulsions that grew out of the French Revolution, represent closer analogies to the present crisis.

"Certainly we are living at a point in history when changes of a sweeping nature are in the making. The world has outgrown its old framework, and the cracks and fissures which are now appearing in the social and economic structure seem 'o indicate the breaking up off one era and the starting point of another. Apparently we have arrived at one of those crucial periods-like the Renaissance and the Reformation-when old ideas and values no longer serve, and new intellectual scaffolding and new social controls have to be built on the ashes of what has gone."

"Fresh Goals are Being Set"

Despite the fact of the thick gloom that at present enshrouds the world, and the fact, too, that to the minds ,of many in the world, the present distress marks the passing out of this Age, yet men are still hopeful, and instinctively anticipate that a brighter and better age will soon supersede the present unsatisfactory order. And well it is for the poor world that they do not yield to utter despair. The measure of hope that they have enables them to struggle on in the midst of the battle of the raging elements with which they are surrounded, and thus the Divine purpose is served in that God is imparting valuable instruction to men along the lines of sin and evil and the bitter fruits of indulgence therein.

The above writer continues:

"The disappearance of an old era and the emergence of a new is always a frightening time, particularly when the process is rapid, and standards long accepted are given up before fresh ones appear. This is why we are visited by nightmares. One of man's deep instincts seem to be his fear of change, his dread of uncertainty. He naturally shuns whatever threatens to ruffle the stability of existence. He clings for protection to the idea and the institution that is old and familiar. He is tempted to hang on to the shell of his social and economic life even after it has been outgrown, and to adhere to the husk and form of beliefs even after they are dead. . .

"Moreover, as Professor Whitehead has pointed out in a recent book, we are inclined to put an excessive value upon placidity of existence. We make the mistake of thinking that the two words 'security' and 'civilization' mean the same thing. There is, of course, a degree of instability which is inconsistent with civilization, and history tells us of civilizations that were shaken to pieces by

insecurity. But tranquility is not necessarily the basis of progress and the great ages have not always been the stable ages.

"As we look ahead into this next year-into the next decade-it seems likely that there will be in the world less security than in the immediate past, less stability. But out of this prospect it is possible to take hope rather than fear. Whether we like it or not, a fresh direction is being given to the human pilgrimage and fresh goals are being set. In the words of General Smuts, humanity has struck its tents and is once more on the march. A new adventure is beginning, a new search for justice,. perhaps-who knows?-a new Renaissance. 'Ah, but it is -dangerous,' it will be said. Of course it is dangerous. 'We must expect that the future will disclose dangers,' says Professor Whitehead. 'It is the business of the future to be dangerous.'

"Jesus of Nazareth Would Have None of It"

"When, therefore, at the beginning of this new year we face the fact that alteration and change await all human institutions, we need not be too sobered by the news. Frequently, indeed, revolutionary changes are essential if humanity is not to bog down on the march. We have a striking illustration, it seems to me, in our own generation. Our machines, which distinguish this era from all others that preceded it, have fastened themselves on every detail of our lives. They have called into being hundreds of millions of people who otherwise would not have been born. For these hundreds of millions they are the sole means of existence. Stop the machines and half the people in the world would perish in a month. . . . Our generation is witnessing a head-on collision between the driving necessities of machine industry; on the one hand, and on the other the possibility of the good life. We have maneuvered ourselves-or we have been maneuvered by our machines into a position where the very existence of our civilization seems to depend upon our capacity to consume.

"But no great civilization can be built on the ideal of consumption as the chief end of man. There can be no bright future for a race that uses means as ends. Today, as in all previous generations, there is the same fundamental incompatibility between the things of the world and the things of the spirit.

"Consequently ours is an age that would stand condemned by all the foremost teachers and prophets from the, beginning of history. Socrates would riddle it with scorn; Plato and Aristotle would dismiss it as unworthy; Jesus of Nazareth would have none of it. Confucius, Buddha, Lao-Tsze-there is not a spiritual leader whose judgment we profess to revere to whom our acquisitive civilization would not seem repellent and unclean.

"At this moment, in the midst of our economic depression, we are praying for the return of prosperity. What do we mean by prosperity? Do we mean the shrieking, high-power salesmanship and the fever of stimulated wants that made up the whole of existence before 1929? Do we mean a society of patterned minds in which every man desires whatever his neighbor has, and life is a

hectic scramble for gadgets and knick-knacks? It seems inconceivable that any one would want to go back to such a condition. There must be something better.

"We were all of us caught in a system which was not of our making and which we could not control. Now it has broken down. Are we merely to patch it up so that we can live as we lived before? Surely if prosperity means only houses and furniture and automobiles and radios and telephones and all the other paraphernalia of living-and no life that transcends all these mechanisms-then we should earnestly pray that the blight of prosperity may never return. . . .

A Challenge to Faith at this New Year

"In this new age, the gray and gloomy dawn of which it is the destiny of our generation to see, we have the opportunity to lay the foundations of a saner and better world. And it does not mean the indiscriminate scrapping of everything in the -existing edifice. We shall build into the new structure all the sound material which we salvaged from the old. No new age ever starts from scratch. Each era makes its particular contribution to the future. Our ideas of liberty were handed down from Greece. Our conception. of order and law came in large measure from Rome. Our belief in the intrinsic and final value of the individual developed out of the spiritual gropings of the Middle Ages. . . .

"It seems to me, therefore, that what we need at the beginning of this new year is better perspective and a sense of proportion. In our dejection and discouragement we have been entering on the debit side of the account items that should have been entered on the credit side. We have thought of the alterations that are coming in human affairs not as assets but as liabilities. We have pictured the necessity of readjustment and adaptation not as an evidence of essential soundness but as a sign of bankruptcy.

"We have been hugging to ourselves our little systems of justice and our narrow conceptions of an economic and social order, as if in the first three decades of the twentieth century the human race had finally reached its goal and had discovered the ultimate way of life....

"As never before, man is today the captain of his own fate. He can advance or he can retreat. One thing alone he cannot do-and that is stand still. That privilege nature allows to no living organism.

"Here then is a challenge to faith at this New Year's time-faith in the potential promise of change! We need not blanch at the prospect. Rather we should face it with eagerness. How tame and colorless the future would seem if we had to look forward to countless generations living with the beliefs about right and wrong and justice and the social order which they had inherited from us, and which, because we had hit upon the correct answers, they had not been tempted to disturb!

"This is not a time for despair; it is a time for hope. We are living in an exhilarating moment in history. We are the privileged witnesses of great events. Out of this suffering and chaos, new

goals can be set and new landmarks established. In a spirit of high adventure we can strike our tents. The promised land is perhaps not for us, for we may be destined to wander in the wilderness. But our children may yet march into a Canaan that is fairer than this present generation has dared to dream."

God's Viewpoint of This Day

It is observed that this writer in forecasting a new age of grand and sublime character and ideals, believes that it will be by man's achievement: "We shall build into the new structure all the sound material which we salvage from the old"; again, "Man is today the captain of his own fate"; furthermore, "In a spirit of high adventure we can strike our tents."

Ignorant of the counsels of God operating in this time to utterly defeat all human efforts and completely humble the pride of man, this writer is hoping for great things in the new age as a result of man's increased wisdom and ingenuity; and so leaves God out of his calculations altogether. Hear the Word of the Lord in this connection: "Nigh is the great day of the Lord: it is nigh. Nearer and louder comes the uproar of the day of the Lord. There the mighty shall shriek bitterly! That day is a day of wrath, a day of distress and anxiety, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and obscurity [uncertainty and foreboding, as well as present distress], a day of clouds [trouble] and tempestuous gloom, a day of the trumpet [the seventh symbolic trumpet which sounds throughout this day of trouble-also called the trump of God, because connected with the events of this Day of the Lord] and shouting against the fenced cities and the high battlements [clamorous and conflicting denunciations of strong and well entrenched governments]. And I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk about as blind men [groping in uncertainty, not knowing what course to pursue], because they have sinned against Jehovah. Their blood shall be poured out as the dust, and their flesh shall be as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath [though previously wealth could furnish ease and every luxury], but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His zeal; for destruction, yea, quite sudden, will He prepare for all them [the wealthy] that dwell in the land." This destruction will destroy many of the wealthy in the sense that they will cease to be wealthy, though doubtless it will also involve the loss of many lives of all classes.

Man's Extremity God's Opportunity

In this connection we submit a brief passage from the "Divine Plan of the Ages," which bears forcefully upon this aspect of the subject:

"Each time these labor pangs of the new era come upon the present body politic, her strength and courage will be found less, and the pains severer. All that society's physicians (political economists) can do for her relief will be to help, and wisely direct the course of the inevitable birth-to prepare gradually the way for the event. They cannot avert it if they would; for God has decreed that it shall come to pass. Many of society's physicians will, however, be totally ignorant of the real ailment and of the necessities and urgency of the case.

These will undertake repressive measures; and as each paroxysm of trouble passes away, they will take advantage of it to fortify the resistive appliances, and will thereby increase the anguish; and while they will not long delay the birth, their malpractice will hasten the death of their patient; for the old order of things will die in the labor of bringing forth the new."

Thus, as the Scriptures show, man's extremity of helplessness will become God's opportunity to speak peace unto the nations and to make known to them that His almighty power alone can deliver them and bring in the Golden Age of redemption and restitution for man's blessing and uplift so long foretold, by prophets and apostles of past ages.

Watch and Pray

"Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."-Matt. 26:41.

AS ALREADY noted in these columns the words of our Master above have been selected and suggested as the motto text for the consideration of our readers during the year 1932, believing that their prayerful consideration during the present time of special stress and trial, will bring added strength and comfort to the faithful. This statement of the Master expresses an appeal, an admonition of supreme importance and surely one that has been appropriate for the careful consideration of God's people throughout all the Age. But we believe there have been special times of stress, seasons of severer testing, when the admonition to watch and pray and be on guard against being taken unawares by temptation, has come home to the Lord's people with peculiar and unusual force.

The occasion when the Master originally gave this utterance represents one of those times of great trial and testing for Himself as well as for His disciples. Jesus was about to finish His earthly mission. The gathering in the upper room, the partaking of the mystical supper, and the departure of Judas were in the past. En route to Gethsemane, Jesus sought to impress upon His disciples the fact that they were approaching a great crisis. He called their attention to the prophecy, "I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." He declared plainly that as a result they would all be offended, discouraged, stumbled, amazed. The things that they were not at all expecting would occur. The Apostle Peter, full of confidence in his own devotion to the Lord, denied this, declaring that it would not be true in his case that even though it should be true of all the others, he was ready to die with the Master rather than to deny Him. But the Master still urged that the Apostle was in great danger. He was trusting too much to his flesh and not looking to God and prayerfully watching against temptation. Indeed all the disciples joined in the same remonstrance against the accusation that Jesus had made. They declared themselves loyal and ready for death. How little they knew what severe trials would come upon them

Jesus and the Apostles in Gethsemane

We pause here to note the lesson for all the Lord's followers today as well as then. It is entirely proper that we should feel ourselves thoroughly determined to be loyal to the Lord's cause to our very last breath; for such a determination is quite necessary to victory. The mistake that many have made is in not realizing 'how severe the trials and temptations may become-in not realizing the necessity of heavenly assistance in our every time of need. The Apostle truly wrote, "when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10.) By this he assuredly meant, when fully loyal to the Lord I realize my own weakness' and insufficiency, but I am strong because then I rely especially upon heavenly aid-then I watch and pray and am thus forewarned against the temptation.

The sacred narrative tells us that arriving at the Garden Jesus left eight of the Apostles near the entrance and went further into its shade with Peter, James and John. All were to watch, to be on guard against something that was to occur, something of which Jesus knew, but seemed most improbable to the Apostles. They were unable to comprehend the Master's foreboding, even

though they sympathized with Him. It was midnight and they were accustomed to retiring early. The strain of the evening and the weighty lessons which the Master had imparted reacted in drowsiness. They slept instead of watched and prayed, and this was true even of the three nearest to the Master. Earnestly desiring to be alone in His communion with the Father in this tragic hour, Jesus went a stone's throw farther into the shade by Himself. Time and again, in the agony which came upon Him, He came seeking human sympathy only to find His dearest ones oblivious in sleep. Well had it been expressed by the Prophet, "Of the people there was none with Me." (Isa. 63:3.) He trod the wine-press of grief alone.

Years afterward, the Apostle Paul explained to us the secret of our Master's victory in this the great crisis of all time: "Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. He was heard of His Father, in that He had respect unto His Father's will; He was loyal at heart and in the midst of His great trial He watched and prayed, and thus derived that strength that fortified Him and prepared Him for the great ordeal.

God's People Tried and Tempest-Tossed

The Apostle affirms that in leading many sons to glory, it pleased God to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, through trial. Hence this thought is made prominent throughout the New Testament, that the follower of Christ must expect to meet the same tests, must be prepared to face severe temptation which will have to do with determining the state of the heart, the measure of loyalty toward the Lord and His holy will.

Looking back now over the Age we observe that history records how the Lord's professed followers have been tried and tempest-tossed, have been confronted with powerful temptations all along the line. Yea, many have yielded to discouragement or to the inclination to be less zealous and less loyal toward the Lord and spiritual things; others have yielded to the deceptive influences and sophistries of the Adversary, and still others have grown tired and weary in well doing, thus disclosing the fact that their consecration to the Lord has been insufficient, has not been whole-hearted, and hence lacking in faith they have not been sufficiently zealous in watching and praying lest they enter into temptation. Yet there have been a faithful few who have profited by the Master's warning because they have been the fully surrendered ones and in their hearts thoroughly loyal to the good pleasure and will of God.

The closing days of this Age have been declared by our Lord, by the Apostles and Prophets to be days of tribulation, days fraught with peculiar trials and temptations especially to God's people. For this reason it would seem that the Master's admonition to watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation, would come home to all with much force, and increasingly so as we realize that the signs are increasing around us that "the end of all things," pertaining to the present order is rapidly approaching.

To Try All Them that Dwell upon the Earth

In our Savior's message to the Church at Philadelphia, in pointed manner He makes mention of the trial or temptation that is coming upon all them that dwell upon the earth, thus clearly implying that this Day of the Lord which has come in the time of the Church of Laodicea, the Church of the last times, has brought with it the temptations and trials of which the Master's message forewarned. We now see that in the gathering and mustering of the various forces, social, religious, political and ecclesiastical, that are to play their parts in the closing drama of this Age, great and severe trials are imminent for all humanity. The hopes of humanity, that they may be enabled to uphold and stabilize the present order of things, and preserve peace in their midst,, are about to be dashed to pieces. It would be difficult to estimate the intensity and severity of the discouragement and despair that will seize the hearts of men as they realize ultimately the full import of this Day of Jehovah.

But the trials and temptations that are of the utmost concern are those that have to do with God's people, that stand related to disciples of Christ as New Creatures in Him. The Divine promise is that grace and strength shall be given to those who are so fully committed to the Lord as to be counted amongst the "very elect. For, said our Master, they shall be accounted worthy to escape those things coming upon the earth; they will escape them in the sense of being kept and so protected that no harm or injury will come to them as New Creatures. And though they may for a time be permitted to share much of the outward trouble and difficult circumstances with the world, yet on account of their strong faith and implicit trust in God, they will realize themselves "kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." But their success will lie in the direction of maintaining the attitude and disposition to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation, lest they yield to temptation.

Importance of Vigilant Prayerful Heart

Another writing upon this admonition of the Master and its application to His followers, has said, "The word rendered watch, means literally to abstain from sleep; then to be vigilant; to guard against danger. Here it seems to mean to sympathize with Him; to unite with Him in seeking Divine support; and to prepare themselves for approaching danger." There has been all along the tendency to fall asleep spiritually, to yield to the stupefying influences of present surroundings; they are such as would benumb the spiritual senses and cause the individual, to fall into a stupor or sleepy attitude spiritually, in which condition or situation he would be subject to the power of the temptations of the Adversary and fall a prey thereto. It was concerning this very point that the Master in describing conditions relating to His followers in the end of this Age said, "because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold."

Without doubt the watchful and prayerful attitude has much to do with the soul's preparation to meet temptation" the vigilant and prayerful heart is the one that will most likely be living near to the Lord, in the consciousness of His holy presence; and such nearness to the Lord fortifies one against the power of temptation and puts him in the position of preparedness to deal wisely and bravely with those problems and issues that test the sincerity and integrity of the soul as well as its loyalty to the will of God.

He Never Fails Us

Again the Word of the Lord urges that the child of God should be persevering in prayer, "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6:18.) Perhaps one reason why our Lord does not answer our petitions quickly is that He desires us to learn to watch for the answer and thereby get the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him as we realize that He has given us our request. We should, therefore, pray with all perseverance, watching for His providential leading and direction. The Lord might see best to further defer the answer to our petitions, either to test our faith or to increase our earnestness and lead us into a better condition to receive the blessing. It requires time to become emptied of self and prepared to receive the mind of Christ.

We all realize at times the inability of even our dearest ones to enter fully into and appreciate our sorrows and our needs. They are unable to sympathize with us fully in our struggles and our trials. This realization should send us, as it did our dear Lord, the more frequently to the Throne of Grace, where we are always sure of having the ear of One who understands us perfectly and can make all needful allowance for our frailty, who knows the limit of our ability to do and to be, in our imperfect flesh, and who can give us the perfect sympathy which none other can give. He never fails to hear and to heed the cry of His children, even though He may for a wise purpose in love, defer for a time, a visible answer to their plea.

Jacob as an Example

The prayer of Jacob at the time when he was anticipating meeting with Esau on his return from Padan-Aram, may be considered one of the most excellent examples of earnest, persevering prayer to be found in the Word of God. It is full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts' God's promise to his grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac, and the renewal of this promise to himself. He mentions to the Lord His promise also to bring him again to his homeland. His humility is shown in his words, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home] and now I am become two bands. (Gen. 32:10.) He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob, and so full of faith was he in the power of God and in His promise to protect him and make of him a great nation, that he laid physical hold upon the angel, declaring, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" The angel here appeared as a man; but Jacob had recognized him as the representative of the Lord sent to meet him.

Nor would we suppose that the angel was not sufficiently powerful to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, but rather that God was pleased to bless him, and that these circumstances were designed for the very purpose of drawing out Jacob's longing desire for this blessing of the Lord, to demonstrate the depths and intensity of his desire. When this was proved, when he had mani-

fested his deep appreciation of the blessing which God alone could give, and this great longing to be in harmony with Him, then the blessing came Jacob's victory. God was pleased to reward such faith and energy and zeal. Jacob was only a natural man, yet his prayer has in it a lesson that may be of much profit to New Creatures in Christ; not that we should wrestle with God as did Jacob, for we are sons of God and have a much closer relationship than servants, and have no need to wrestle with God to gain His favor. The late Bishop, Philips Brooks, expressed the true thought very beautifully and forcefully when he said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance; it is laying hold upon God's willingness."

Church's Gethsemane Experience

Surely the "hour of temptation" is upon all the world today, and the words of the Apostle are quite in order here, "Judgment must begin with the house of God." Since the house of God represents those who now possess the light and are on trial for life, and since this is the time when He is completing the trial and testing of those who shall have a part in the Kingdom, the significance is that the present hour is one of great solemnity to the children of God waiting for the consummation of their hopes, the great deliverance. Of this time and its significance Brother Russell has most aptly written and; left us a suggestion that is worthy of prayerful contemplation. He said:

"Doubtless in the end of this Age-in the closing days of this Gospel dispensation-there will come Gethsemane experiences to the Church of Christ. Those who will stand those temptations and trials, and come off victorious, will be the ones whose faith and trust in the Lord are strong-those who watch and pray lest they enter into temptation, and who are thus safe-guarded against it. As our Lord forewarned St. Peter and the other Apostles of their coming trial, so He has forewarned us of the great and crucial test near at hand. Let us profit by the experiences of. the Apostles."

The Master's Victory through Watching and Praying

Again, in reviewing the last hours of our Lord's life and the trials and tests incident thereto, our Brother has left us the following important suggestions well worthy of our prayerful consideration:

"In the case of our Lord and the Apostles we see illustrated the value of watchfulness and prayer in the dark hour of trouble. Our Lord followed the directions He gave to the disciples: He watched, He prayed, He got a blessing, He was strengthened, and came off victor. They did not watch and did not pray, failing to realize the necessities of the occasion, and as a result we find them scattered, bewildered;-and one of them, the very strongest of them all, who boastingly had said a little while before, 'Though all men forsake Thee yet will not I,' was so overpowered by his surroundings, and so weak through lack of the very strength he should have obtained through watching and prayer, that he denied the Lord with profanity.

"Whenever we find the Lord's people attempting to live a life of holiness and consecration, yet ignoring the injunction of our Lord to watch and pray, we know that they are unwise; and that however much they may be virgins, pure ones, they are foolish: they cannot hope to gain the victory over :self and sin and the Adversary, single-handed, alone. If the Master Himself needed strengthening, surely we also need it; and if He received it in response *to* supplications with strong cryings and tears, it is an intimation to us of the way in which God *is* pleased to bestow the full assurance of faith which is able to, strengthen *us* as good soldiers to endure any and everything in His name and service. Those who seek the Lord earnestly and in prayer are as sure to receive a blessing as was the Lord Jesus Himself; and although there will not come to them the same kind of heavenly messenger to comfort and encourage them, nevertheless a heavenly messenger of an-other kind will surely be sent. It may be in the person of a fellow-disciple, able to enter into and sympathize with us in our trials and difficulties, as none of the Apostles could sympathize with out Lord or assist Him. Or it may be that the messenger will be one of the Apostles himself, through the many gracious words of inspiration which God has communicated to *us* through them in His Word. But however the strength may come, it must be the assurance, not of men nor of angels, but of God, that we are pleasing and acceptable to Him,-and that we may claim and expect the exceeding great and precious things which He has in reservation *for* them that love Him.

"So to speak, we are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be 'the hour of temptation' or testing at the close of this Age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to Him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are His, and that He is ours; and that we may rely confidently on His strength to carry us through this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing

"O let no earth-born cloud arise

To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 23

"We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."-Phil. 3:3.

CIRCUMCISION does indeed profit, if you obey the law; but if *you* are a law-breaker, the fact that you have been circumcised counts for nothing. In the same way if an uncircumcised man pays attention to the just requirements of the Law, shall not his lack of circumcision be overlooked, and, although he is a Gentile by birth, if he scrupulously obeys the Law, shall he not sit *in* judgment upon you who, possessing, as you do, a written Law and circumcision, are yet a Law-breaker? For the true Jew is not the man who is simply a Jew outwardly, and true circumcision is not that which is outward and bodily. But the true **Jew is one** inwardly, and true circumcision is heart-circumcision-not literal but spiritual; and such people receive praise not from men, but from God." Rom. 2:25-29, Weymouth.

The Jew also without Salvation

As we come now to consider these closing verses of chapter 2 of our *Epistle*, it will at once be seen that they are in further elaboration of the principle laid down in verses 1 and 2, namely that God's judgment is according to truth, that is to say, is without partiality. The Jew, to whose conscience chapter 2 is especially addressed, was ready enough to acquiesce in the Apostle's description of the Gentile world as portrayed *in* chapter 1, verses 18-32. and to concur in his conclusion that apart from a faith-righteousness the Gentile was without hope of salvation, but he was quite unprepared to make a similar admission concerning himself. Ready enough to judge others, the mind of the Jew bitterly resented the idea that he himself stood in equal, if not greater, need of redemption. In his judgment of the Gentile world, St. Paul did but repeat, "with more of moral discernment, what he would have learned in his Jewish training. But the strict Jews who had taught St. Paul, though some among them must have been good men, ready to enter into the deeply penitential spirit of their psalmists and prophets, do not seem as a rule to have liked to think of their own people as liable to Divine condemnation. They chose to suppose that the Gentile world alone was the area upon which Divine vengeance, would 'light, while the Jews were to appear as the instruments of God's judgments, or at least themselves exempt from them. They had forgotten all the superabundant warnings against such a spirit which the Prophets from Amos to John the Baptist had let fall. This frame of mind-censorious when it looks without, lenient to the point of blindness when it *looks* within-sometimes appears as almost impossible, in the form at least in which St. Paul here proceeds to attribute *into* the Jews. We can hardly believe that any responsible beings could be so blind as St. Paul implies that his pious fellow-countrymen were. But it needs *only* experience to convince us that even in its grosser *forms* this frame of mind is extraordinarily common in individuals, in nations, and in churches. . . . And in the case of the Jews we have also the witness of our Lord. He represents the Jewish world as honeycombed with hypocrisy of a plain and gross sort. They are to Him the very types of the men who behold the mote that is in their brother's' eye, but consider not the beam that is in their own eye."

The Judgment of God Free from Partiality

St. Paul's witness then is only the same as that of Christ. And in the first 24 verses of chapter 2, considered in our previous meditations, we have seen him cutting away any possible ground of confidence which the Jew might derive from the thought that he had Abraham to his father. Supported by their own Scriptures he has established the principle that "God's judgment is directed by an absolutely impartial 'truth' or estimate of the facts in their inner reality. If in any particular case of persistent sin His judgment seems to linger, it is not that He has forgotten or will overlook; it is only that He is merciful and forbearing, and gives long space for repentance. But, meanwhile, if the opportunity is not taken, if the 'heart is hard and impenitent, a store is being laid up against the offender in the place of judgment which will break out in the great day in manifested wrath. God's principle of judgment is absolutely free from partiality. There are men who have steadily in view the true aim of human life, its imperishable glory, its final permanent 'honor, and therefore, preferring eternal to temporal things, patiently go on doing good; they may be Jews or Greeks, but in either case indifferently, 'the reward that they have sought will be theirs with the accompaniment of inward peace. There are other men who are contentious, and refusing the leading of the truth, make themselves servants to unrighteousness. They may be Jews or Gentiles, but: the Divine wrath, showing itself in outward suffering and inward anguish will be upon them all equally. For God judges men impartially in the light of their opportunities. Those who have the advantage of a revealed law shall be judged and acquitted according as they have not listened to it merely, but obeyed it. For a law known and not kept, so far from commending us to God, is but the instrument of our judgment. And those who have not this advantage are yet not without an inward 'light in the natural moral consciousness of mankind. Those who have sinned against this light shall find nothing else was needed to bring them to their ruin. And those, on the other hand, who by its help keep the moral law in effect, without any assistance from a revealed law, are their own law for themselves'. They have the law in its practical result -written in their hearts as their conduct shows, and their natural conscience bears its accompanying witness. For conscience, both individual and social, reflecting on all human actions to condemn, or, more rarely, to acquit, anticipates the final judgment which, as St. Paul continually announces, it will be the office of Jesus the Christ 'to pass unerringly upon things secret as well as open in the 'day of the Lord.'"

The Lord Looketh on the Heart

But if the possession of the specially revealed Law will avail him nothing, the Jewish objector has yet another secret ground of hope. The word circumcision uncovers it. He bears in his body the sign and seal of the covenant of God. By the express command of God he has been circumcised. But just as the Apostle has shown that the Law cannot bring salvation, so now he will show that circumcision will not save a sinner from God's impartial judgment.

"For circumcision indeed profits **you, if you carry law into** practice; in that case circumcision is for you God's seal upon God's own promises to the true sons of Abraham's blood and faith. Are you indeed a practiser of the holy Code whose summary and essence is love to God and to man?

Can you look your Lord in the face and say--not, 'I have satisfied all Thy demands; pay me that Thou owest,' but, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee, and therefore, oh, how I love Thy law'? ,Then you are indeed a child of the covenant, through His grace; and the seal of the covenant speaks to you the-certainties of its blessing. But if you are a transgressor of Law, your circumcision is turned uncircumcision; the Divine seal is to you nothing, for you are not the rightful holder of the deed of covenant which it seals. If therefore the uncircumcision, the Gentile world, in some individual instance, carefully keeps the ordinances of the Law, reverently remembers the love owed to God and to man, shall **not his uncircumcision**, the uncircumcision of the man supposed, be counted as if circumcision? Shall he not be treated as a lawful recipient of covenant blessings even though the seal upon the document of promise is, not at all by his fault, missing? And thus shall not this hereditary uncircumcision, this Gentile born and bred, fulfilling the law of love and duty, judge you, ' **who by means of letter and** circumcision are-law's transgressor, using as you practically do use the terms, the letter, of the covenant, and the rite which is its seal, as means to violate its inmost import, and claiming, in the pride of privilege, blessings promised only to self-for-getting love? For not the (Jew) in the visible sphere is a Jew; nor is circumcision in the visible sphere, in the flesh, circumcision. **No, but the Jew in the hidden sphere and circumcision of heart**, in spirit, not letter; circumcision in the sense of a work on the soul, wrought by God's Spirit, not in that of a legal claim supposed to rest upon a routine of prescribed observances. **His** praise, the praise of such a Jew, the Jew in this hidden sense, thus circumcised in heart, does not come **from men**, but does come from God. Men may, and very likely will, give him anything but praise; they will not like him the better for his deep divergence from their standard, and from their spirit. But the Lord knows him, and loves him, and prepares for him His own welcome: 'Well done, good and faithful. -Ver. 25-29.

Paul-A Miracle of Grace

"Here is a passage far reaching, like the paragraphs' which have gone before it. Its immediate bearing needs only brief comment, certainly brief explanation. We need do little more than wonder at the moral miracle of words like these written by one who, a few years before, was spending the whole energy of his mighty will upon the defense of ultra-Judaism. The miracle resides not only in the vastness of the man's change of view, but in the manner of it. It is not only that he denounces Pharisaism, but he denounces it **in** a tone entirely **free from its** spirit, which he might easily have carried into the opposite camp. What he meets it with is the assertions 'of truth as pure and peaceable as they are eternal; the truths of 'the supreme and ultimate importance of the right attitude of man's heart towards God, and of the inexorable connection between' such an attitude and a life of unselfish love towards man. Here is one great instance of that large spiritual phenomenon, the transfiguration of the first followers of the Lord Jesus from what they had been to what under His risen power they became. We see in them, men whose convictions and hopes have undergone an incalculable revolution; yet it is a revolution which disorders nothing. Rather, it 'has taken fanaticism for ever out of their thoughts and purposes. It has softened their whole souls towards man, as well as drawn them into the most practical and affectionate relations with every claim upon them in the world around them.

Symbol and Reality Contrasted

"But the significance of this particular passage is indeed far-reaching, permanent, universal. As before, so here, the Apostle warns us (not only the Jew of that distant day) against the fatal but easy error of perverting privilege into pride, forgetting that every gift of God is 'a talent' with which the man is to trade for his Lord, and for his Lord alone. But also, more explicitly 'here, he warns us against that subtle tendency of man's heart to substitute, in religion, the outward for the **inward**, the mechanical for the spiritual, the symbol for the thing. Who can read this passage without reflections on the privileges, and on the seals of membership, of the 'Christian Church?' Who may not take from it a warning not to put in the wrong place the sacred ordinances, as sacred as they can be, because Divine, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Here is St. Paul dealing with circumcision, that primary rite of the Jewish Church, of which such high and urgent things are said in the Hebrew Scriptures'. "But when he has to consider the case of one who has received the physical ordinance apart from the right attitude of soul, 'he speaks of the ordinance in terms which a hasty reader might think slighting. He does not slight it. He says 'it profits,' and he is soon to say more to that purpose. For him it is nothing less than God's own Seal on God's own Word, assuring the individual, as with a literal touch Divine, that all is true for him, as he claims grace in humble faith. But then he contemplates the case of one who, by no contempt but by force of circumstance, has never received the holy seal, yet believes, and loves, and obeys. And he lays it down that the Lord of the Covenant will honor that man's humble claim as surely as if he brought the covenant document ready sealed in his hand. Not that even for him, the seal, if it may be had, will be nothing; it will assuredly be Divine still, and will be sought as God's own gift. But the principle remains that the ritual seal and the spiritual reality are separable; and that the greater thing, the thing of absolute and ultimate necessity between the soul and God, is the spiritual reality; and that where that is present, there God accepts.

"It was the temptation of Israel of old to put circumcision in the place of faith, love, and holiness, instead of in its right place, as the Divine, imperial seal upon . . . their covenant. It is the temptation of some Christians now to put Baptism and the Lord's Supper [and the time and manner of their administration] in the place of spiritual regeneration, and spiritual communion, rather than in their right place as Divine, imperial seals on the covenant which guarantees both to faith [and consecration]."

Sacred indeed are the "outward and visible signs," "but the "inward and spiritual grace" is greater.

STRIVE, WAIT, AND PRAY

Strive; yet I do not promise
The prize you dream of today
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,
And melt in your hand away;

But another and holier treasure,
You would now perchance disdain
Will come when your toil is over,
And pay you for all your pain.

Wait; yet I do not tell you
The hour you long for now
Will not come with its radiance vanished,
And a shadow upon its brow;

Yet far through the misty future,
With a crown of starry light,
An hour of joy you know not
Is winging her silent flight.

Pray; though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray, 'and with hopeful tears;

An answer, not that you long for,
But diviner, will come one day;
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive, and wait, and pray.

From Jerusalem to Galilee

By BROTHER I. F. HOSKINS

WE ARE bidding farewell to the Holy City, for now we are entering on the last half of our sojourn in Palestine. Though there are many points and places here that we have not looked upon for lack of time, yet the thought that our feet have literally trodden upon the soil where walked the Son of God long ago, and our eyes have looked upon those objects and scenes that so often met His gaze when He was here, fills us with holy awe and reverence. Yet there is a kind of saddening feeling that apparently all pilgrims carry away, an impression, however, that is true to every reasonable expectation from the standpoint of the outworking of the purposes of God. It is the feeling akin to that which the Master experienced when just before His death, as He was gazing meditatively on the Holy City, He wept over it; it is the sense of sadness and loneliness that is finally left on the mind after exploring the neighborhood of Jerusalem, inspired by the vacancy, desertion, and desolation which is witnessed on every hand, which speaks in no uncertain tones of a lost dominion and of fallen glory.

At first there cannot be something of a shock in seeing before our eyes and under our feet places, in comparison with whose sanctity the high altar of St. Peter's would seem profane. Yet gradually this thought dissolves, and another comes in its place these localities have indeed no real connection with Him. It is true that they bring the scenes vividly before us-that in many instances they illustrate His words and works in detail. But the more we gaze at them, the more do we feel that this interest and instruction are secondary, not primary: their value is imaginative and 'historical rather than religious. The desolation and degradation, which has so often left on those who visit Jerusalem the impression of an accursed city, convey in this sense a true lesson: "He is not here: He is risen."

Seeing Palestine by Motor Car

Leaving Jerusalem we are now to tour Palestine northward first to Nazareth, a distance of about sixty-five miles; thence to Tiberias and Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, Damascus and Baalbek in Syria, and westward to Beirut, also of Syria, on the Mediterranean Sea; then southward through Tyre and Sidon to Haifa -at the foot of Mount Carmel. And this will complete our tour of the Holy Land. While we are traveling now by automobile, accompanied by our guide, and prefer this mode of travel as we desire to cover the most possible territory in a short time, there are some who prefer the old methods of travel. And here we may profitably quote the Reverend R. Maclnnes, Bishop of Jerusalem, who, in his valuable little handbook for Palestine travelers, says, "The old leisurely days of camping through Palestine are gone forever, and the modern traveler is whirled through the country at thirty miles an hour in a motor car. Instead of riding through the land and, spending the night in many a beautiful or historic spot, during a journey of three, four, or six weeks, people can now traverse the whole country from Jerusalem, via Naples and Nazareth, to the Sea of Galilee between midday and sunset."

Picturesque Route from Jerusalem

In our opinion it is in northern Palestine that the traveler today can find the Holy Land as it was in the time of our Lord. It is a comparatively easy journey from Jerusalem to Galilee, and beyond to Damascus. Modern roads make the trip a pleasure except for the minor discomfort of heat in the midsummer, and even that is generally tempered by a breeze. In easy stages, Galilee may be reached in two days or less, and still allow ample time to see the sights along the way and to visit various places made famous by their association with the Savior and their part in the history of God's ancient people. It is a picturesque route from Jerusalem to Nazareth. The road is good and the scenery varied. As one descends from the altitude of Jerusalem, the eye is pleased with the picture of the olive groves that flourish profusely on the hillsides, with terraces of grape-vines and the verdant green of luxuriant vegetation in the valley. Round and round the road winds and on every hand one observes places familiar in Bible story, some in ruins, some inhabited by a mere handful of human beings who appear to care little for the significance of the associations that surround them, even if aware of them.

A short distance from Jerusalem we pass Nebi Samwil, the burial place of Samuel and the scene of heavy fighting during the World War. Further on we come to Beeroth, which tradition states is the place where Mary and Joseph discovered that the child Jesus was not with them and returned to Jerusalem to find Him in the Temple disputing with the Rabbis. The little town lies about fifteen miles from Jerusalem and answers the Biblical requirement in being about one day's journey from the Holy City. Every mile of the way discloses sites of towns and villages familiar to every student of the Bible, to enumerate which would only read like a guidebook to the Holy Land.

Jacob's Well

Continuing, the road climbs up to the highlands of Singil, and then descends by a marvelous winding road to the well of Lubban. Afterwards we traverse a fertile valley, mount a steep range of hills, again descend into a plain, and soon reach Jacob's well. The authenticity of this well has never been questioned. There can be no doubt that it was here where Jesus rested on His journey from Judea to Galilee and conversed with the woman of Samaria who had come to draw water. Dean Stanley says, "Of all the special localities of our Lord's life in Palestine this is about the only one absolutely undisputed." As usual with regard to these holy places, so here, a chapel is built over the well. We are admitted to the chapel by a woman, and while we are standing by this sacred well, a bucket containing several lighted candles is let down into the well that we may gain some idea as to its unusual depth, in harmony with the words of the woman with whom Christ had the conversation at this place: "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?" John 4:11.

Nearby is the little village of Sychar, and "the parcel of ground" that Jacob gave to his favorite son Joseph, whose remains the children of Israel brought up with them out of Egypt and buried here. The tomb of Joseph still exists. From the tomb it is a short and pleasant journey along the valley between Mounts Gerizim and Ebal to Nablus.

Ancient Shechem

Nablus is the ancient Shechem, the only other city beside Jerusalem that has reached the dignity of capital of Palestine. Its situation is very beautiful. Shechem and the sacred mountain of Gerizim, have been the center of Samaritan worship since the return from the captivity. Dean Stanley says again, "Probably in no other locality has the same worship been sustained with so little change or interruption for so great a series of years as in this mountain, from the time of Abraham to the present day. In their humble synagogue, at the foot of the mountain, the Samaritans still worship-the oldest and the smallest sect in the world; distinguished by their noble physiognomy and stately appearance from all other branches of the race of Israel." They have their high-priest who claims descent from Aaron, and up the side of the mountain and on its long ridge, is to be traced the pathway by which they ascend to the sacred spots where they, alone of all the Jewish race, yearly celebrate the Paschal Sacrifice.

From Nablus to Nazareth is two hours' drive. It is a picturesque road and a relief to the eyes that have been long accustomed to the dry and arid scenes that surround Jerusalem. Samaria is passed, and in the distance to our right one can see little Hermon. In the clear atmosphere Mt. Hermon is visible, though ninety miles away. Also in the distance to our left as we proceed, Mount Carmel comes into view; Nain, where Jesus raised the widow's only son to life, and Endor, where dwelt the witch whom Saul consulted on the eve of the fatal battle, are all within sight as we drive to the foot of the Galilean hills on the top of which lies Nazareth.

The Place of "Armageddon"

We have been crossing the Plain or famous valley of Esdraelon, and have traversed it in the heat of midday. It is said that this valley is perhaps the most famous battle-ground of the world, because across it the feet of multitudes of warriors have passed. Its soil has been reddened as no other spot by the blood of innumerable men obeying the behest of demagogues consumed with the lust to conquer. Bounded as it is by the hills of Palestine on both north and south, this valley would naturally become the arena of war between the lowlanders who trusted in their chariots, and the Israelite highlanders of the neighboring heights. To this cause mainly it owes its celebrity, as the battlefield of the world which has, through its adoption into the language -of the Apocalypse, passed into a universal proverb. Since the Book of Revelation has proceeded to us from our risen Lord, who during His earthly ministry frequented this region in company with His disciples, several of whom were Galilean fishermen, it is the more easy to understand why, with the scene of those many battles constantly before Him, our Master should have drawn the figurative name of the final conflict between the hosts of good and evil, from "the place which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon" that is, "the city or mountain of Megiddo."

Where King Saul was Defeated

As we drive farther along in this valley our guide calls our attention to one of the most memorable disasters of Israel's history, the defeat of King Saul, by the Philistines. The Philistines appeared to have gathered all their strength for a final effort; and having marched up the sea coast to have encamped like the Midianites, in that part of the plain properly called "the Valley of Jezreel." The spot on which their encampment was fixed was on the northern side of the valley, in one passage called Aphek, and in another, Shunem. On the opposite side, nearly on the site of Gideon's camp, on the rise of Mount Gilboa, hard by the "spring of Jezreel," was the army of Saul, the Israelites as usual keeping to the heights, whilst their enemies clung to the plain. It was whilst the two armies were in this position that Saul made the disguised and adventurous journey by night over the shoulder of the ridge on which the Philistines were encamped,, to visit the witch at Endor, situated immediately on the other side of the range, and immediately facing Mount Tabor. Large caves which, at least to modern notions, accord with the residence of the Necromancer, still perforate the rocky sides of the hill.

The conflict took place the next morning. The Philistines instantly drove the Israelites up the slopes of Gilboa *and however the route* may have carried the mass of the fugitives down the valley to the Jordan, the thick of the fight must have been on the heights themselves; for it was ' "on Mount Gilboa that the wild Amalekite, wandering like his modern 'countryman over the upland waste, "chanced" to see The dying king; and "on Mount Gilboa" the corpses of Saul and his three sons were found by the Philistines the next day. Esdraelon today is peaceful enough, as though in mute protest at the slaughter it has seen. The soil is fertile and yields abundantly. Through its fields an Arab with flowing robes rides on his steed, a camel train passes by, and the humbler peasant ambles slowly along on the lowly donkey.

Nazareth the Home of the Holy Family.

And now we have entered Nazareth, sacred to all Christians as the home of the Holy Family; -it is a long straggling village built against and up the side of one of the hills which enclose the valley. It is said that the habits of the people here are altogether different from those met elsewhere and are noted for their kindness and courteousness, while the women, like those of Bethlehem, are proverbial for their good looks. The principal building and one of the most interesting places in Nazareth is the Latin Convent containing the Church of the Annunciation. Traditional places abound-some of them valueless so far as historical evidence is concerned, but all interesting from the fact that somewhere in the immediate neighborhood the actual sites must have been. Tradition says that the Church of the Annunciation marks the place of the home of the Holy Family, where our Savior grew to manhood's estate. We were led into the dusky interior of this church crowded with silver-encrusted ikons and hung with many votive lamps. The custodian was an American born and reared Franciscan monk. He related the story of the Annunciation and pointed out the exact spot where tradition says that the angel of the Lord appeared unto Mary. We thanked this monk very kindly for his information and on learning that he was American born we took occasion to briefly mention our own mission as being that of announcing what we understood to be the great truths relating to the second manifestation of Messiah, and asked him if he did not believe that the signs and conditions in the world today did not indicate that we were approaching nigh unto the second revelation or manifestation of the Savior. To this he replied that our question

was one that would be very difficult to answer for, said he, "Our Lord and Master Himself declared that He did not know the time of His Second Advent, and not the angels of heaven were made aware of it either, and so," he continued, "if He, our Lord and Master, did not understand these things, then how could -we, His humble disciples, expect to know them?" But we urged that the Master made that statement while He was still in the flesh, more than eighteen centuries ago, and that now He is the highly glorified Lord of heaven and earth; furthermore, that the Master has given us very definite and clear -outlines of the developments and conditions on the earth that would be associated with His Second Advent, urging us to watch, and so we asked, "Do you not think that these signs mentioned by the Master are everywhere around us in evidence?" But again lie evasively replied, though courteously, "That would be a very difficult question to answer."

The Virgin's Well

Another cherished memory in the town of Nazareth is what is called the Virgin's Well or Fountain of Mary. It is regarded as one of the most authentic of the holy places in Palestine. We were told that the scene at this sacred fountain is always interesting and especially so in the evening when it is thoroughly eastern. Since it is the only well in Nazareth there can be no reasonable doubt that Mary often came here, and that Jesus often quenched His thirst at this very place. While we stand gazing at this spot, women are coming and going filling their water pots from the fountain and bearing them away on the top of their heads in exactly the custom and manner of the *ancient times*.

We take up our journey again, now on the way to Tiberias. We pass clustering villages of flat-roofed rubble-walled huts. On the roofs were bowers of rusty-leaved boughs built to serve as sleeping places during the hot weather. Many of the villages were entirely deserted, the inhabitants off gathering in the harvest. Near others the threshing had begun. Women in shapeless faded garments pounded out grain with mallets. On the threshing floors of beaten clay, shouting boys rode sledges drawn by horses or oxen, which, unmuzzled, stopped now and then in their leisurely round for a mouthful of grain. A little apart, men tossed the threshed grain into the air, to be winnowed by the hot wind.

Cana, Place of First Miracle

We have now arrived at the little town, Cana of Galilee; where Jesus performed His first miracle at the marriage feast. At the outskirts of the village 'is the spring from which is said to 'have been taken the water miraculously converted into wine. Some of the water is caught in an ancient sarcophagus that serves as a watering trough for the beasts of the villagers. It is a wonder not to be explained that this trough has remained there through countless vicissitudes; for the annals of very early travelers mention the sarcophagus as a place where pilgrims bathe in token of devotion. Other antiquities of Cana serve nobler uses. In the Greek Church of the village two great heavy stone basins, probably baptistries of moderate age, are shown as the jars of the miracle. The Latin Christians claim the site of their church as the veritable place of the wedding feast. However that may be, it is a site long venerated.

A little distance on we see away on the left, the top of a curiously shaped hill, having on its summit two peaks or horns, from which it derives its name of the Horns of Hattin. This is the traditional Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus' is said to have preached the Sermon on the Mount. It is declared by those who have made a careful study of its geographical position, to meet all the requirements of the Gospel narrative, being comparatively close to the Sea of Galilee. Descending the slope we come to a rich valley and after ascending a wide, deep glen, emerge from the top of a hill where the Sea of Galilee, a thousand feet or more below, bursts on our vision. The descent to Tiberias is very steep, and the change of temperature reminds the traveler of the descent into the Valley of ' the, Jordan at Jericho. The views are interesting, especially as the old walled town of Tiberias makes a picturesque foreground to the scenery of the Lake.

Memories of Galilee

Galilee is entirely enclosed by hills. - On every side they slope gently down to the water's edge. The lake itself lies some 700 feet below the level of the Sea, and one can readily see how its situation makes it liable to sudden storms sweeping down from the mountains that surround it. It is easy to understand our Lord's affection for this part of the country. Land and lake combine to produce upon mind and heart the peace His nature so earnestly craved. To the modern traveler, jaded by the process of continual sight-seeing, and the weary pilgrimage to churches and shrines where the spiritual significance of things is so often forgotten in beholding material representations of them, Galilee comes with refreshing balm to the weary soul. Here one feels at last is the peace and rest the soul craves. Here at least is a sight and a scene that is absolutely authenticated. Here is a place we know where the feet of our Lord trod, and there is the lake beyond a shadow of a doubt upon whose surface His sacred feet have walked. Somewhere upon the lake our Lord uttered the words that produced a "great calm," and led the disciples to say, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him!" But there is no need for any miracle to still the waters during the time of our visit here. The lake lies shimmering in the sunshine of a perfect July day. Only a ripple of a breeze occasionally stirs its surface, but for the most part it remains calm and undisturbed.

Though almost two millenniums have elapsed since our Master walked upon the earth, the scenes associated with Galilee remain unchanged since His day. The works of God are unspoiled by the rude hands of man. The birds sing their songs in the trees, the eternal hills look down upon Galilee, the stately palm trees wave gently in the breeze and whisper to the responsive heart unutterable things. Here one feels is at last the Palestine of our Lord. Jerusalem in some respects is modern, its streets congested with vehicles, its sacred places covered by churches and commercialized for gain that tend to become a weariness of the flesh, but Galilee brings refreshment to the weary soul. Not in Jerusalem, not even in Bethlehem can one feel the kinship with the Lord that is to be found in Galilee.

"Where Jesus Loved so Much to Be"

Row-boats are provided on Galilee so that travelers visiting here are permitted to experience the inspiration of riding upon these sacred waters. Our guide sees to it that we are comfortably situated in one of these row-boats and we are taken far out into the lake; indeed what hallowed memories are recalled as we realize that we are upon the waters that so frequently met the gaze of our gracious Master and His disciples. Quickly sweeping over the sacred narrative contained in the Gospel story, we come to the last mention of Galilee in connection with one of our Lord's manifestations after His resurrection. For immediately after He had revealed Himself as the risen Lord, the Master instructed that He would go before His disciples into Galilee. Again the Savior was seen walking upon the shores of this lake at which time His disciples witnessed the wonderful miracle of the unusually large catch of fish, and as Peter hurried quickly to the shore to greet His Master there was delivered to him the great commission, "Feed My lambs "Feed My sheep."

As we are to remain over night at Tiberias, we are now witnessing the light fading on Galilee, the hills gleam red in the setting sun, and scarlet and gold fade out -of the heavens, one by one the silent stars come out. It is a scene of perfect peace and suggests to us prophetically the time when our Lord's great mission: shall be accomplished in the earth, when beyond the echo of war and blood-shed the peace that He came to establish shall be consummated and wars and strife shall vex the nations no more. With thanksgiving and gratitude do we hail the signs that proclaim the close proximity of that glad day ! To Capernaum and Damascus next.

Each cooing dove and sighing bough
That makes the eve so blest to me,
Has something far diviner now-
It bears me back to Galilee.

Each flowery glen and mossy dell,
Where happy birds in song agree,
Through sunny morn the praises tell
Of sights and sounds in Galilee.

And when I read the thrilling lore,
Of Him who walked upon the sea,
'I long, oh, how I long once more
To follow Him in Galilee.

O Galilee! sweet Galilee!
Where Jesus loved so much to be;
O Galilee! blue Galilee!
Come, sing thy song again to me!

Encouraging Letters

Dear Brethren:

Please apply the enclosed Bank Draft as follows:

We all appreciate greatly the two books, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," which we received some weeks ago, but one set is not enough for our little Class; hence we send order for more. We quickly saw that they were written 'in harmony, with "Studies in the, Scriptures" and with Brother Russell, and moreover in harmony with the whole Bible. We are resolved to forget the obvious errors we have been taught and look for healthy, upbuilding truth, which we are glad to find in these expositions. The Lord's true sheep, will not follow a stranger very long if they pay heed to the voice of the Great Shepherd, Christ Jesus.

I greatly appreciate the "Herald," and if you can continue the extra copy yet' a' while I can make good use of them. Often I lend both copies out and am glad to got one-back for my file. Hope to get others to subscribe.

With much Christian love from our Class, Your brother by His grace,

J. D. W.-Calif.

Dear Brethren:

It is with a sense of praise and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father,' I as well as gratitude to those` whom He has used' during the past; year in helping. the majority of us, the Lord's brethren, to keep our feet firmly holding to the Rock 'of Ages when so many of those who once walked and loved this same way, no longer can see it; nor do they desire to see, us who do still love it.

For this reason I desire at this, the start of another year to express my appreciation of your efforts, of your loving labor in behalf of God's children scattered abroad, to give us, food and drink for our hungry and thirsty souls; to give us comfort and encouragement, to press onward in the narrow way; to help us to keep on the "whole armor of God" and be able to stand in this evil hour.

Your efforts in this respect have been blessed of the Lord, for many of us have been encouraged by our reading and studying of the articles in the "Herald"; and, we look forward with joy to their regular visits and ask the Lord's blessings upon you during this new year. May your own hearts be comforted as you seek to help and encourage others. May the spirit of meekness and humility be always your portion, and may you ever- be strong' in the Lord, and in the power of His might. God bless you all is our daily prayer.

Your brother and fellow-worker by His grace` ,

C. A. K.-Pa.

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing money order for \$2.00, for my own Herald renewal and, the other dollar to pay for some one's renewal that is unable, to pay for it. We, have appreciated the splendid articles appearing in the "Herald" and believe that they are helping us all to keep sober - watching thereunto with prayer. It seems as if "spiritual" intoxication (if such an expression is permissible) was and is quite general amongst the Lord's professed people, and no doubt is due to adulterated "wine"; and the wholesome counsels of the Herald's pages is an excellent and efficient antidote (taken regularly).

The little Class here are rejoicing in their freedom in Christ, and are endeavoring to have His likeness deeply engraven in their hearts as the days go swiftly by. Sister S. joins in Christian love and the Season's greetings to you all. God bless and keep you for His very own:

Your brother by His grace,

Dear Sirs:

The enclosed pamphlet was handed to me a short time ago. Though showing signs of much handling, it carried a powerful message just the same. I am thankful the light has been cast my way through this short sermon, and will be very grateful for a few of these pamphlets, also any other Bible literature that I might distribute among my friends.

Respectfully,

H. B.-Ind.

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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The Bow Shall Be in the Cloud

"When I bring a cloud over the earth ... the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant." - Gen. 9:14, 16.

HOW NUMEROUS and wonderful are the varied descriptions given us of God's character in His inspired Word. As Creator and Ruler of the vast universe He is revealed to us "in His unlimited power -- a Being possessed with perfect wisdom and power to order and control uncounted worlds. As a holy God, opposed to all insubordination and sin, He is seen as "angry with the wicked every day," "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation." In the exercise of all His attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power, when, and however they may be brought into view, there is perfect equilibrium and poise. In every revelation of His perfect character contained in His Word or revealed in His providences, all His intelligent creatures may find cause to exclaim with the inspired writers, "Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto Thee!" "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?" "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." - Psa. 71:19; Rom. 11:33, 34; Rev. 15:4.

Revealed as the Father of Mercies

But of all the visions of God granted to tried and tempest tossed humanity, there can be nothing so consoling and reassuring as the repeated reminders that "God is love." "To those of the "groaning creation" who have been disposed to turn a listening ear to the Word of His grace, nothing has been more comforting than the assurance that God really loved the world sufficiently to plan for its deliverance from the power of sin and death.' Thus, through the centuries of sighing, crying, and dying, the hope of a Golden Age, where death would be vanquished and pain and sorrow flee away forever, has sustained these weary and burdened children of men. Hope springing eternal in the human breast has had its real foundation in the blessed Word of God. But it remained for God's Spirit-begotten ones to learn the-sweetest secrets of God's loving kindness. To these favored ones He stands revealed as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulations." And what Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts? What Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone? God has been faithful to comfort us with the knowledge of sins forgiven, that whatever may have been our former condition while children 'of wrath even as others, we are now "washed," "sanctified," and "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by

the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) He has comforted us also with multiplied assurances that He is very pitiful, even "as a father pitieth his children," and therefore if any one be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not utterly cast down." If the children of God had no such consolations as these, they surely would be utterly discouraged, and many of them would faint by the way. And in order that no seeming disaster, no loss of loved ones, or of health, wealth, or of any earthly store, should cause us to doubt His care for us, He has given us that all-comprehensive promise and assurance "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to, them who are the called according to His purpose." - Rom. 8:28.

I will Trust and not be Afraid

"Through much tribulation shall ye enter the Kingdom" was our Master's word of warning to, us as we began our walk with Him, and how' well we have realized that this is so. We are happy, however, to have found ourselves fully appreciating the fact that only by such experiences could we be developed in character-likeness to the Lord, and our refrain has been true and fervent, "Gladly will I toil and suffer, only let me walk with Thee." If "tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:4), those inspired by this hope realize no sense of shame or discouragement under the discipline and trials they must endure, but they can glory in tribulations, and even rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer with their Lord, and for His sake, and thus by way of the cross, walk even as He walked.

If in more prosperous times, when the clouds were less heavy than they may be today, we sang our entreaty for help in darker days to come, and said "As I near the time of trouble, bid my faith in Thee increase," it may be that just now there is a realization of great need of a faith that will trust and not be afraid, come what may. If from the sheltered place we enjoyed during the past years, we looked forward to coming days in the expectation that there would be times of unusual difficulty when "hire for man or beast" might be hard to find, and trying times overtake society in general, and for this reason offered up our prayers for strength in that coming day, how is it with us now? Or did we visualize the Lord's people in that. period of depression and general disruption as enjoying immunity from the prevailing distress? Notwithstanding the import of the prayer we were offering up, did we assume that our "bread and water" would unquestionably be assured us however widespread and general the trouble would be? If so, perhaps there is a real need today of a truer understanding of the possible experience of some of the saints themselves. Such immunity on the part of those whose test is very particularly one of faith "come what may," is scarcely consistent with God's method of developing His Church. Faithful Apostle's knew what it meant "to be full and to be hungry," and saints previous to the Gospel Age knew what it meant to be wandering about "in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; . . . and in dens and caves of the earth." (Phil. 4:12; Heb. 11:37, 38.) Why then, should we expect immunity from the same experiences? Rather, let us pray for the faith that will not shrink nor give way whatever lot we may see, and thus prove ourselves worthy of a place among the heroes of faith.

The Bow in the Cloud

Clouds may come to the world just in the general course of events; and as a part of the reign of evil now existing in the earth, but we are assured that no experience can come to a child of God without His direct permission. To these, therefore, the words of our opening text are wonderfully significant: "When I bring a cloud . . . the bow shall be seen in the cloud." "The tender thoughtfulness of that sign of mercy comforted Noah, and it has comforted thousands since. It was a beautiful way, too, that God spoke of it: 'When I bring a cloud upon the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud and I will look upon it, and remember My covenant.'" God's eyes and ours looking on the same thing at the same moment--that is a beautiful thought, but there is a more comforting one still, that He sees the bow where our weak and blind eyes do not see it at all.

"The bow of covenant mercy spans the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, resting, at one end, on the sodden earth of Ararat, at the other on the glowing throne of heaven, and over-arching all the space between. We see it in the consoling words, eighteen hundred years after the Flood, 'As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee' (Isa. 54:9); and after another eight hundred years we see it in the vision of the rapt Apostle John, 'A throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne. . . . And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald' (Rev. 4:3): the old sign of God's eternal faithfulness thus appearing in heaven itself. This rainbow round the throne differed from all others in having only one color instead of seven; and yet that difference only brings out the meaning of it more distinctly. For we must read Bible symbols with Eastern and not Western eyes; and in Oriental thought, green is the universally accepted emblem of faithfulness and truth. The best saints have failed, the noblest patriarchs, the holiest apostles have failed; but God's faithfulness to His own promises has never failed, and never can.

"Is there not here a great message of peace and hope for all suffering hearts? We would all fain have rainbows without clouds; but we cannot. The sun needs a dark cloud to print its [brightest] colors on, and God [frequently] needs a dark background of sorrow to make His love shine out to view. The darker the cloud, the brighter the bow; and one reason why He so often lets clouds grow heavier and darker over us is just to make us see His love as a most undeniable and conspicuous thing.

The Thick Cloud upon Jacob

"A beautiful illustration of this can be found in the history of that sorely tried patriarch Jacob. A thick cloud came down upon him when his beloved Rachel died; and Joseph was stolen and supposed to be dead too. Then, on the back of these griefs, came another still. There was a famine in the land. Death seemed to be waiting for him and all his house. There was a bow upon the cloud even then, and God was looking upon it, but Jacob could not see it. It was too faint for his tear-dimmed eyes to distinguish; and the reason of that was that the cloud was not yet dark enough to show it. So God proceeded to make it darker still. Jacob has to send his sons into Egypt

for bread. They are long in coming back. He is full of disquietude and alarm. By and by they return, but only to tell him that they had to leave Simeon behind in prison, and that the ruler of Egypt spoke roughly to them, and demanded Benjamin too. The poor patriarch breaks down on hearing this. He could not part with Benjamin, the son he loved best of all; and he cries, 'I will not have the cloud become any darker than it is, Benjamin shall not go.' But God means that the cloud shall become denser still. Benjamin has to be sent away, the aged father's heart almost breaking as he says, 'Ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; all these things are against me.'

"For many a weary week thereafter the cloud gets thicker, till, at last, when hope is almost gone, the sun shines out, and against the thickest darkness of all the bow is seen. 'Joseph is alive,' they tell him; and he well nigh faints with joy. The bow is so bright it almost dazzles his eyes: but, the more steadily he looks, the clearer becomes his conviction that, instead of all things being against him,' all things had been 'working together' for a higher good than he had ever imagined could be his. He looked at last where God had been looking all along, and then he gained what he might have had long before, the peace of a heart that was letting God take His own way with it, and resting in Him. All the time that he had been looking on his sorrows alone, his faithful God had been planning for the appearing of the bow. So it ever is.

Your Sorrow shall be turned into joy

" 'In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment,' there is the cloud-'but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy upon thee,' there is the bow. 'I will visit their transgressions with a rod,' there is the cloud-'nevertheless My loving kindness I will not take away, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail,' there is the bow. 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,' there was the cloud -'Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?' there was the bow. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' there is the cloud-'but be of good cheer, in Me ye shall have peace,' there is the bow. 'What I do thou knowest not now,' there is the cloud -- 'but thou shalt know hereafter,' there is the bow. 'Ye now therefore have sorrow,' there is the cloud -- 'but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice,' there is the bow. No cloud whatever, either of sin or of sorrow, can be overhead that is not brightened by an assurance of God's all-pardoning grace and all-sufficing peace."

"There is no blessing in affliction till the love of God is seen shining on it. The cloud does not produce the rainbow without the sun; but when we see the brilliant arch that spans the cloud, we see what glorifies the cloud, and we cease to think of the cloud, we see only the bow. Looking at the love that over-arches sorrow, the sorrow almost disappears; it is turned into joy.' Sometimes, indeed, we can scarcely see the bow, it is too dim and indistinct, but the brightness increases just as the cloud gets more intensely dark. Perhaps this is the reason why God so often thickens our clouds till they become black as night. Only let us realize that though our eyes cannot see the brightness, God's eye does; He is always looking at it, and is 'ever mindful of His covenant.'

His Banner over Us is Love

"What a wealth of spiritual suggestiveness lies also in the fact that the rainbow, as seen by us, is only half the circle, and in so far is incomplete. But the reason for that is that we are looking at it from the level of the earth. Those who have seen it from a high mountain-peak, and those who have seen it when voyaging in the upper air, with clouds below them as well as above, have told us that as they saw it, the circle was complete. Carrying this thought with us as we read again the words, 'there was a rainbow round about the throne,' does it not suggest the truth that whereas, here on earth, we cannot see the whole compass of God's love, when lifted higher and made to sit in heavenly places, we shall see all that is now hidden from our view, shall 'know even as we are known'? O sorrowing hearts, wait till you get higher up, and all apparent imperfection in the love of God will wholly disappear! But this is kept as a glad surprise for the heavenly eye, the eye that can look upon the love of God from the very center of that love, the throne of Jesus Christ."

In the midst of the cares, perplexities, and difficulties that may yet come to us, surely we can trust Him fully, and trusting Him, possess our souls in peace and patience. In every experience of sorrow and distress His banner over us is love. And O how great is that love that longs to have us made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. It is love and only love that permits the special experiences of tribulation by which we may enter the Kingdom. Shall we not, then, always remember the bow in the cloud and be encouraged with the thought that our gracious God is also looking at the same bow, and remembering His covenant to make it work out our eternal good. The dear Master is standing close by and will never permit the furnace heat to grow so intense that the precious metal would be destroyed. He loves us too well to have us suffer a needless pain or sorrow. Let us raise our eyes upwards, then, and train our faith to behold His bow in every cloud, and like the Apostle, realize in a blessed and peaceful experience of confidence in God, that "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal." - 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.

"We thank Thee, Lord, for weary days
When desert springs are dry;
For then we prove what depth of need
Thy love can satisfy.

"The touch that healed the broken heart,
Is never felt above;
The angels know Thy blessedness,
But way-worn saints Thy love."

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

"God is not a man, that he should lie; hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" - Num. 23:19.

No. 24

WITH THE close of chapter 2, the Apostle has completed his argument that apart from a faith-righteousness the case of the Jews is just as hopeless as in chapter 1 he has shown that of the Gentiles to be.

Before going further, however, and drawing the obvious conclusions which would follow from his argument he feels the need of anticipating and answering objections to the truths' he has just developed. This he accomplishes in the first eight verses of chapter 3.

Objections Anticipated and Answered

These eight verses in their details form perhaps one of the most difficult passages *in* our Epistle, yet their main import is clear enough, and their prayerful study cannot fail to furnish lessons which will be helpful to us not only now, but also when we reach the more detailed discussion of the same questions which the Apostle undertakes in chapters 9 to 11. The point of chief difficulty is to determine who the speaker is in each of the verses. Some have supposed that the Apostle is here introducing a dialogue between himself and the Jew, and assume that it is a Jew who speaks in verses 1, 3, 5, and 7 and that the Apostle replies in verses 2, 4, 6, and 8. Others, while agreeing in the main with this view, arrange the dialogue in a somewhat different manner. Amongst those who take these views are some concerning whose devotion and scholarship there can be no question.

It must be admitted, however, that the Apostle does not here make use of the formula, "But some one will say." It cannot be denied, therefore, that he "does not formally summon an objector into the arena of dispute; and consequently does not formally transfer to the objector's mouth the queries he proposes." And it would appear to be more in harmony with the Apostle's standpoint to suppose (with many of equal devotion and scholarship to those who take the other views) that the Apostle is simply proposing these questions to himself. By thus anticipating them, he gets the opportunity of meeting and removing them.

It is doubtless true, however, that they had actually been raised against him many times by Jewish objectors in the course of his ministry. To quote from another: "As the Apostle dictates, there rises before his mind a figure often seen by his eyes, the Rabbinic disputant. Keen, subtle, unscrupulous, at once eagerly in earnest, yet ready to use any argument for victory, how often that adversary had crossed his path, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, in Achaia! He is present now to *his* consciousness, within the quiet house of Gaius; and his questions come thick

and fast, following on this urgent appeal [in chapter 2] to his, alas, almost impenetrable conscience."

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"-Ver. 1.

The word "then" connects this question with the concluding statements of the previous chapter. It is as if the Apostle were to say: But if indeed it be the case as I have just stated it to be, that it is the Jew inwardly who is the true Jew, and circumcision of the heart the true circumcision; if the virtuous among the Gentiles are as acceptable as any of the Jews, and indeed by their conduct actually condemn those Jews who transgress the Law; there may be some among you who are drawing an erroneous inference, and, notwithstanding the fact that I have gone on record that "circumcision verily profiteth" (Rom. 2:25), believe that I really deny that it does profit and that I deny that the Jewish nation has any advantage at all over the rest of mankind. *And* the question may be forcing itself upon the minds of some of you:--If the people whom God has elected and marked with the seal of this 'election are *to* the treated exactly the same as the rest of the world, wherein *lies* their surplus of privilege?

The Apostle answers his own question thus:

"Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God"-Ver. 2.

Whose are the Fathers

"Though the advantage of the Jew does not consist in exemption from judgment, *he* has an advantage, nevertheless, and it is very great." "If for example, ' we consider the Jews as susceptible of blissful influence in *a* hereditary manner, from the sires of their race, we see that they were highly exalted in privilege; for theirs were the patriarchal fathers,-Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Rom. 9:5.) If we consider them as susceptible of blissful influence from ordinances of religion, eminently significant and sublimely typical, we see again that they were peculiarly exalted in privilege, for their ritual of religious service was incomparably superior to that of all surrounding peoples. (Rom. 9:4.) If we consider them as susceptible of blissful influence from a legislative code of pre-eminent moral purity, we see again that they were peculiarly privileged, for the core of their whole legislative system was a singularly pure and complete edition of the moral law. (Rom, 9:4.) If 'we consider them as susceptible of blissful influence from the zealous ministrations of faithful, uncorrupted, and incorruptible instructors and reformers, we see again that they were singularly, privileged in having had among them a succession of 'holy and 'devoted prophets who spake *as* they were moved by the *Holy* Spirit. If we consider them as susceptible of blissful influence from a very special Divine providence guiding them, restraining them, constraining them, hedging them round and round in the way of shutting them off from evil, and in the way of shutting them up to good, surely we must see again that their surplus of privilege was very great. And if we consider it a means of peculiarly blissful influence to have a high ideal presented to the mind, and a lofty aspiration stirred within the heart; then in the exhibition of the Messiah to come, as the 'Seed' par excellence, that was germinally enclosed in their distinctively Abrahamic 'seed,' -- in this exhibition, as forming indeed the very central element of Jewish

peculiarities, we see that the Jews enjoyed a privilege that was altogether unrivaled and inestimable. In short, view the subject as we may, the surplus of privilege belonging to the Jews is . . . 'much in every respect.' "

To Whom Pertaineth the Promises

Had the Apostle intended to set forth the beneficial religious and moral influence exclusively enjoyed by the Jews in, their national, domestic, and individual life, it is evident that he would have had a multitude of things to say. But it is equally clear that he would have been thus diverted from the object of his discussion,, And hence he confines himself to establishing the point from which all the rest flow. This he does in the words: "chiefly [or in the first place] because that unto them were committed [or entrusted] the oracles of God."

"When it is said that the Jews **were entrusted** with these oracles, the expression indicates that it was not for their own benefit alone that the oracles were given to them. The revelation with which they were blessed was intended for wider dissemination. It was a boon for universal man. And they were trustees, for a season, for the behalf of the human race. Nevertheless they were not simply Depositaries in behalf of others.

They were not even simply 'God's Library keepers.' . . . They themselves were heirs of the blessing which was confided to their charge. The revelation, with all its gracious and glorious promises, was a Divine message to themselves. And in the possession of it, they enjoyed for themselves an inestimable privilege. It was the Gospel in anticipation. It was the verbal word, mirroring the personal Word. It was the impersonal word of eternal life, mirroring Him who is pre-eminently, at once the personal Word of God and the Eternal Life of man. It was the glad tidings of salvation through the atonement that was to be. It was all this-with **an** additament, the additament, namely of an assurance to the Jews, that, in consequence of the peculiarly intimate relation which the future Messiah was to sustain to their race they would meanwhile be distinguishingly blessed in the enjoyment of anticipative spiritual advantages, and eventually exalted into the dignity of being almoners of God-the dispensers of some of the' richest elements of His 'bounty, to the world at large. They would hence be emphatically -- in virtue of such prerogatives -- God's favored people -- His national 'son,' as well as His national 'servant,' -- His 'peculiar people.' In addition to the fundamental promises, relating to the provision of mercy made for men, as men, the oracles of the Old Testament are, as a matter of fact, bestrewed, from beginning to ending, with gems of exceeding great and precious promises relating to the provision of favor made for the Jews, as Jews. God "shewed His word [K'ri, His words, His oracles] unto Jacob; His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for His judgments they [the nations in general]" have not known them."-Psa. 147:19, 20.

"To insist upon this immense privilege is. Altogether to St. Paul's purpose here. For it is a privilege which evidently carries an awful responsibility with it. What would be the guilt of the soul, of the community, to whom those oracles were not given as property, but entrusted-and who did not do the things they said?"

Jewish Privileges Great, even though Unimproved

But a further objection immediately arises: **"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"-Ver. 3.**

"It must be evident to every considerate reader, that 'the faith of God' here means God's faithfulness: the same word in the original is, in one passage, translated fidelity, and has probably the same meaning in several others (Titus 2:10; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 5:22); and the connection plainly requires this sense in the passage before us." The reply to the question is: **"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."-Ver. 4.**

We have already remarked that some suppose that the words of verse 3 are not spoken by the Apostle in his own person. They imagine that the paragraph is a dialogue-a 'dialectical debate; and that in this verse it is a Jewish objector who speaks. .Such a view, however, fails to take into consideration the significance of the connection which the opening word translated "for" makes with the words of verse 2. Indeed some translate this word "and"; others translate it "but." To our understanding, however, verse 3 does but continue and vindicate the position which the Apostle has just taken as to the immense privilege enjoyed by the Jewish nation. It is as though he had ^{said:} I may well specify the possession of the oracles of God as a high privilege of the Jews,-for, whatsoever may be the actual treatment which these oracles have received at the hands of my countrymen, the possession of them is nevertheless, when intrinsically considered, an inestimable boon. "They were blessed in having the oracles, and in possessing the multitudinous concomitant advantages attached to the oracles, whether they improved their high privileges or not."

In What did Their Unbelief Consist?

It has been questioned, whether, when the Apostle says, "What if some did not believe?" he referred exclusively to the unbelief which had characterized their past history, or whether he referred to their unbelief in and consequent rejection of the Messiah. "The tense of the verb employed by the Apostle shows, as it appears to us, that the lines of his thought were running in the plane of the past-that plane of things which covered the entire period when the Jews, as distinguished from the Gentiles, were entrusted with the oracles of God. But, logically, his reference was not confined to this plane. His eye swept, indeed, over the past ages; but it ranged downward through those ages till it rested on what had been, and was still, transpiring, since 'the fulness of the time' had arrived, and since that illustrious Personage had appeared, in whom the precious promises of God were 'yea and amen,' and who, in His own grand personality, is the Consummation and the Sum of the oracles of God. What matters it, says the Apostle, though some believed not? -- that is -- What matters it though many, in the bygone ages have lived and died without faith in the true import of the oracles of God, and thus without faith in the Great Propitiator? -- And what matters it, though many of their descendants, now living, are walking in their footsteps, and have refused to believe that which is the very Sum and Substance of their own precious Scriptures? -- What signifies all this, so far as the question of prerogative is concerned?" The possession of those oracles constituted a veritable and inestimable privilege to them, whether they believed in them or not.

The Chief Promises Conditional

Some have supposed that the reason the Apostle is able to affirm that the faithfulness of God will not fail, but that His promises to Israel will be made good to them, notwithstanding the unbelief of some, lies in the fact that there was within "nominal" Israel, a secretly elected Israel, in whose blessed experiences the promises would be realized. But the Apostle's affirmation rests on no such grounds. Had he chosen he might have said: "For what if **none** believed?" Although all Israel had proved to be unbelieving, their want of faith would not, in the least, have evacuated or diminished or dimmed the faithfulness of God. What God had unconditionally promised, that He would unconditionally fulfill; and what was promised only conditionally would wait, with untarnished honor, for its fulfillment on the forthcoming of the condition. Personal enjoyment of the chief blessings exhibited and promised in the oracles is suspended on the condition of faith. "When this faith was withheld, the blessings referred to could not be enjoyed; and yet the faithfulness of God in (conditionally) promising them, and in (unconditionally) promising the propitiatory ground on which they rested, is unimpeached and unimpeachable."

Let God be True

"The Apostle does not, in this place, enter on the formal proof of the consistency of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews with the Divine promise.

The main argument by which this consistency is established, rests on the distinction stated in the end of the preceding chapter between Jews by birth and Jews in spirit; between the circumcision of the heart and circumcision in the flesh. To this argument he gives due prominence in the beginning of the ninth chapter; and we shall not now anticipate the illustration of it. In the passage before us he assumes a different ground. He indignantly repels the implied charge against the Divine faithfulness, on account of its obvious and shocking impiety; its flagrant opposition to the necessary and acknowledged character of God. It is as if he had said -- Let what will be the solution of the seeming difficulty, this assuredly can never be. The immutable veracity of the God of truth must, at all events, be free from impeachment. Let not the suspicion of the contrary be harbored even for an instant. Let not the possibility of it be so much as supposed. Let the very thought be rejected, with shuddering abhorrence, as a thought that should never have been formed. Should the acknowledgment implicate all creatures in falsehood -- let God be true."

"The Apostle confirms his sentiment by a quotation from the fifty-first Psalm:---!That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.' The passage is quoted as it stands in the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament. In our English version the words are 'that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.'

"Without entering into any discussion of the causes that may have produced the diversities between the Septuagint translation and the original Hebrew, . . . we would remark in general, that wherever the New Testament writers make their quotations from the Septuagint, we may be sure the sense must be the same although the words may be somewhat different. If the writers of both the Old and the New Testaments were inspired, this is a necessary inference from their inspiration. At the same time it ought to be observed, that such quotations are by no means to be considered as giving an inspired sanction to the translation, as a whole, from which they are taken; but merely as confirming the correctness, with respect to sense, of the passage quoted. In the case before us the reader will perceive, the difference is merely verbal. God is addressed in the passage, by the penitent Psalmist, as an offended Sovereign and Judge. For such an One to be 'clear when He is judged,' is to have His character for righteousness and truth established when His conduct is tried. This amounts, in effect, to much the same thing with His being 'clear (that is clear of any fault or blame) when He judges'; -- impartially just in the sentence pronounced by Him. While David, in these words, expresses, with deep self-abasement, his personal conviction of the justice of God in visiting his sins with deserved punishment, he at the same time declares a universal truth, applicable, in its full extent, to the whole of the Divine procedure. In this light his words are used by the inspired Apostle

The Importance and Value of the Pilgrim Ministry

THROUGH THE past fourteen years during which the brethren of our Association have been laboring together, one of the branches that has been specially blessed of the Lord is that of the service of the brethren who travel from place to place and minister to various companies of the Lord's people. Through our correspondence department we hear from the friends far and near, and are repeatedly assured that these ministries of the traveling brethren are much in demand and are deeply appreciated. During these years several brethren have devoted much time to this branch of the service, and we would in these remarks not only encourage those brethren who are devoting more or less of their time and addressing meetings from place to place, but we would also encourage the friends everywhere to make effort to attend the meetings and avail themselves of the privileges of spiritual fellowship in connection with these visits of the Pilgrims. While we have advised the friends in the past to arrange for some public witness in behalf of the Truth, as far as it may seem best, and still so recommend, yet our conviction is that the richer ministry in connection with the traveling brethren is represented in those meetings where the addresses are suited more particularly to the consecrated and their spiritual necessities.

It is true, it has not been to many large assemblies that the services of these brethren have been rendered, but even this is not discouraging in any way in consideration of the fact that the ministry of the Divine Word throughout the Age has been to a comparatively small number, a little flock, the jewel class, who alone are promised the Kingdom of God. It is good always to remember the Apostle's statement: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." - 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

It is remembered that this form of ministry today that we designate the Pilgrim Work is very similar to that which was engaged in by St. Paul and others in the Apostolic period, for we read of how they journeyed from place to place preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, seeing at times much fruit of their labors, and at other times realizing but little from their faithful efforts; not only often receiving as compensation the scoffs and jeers of the world and the cruel hand of persecution, but frequently a lack of appreciation on the part of professing believers themselves. All faithful ambassadors have been admonished to expect similar experiences themselves even unto the end of the Age. Again one of the special features of the Pilgrim ministry during the days of the primitive Church, was that of visiting the various companies of the brethren who had been brought together by those who had announced the Message, the Gospel of the Kingdom. Following the leading of the Spirit, the Apostles who journeyed from place to place amongst these groups of the consecrated, made special effort to impart a knowledge of the deep things, those truths that had to do with the development of spirituality and personal acquaintance with the Lord; for only by such knowledge of the more profound truths, could the brethren advance to those higher stages of Christian life and experience.

While from the standpoint of inspired revelation the efforts of the brethren to comfort one another in these times are most encouraging, yet, inasmuch as this is a time when a considerable number are being freed from the confusion and bondage in which they have found themselves, we are inclined to believe and hope that there are further and richer results to come from further endeavors in the direction of the Pilgrim ministry by those who are already serving along this line and by still others whom the Lord may provide to devote time to the same also. The resources, financial and otherwise, placed in the hands of the brethren in charge of this service, of course more or less regulate the extensiveness of this branch, while at the same time the number of brethren who are qualified and have the opportunity of encouraging in this direction, is quite limited. As with every other feature of the service, we look to the Lord for guidance, well knowing that He is able to encourage this phase of the ministry or withhold His hand as in His unerring wisdom He sees best.

It will facilitate the work and assist those who have matters in charge, if the brethren of the various Classes throughout the country will communicate their wishes with regard to arranging for visits from any of our brethren traveling from place to place, so that when we are making out the schedule and preparing tours we will be in a better position to make the appointments. Frequently our brethren pass through cities where there are only one or two of the friends and arrangement could be easily made for a visit there without any additional expense. It will therefore assist us materially and make it possible to accomplish more in this branch, if the friends will cooperate by freely communicating with us their desires respecting Pilgrim visits.

From Galilee to Damascus and Haifa

By **BROTHER I. F. HOSKINS**

IN THE morning of July 14 we awake from our sleep in the little ancient town of Tiberias; and shall always cherish the memory of the few hours we have spent by the Sea of Galilee, associated as it is with the sacred narrative of the life of Him whose holy feet walked not only upon the shores but upon the waves of the Sea itself. With many of the incidents of the Gospels fresh in mind as we have tarried here, we are loath to take our departure, and have a feeling somewhat akin to that expressed by the Apostle Peter when witnessing the remarkable vision on the Mount of Transfiguration, he said to the Master, "It is good for us to be here; let us make here three tabernacles"; etc.

Magdala

Our next objective is Damascus, some sixty miles northward in Syria. Leaving Tiberias we are therefore traveling northward around the shores of Galilee. The sites and true positions of the busy towns which lined the shores in the time of our Lord, are much in dispute. One or two, however, seem reasonably certain. It is now through the Plain of Gennesareth on the western shores of 'Galilee that we are driving; this is regarded as the most sacred region of the lake. We come to plantations of oranges and bananas which mark the rise of the modern Jewish settlement of Migdal, and this marks the site of Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene; deriving its whole celebrity from its being the birthplace of her, through whom the name of Magdalene has been incorporated into the language of the world. Until recent years this was merely a collection of a few hovels in the southeastern corner of the Plain of Gennesareth.

The Synagogue at Capernaum

Beyond this point northward, the hills though always leaving a beach, again advance close to the lake. This is the northern boundary of the Plain. Farther on near, the head of the Lake the fragments of some large edifice amongst the jungle, known by the name of Tell Hum complete the signs of human habitation on the western shore. There is general agreement amongst observers and those who have carefully studied the situation, that Tell Hum marks the site of the ancient Capernaum against which our Lord pronounced such definite and decisive judgment, for it would seem as if the woe pronounced against this city had been literally fulfilled. Yet the woe here as elsewhere was doubtless spoken not against the walls and houses of Capernaum but against those who dwelt within them. As we come to the entrance of Capernaum itself, just on the shore, a number of large eucalyptus trees are seen. In virtue of the persistent malaria associated with the marshy land at that spot, they were planted. When that work was being done, traces of the harbor works at Capernaum were found. Truly if the stones could have spoken, they could have told many a tale of human life and' experience. There are ruins at Capernaum that lie close upon the shore. Interesting excavations have been made, and it is believed that the foundations of the synagogue which have been unearthed are those of the edifice in which Jesus preached his

famous discourse on the bread of life. The well-worn steps leading into the synagogue, which remain intact, are believed to be the very ones upon which the feet of Christ stepped as He entered this edifice in His day.

Considering the fact that our Lord spent so much of His time during the years of His ministry amongst the towns that line the shores of His Galilee, and so much of His ministry was devoted to these parts, it has seemed strange to many that little effort has been made to recover what ought to have been the historical sanctuaries on these wonderful shores. Compared with Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem, it may be almost said that Capernaum is an unknown name. It has gone, and in its very destruction, remains a warning that for the preservation even of the holiest places no special interposition is to be expected; that we must be content with general, not particular certainty; as at Jerusalem, so also in Galilee.

Hermon, the Mountain of Ice

Now as one realizes a peaceful presence dwelling undisturbed on the shores of Galilee and its waters from end to end, the moment that the traveler emerges from this place, he finds himself once more in the scenes of the old wars of the earliest times'. On ascending and advancing northward, he is again amidst the troubled times of Joshua and the Judges. We are setting out now directly for Damascus.

Mounting from the shores of the Plain of Gennesareth, wider and wider glimpses of the lake open, before we see it for the last time. Tabor, with the Mount of the Beatitudes as its outpost, is long_ visible above the Jordan Valley. Round and round over one range of hills after another, we reach a high point of elevation, and then for many miles we travel over the long undulating plains enclosed between the two lines of Anti-Libanus-the upper-most stage of the Jordan. The northern horizon is closed by Hermon with its double snow-clad peak, and beyond by Lebanon with its many heads in the further distance.

Far on the way to Damascus now, to our right is what was known in Biblical times as the land of - Bashan, which was then peopled by the Rephaim, or Giants, who under Og, their king, so terrified Israel. Deraa is the Edrei of the Bible, the capital city of the Giant Og. It was here on the plain before it that he opposed the invading Israelites, was slain, and his army totally defeated.

As we approach still more closely to Damascus, we are passing very near the foothills of Hermon; it seems but a little distance up to the great bank of snow that rests near the top and one realizes increasingly the grandeur and sublimity of this mountain, and the impression deepens that it is well deserving of the prominence that has been given it in both sacred and secular literature. The ancient names of its double range are all significant of its peculiar position in that it can be seen distinctly from a large area of Palestine as well as from other countries. It was called "the upraised"; "The Lofty Peak"; the glittering "breastplate" of ice; "The White Mountain" of ancient times; or the "Mountain of Ice," in modern times.

The Oldest City in the World

As Damascus is approached from the west, the road emerges from the rocky hills between two precipitous cliffs-up the side of one of these cliffs the road winds; and from the edge of the mountain range one looks down on the plain of Damascus. It is here seen in its widest and fullest perfection, with the visible explanation of the whole secret of its great and enduring charm, that which it must have had when it was the solitary seat of civilization in Syria-the River Abana. The River is visible at the bottom of the mountain range .with its green banks rushing through the cleft in the hills; it bursts forth and as if in a moment, scatters 'over the plain through a circle of several miles, the same verdure which had hitherto been confined to a single channel. In the midst of this plain lies at our feet the vast lake or islands of deep verdure of various fruits, vegetables, and grass below; and in the midst of this mass of foliage rises, striking out in white arms of streets hither and thither, and its white minarets above the trees which embosomed them, the city of Damascus.

This River Abana is the same one referred to by General Naaman of Syria, when told by Elisha to go and wash in Jordan seven times for the healing of his leprosy, he replied, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings 5:12.) This river has been well harnessed by the inhabitants so that a large portion of the water is carried underneath the city, and supplies its fountains and the requirements of the people.

We are now roaming about what is reputed to be the oldest city in the world, and of which we read quite early in the Genesis account. Apparently the posterity of Noah emigrated to this section of the country shortly after the flood. It was in existence 'when Abraham in response to the Divine call to leave his home in Chaldea, settled in the land of Canaan. We read that in delivering Lot from the hands that had conquered 'Sodom and Gomorrah, "he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus." Thus in this very remote period there existed this city of Damascus.

Scene of St. Paul's Conversion

Because of its connection with events recorded in the New Testament, Damascus- holds considerable attraction for the Christian traveler. Considering the interest that properly attaches to the life of the Apostle Paul, it is no wonder that effort has been made to determine the place where his Christian experience commenced. With regard to the Apostle's conversion we read, "As he drew nigh to Damascus." A quarter of an hour from the walls of the city on the eastern side, the Christian's burial ground and a rude mass of conglomerate stone marks the reputed scene of the conversion of St. Paul. There was the cloudless blue- sky overhead; close in front of the city walk, in part still ancient; around it, the green mass of groves and orchards; and beyond them and deeply contrasted with them on the south, the white top of Hermon; on the north, the gray hills of Saalyah. Such, according to the local belief, was St. Paul's view when the light became darkness before him, and he heard the voice which completely turned the fortunes of his entire career.

"The Street which is called Straight"

We are told that the customs and costumes of the people of this "oldest city in the world," have hardly changed since the time of Abraham, while the bazaars are more renowned than even those of Cairo and some other ancient cities. Its streets are crowded with merchants of all kinds, turbaned men and veiled women, camels and goats, etc. To us the most interesting street of the city was a long thoroughfare said to be the "street which is called Straight, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles where still stands the traditional house of Judas, to which the blind Saul of Tarsus was brought; and in a vision the disciple Ananias was directed of the Lord to inquire at this house "for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth." We were shown this house of Judas. We were next driven on the outer skirts of the city where we had an interesting view of the broken down and ruined walls, which are said to go back of even the Apostolic period. Stopping at one point where the ancient walls were still quite intact which included one of the gates, our guide pointed to the window in the wall above the gate and explained that according to tradition this was the window where the Apostle Paul escaped from the city after his conversion, by being let out this window and safely to the ground in a basket: -- Acts 9:25.

We pause to reflect briefly on ' this great character. The vision he had received of Christ had effected a complete turning about; the voice of the celestial visitor rang clear in his ears, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest." And the inspiration of it impelled him to become as zealous a defender of the Christian faith and of its great Founder, as his blindness had formerly caused him to persecute Christ and to attempt to exterminate Christianity. Then as the life of the Apostle thereafter was a consistent exposition of Christ and of the Christian faith, we marvel not that it had the Divine blessing in fullest measure, and was a life most fruitful not only in those qualities and graces that adorned his own personal character, but fruitful in that persuasive power of the Spirit which drew many other souls to Christ, so that today, after eighteen centuries and more, many thousands can testify to the fact that the ministry of the Apostle Paul has' been instrumental in not only bringing them to Christ, but also in imparting to them a knowledge of the deep things of God, and in clarifying their vision of the crown of life which the Apostle said was reserved for him and for all those who loved Christ and His appearing.

The Ancient Home of Baal Worship

Before changing our course westward, to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, we are driven still further northward in Syria, perhaps sixty miles, to the ancient town of Baalbek. Again we drive over many miles of mountainous country before we reach a broad open fertile valley in which is locate\$ this ancient town. Baalbek was the great center of Baal worship back in the days of God's Kingdom in Israel, and so there are to this day important landmarks of the ancient worship of Baal. This town .was formerly the most glorious city of Syria and the center of 25,000,000 inhabitants, while today it represents only about 3,000,000. This city was adorned with palaces and parks, temples and monuments. Its early history is lost in obscurity. The great Temples of Bacchus and Jupiter that are joined together, the ruins of which remain, constitute one of the seven wonders of the world. These ruins cannot fail to excite enthusiasm in the beholder, but imagination fails to appreciate the Cyclopean masonry of these magnificent columns. Some of the gigantic blocks of limestone used in these superb monuments weigh each, some fifteen hundred tons, and are the largest masses of stone ever handled by man. The explanation was made to us

that three of these large stones which we observed in the Temple of Jupiter and which are in positions twenty feet above the ground, are each sixty-two feet long and fourteen by sixteen feet in width and height. There is no device amongst our modern machinery of today that is equal to and sufficient to handle these stones. For long these great blocks were supposed even by European visitors to be relics of a primeval race of giant builders. The Temple of Bacchus is said to date back to 800 years before Christ, but it is not authentic; its construction could have been centuries before that time. The Temple of Jupiter, it is said, was constructed in the first century A.D., at the time that Pagan Rome flourished and was at the height of its glory.

So much for these ruins that speak so eloquently of the darkness of ignorance and superstition of past ages. But spiritual darkness still covers the earth and gross' darkness the minds of the people. Civilization, under the Christianizing influence of the Gospel, has indeed made some progress, but the hearts of men remain unchanged; and the tendency is to refuse and deny the truth, rather than that of drawing nearer and nearer to the true God and listening to His voice. Various forms of Baal worship, idol worship, and misrepresentations of God still prevail even in so-called Christian lands. Our mind turns instinctively to God's great Plan of the Ages and His arrangement of turning away the darkness and superstition from the face of the earth by the rising of the great Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams, at which time He will lift the veil of darkness, and all humanity will see out of obscurity, Him who was long ago declared to be the Light of the World.

Beirut on the Mediterranean

Our journey next is to Beirut, on the Mediterranean Coast, some seventy miles distant from Baalbek. After some twenty-five miles through the valley, the road again takes to the mountains. It is impossible to convey anything like an adequate notion of the glorious scenery through which this road leads; following the torturous winding of the road among a veritable maze of hills, now ascending and again descending as it runs through wild gorges and dark ravines and by beautiful waterfalls, now creeping along a narrow ledge cut in the side of a precipice, now into a valley of vineyards and orchards or luxuriant pastures, the traveler is constantly astonished by the grandeur of the scenery, until we reach the town of Beirut on the Mediterranean Sea.

This is said to be one of the most attractive cities in Syria. We are told that there are many American and European institutions in this city which has a population of 120,000, about one-third of which are Moslems. Whether or not the town of Beirut is to be identified with Hebrew Berothai or not (2 Sam. 8:8; Ezek. 47:16), it was one of the most ancient settlements on the Phoenician coast; but nothing more than the name is known of it till B. C. 140, when the town was taken and destroyed by Tryphon in his contest with Antiochus VII. From the standpoint of our object in traveling through the Holy Land, this place has no special interest for us.

Mt. Carmel and its Memories

After remaining in Beirut over night we take up our journey again and now it is directly southward down' the Mediterranean coast. The ride of some four hours along the coast is uneventful. Two points of interest claim our attention on the way as our guide points in the distance to our right to the sites of Sidon and Tyre. Nearly all the way of this ride we are in sight of the Mediterranean Sea. We reach Haifa about noon-time and are to remain here for the afternoon and over night. Haifa, as is well known, is located at the foot of Mt. Carmel on the south of the Bay of Acre. The present town is entirely modern and we are advised that it has developed since about 1890 into an important port and is connected by railway with Damascus. In fact this place, it is said, is well on its way towards becoming the most important port in Palestine which is due largely to a fine new harbor which is being built by the government. The population of the town numbers 30,000, half of which are Jews, who for the most part live in well built suburbs which have grown up since the war. The Jews have erected several large factories which not only supply the local market with staples, but do an export trade with other neighboring countries. Among other schools, a technical institute has been established with Hebrew as the language of instruction.

Haifa marks the last of the places on our itinerary and tour of Palestine. Hence our guide explains that before taking his leave for Jerusalem he will see that we are driven safely to the top of Mt. Carmel, which is comparatively a short distance. A good carriage road runs from the town to the summit of Carmel. To all students of Scripture the fact is familiar that this mount is closely associated with the Prophets Elijah and Elisha. As we reach the summit of Carmel, the sacred narrative is recalled of how the awful debate whether Jehovah or Baal was supreme lord of the elements, was fought out for a full day in the face of one of the most sublime prospects of earth and sea and heaven.

We are shown a monastery and are permitted to enter it; over to one side our guide points to a cave which tradition says is the place where Elijah hid when Ahab was seeking his life. While reflecting over the sacred and memorable events that mark this place, it is recalled that we are living near the time when the prophetic experiences of Elijah are to be fulfilled-when the wind, the earthquake and the fire are to be followed by "the still small voice" that is to speak peace to humanity and bid the raging elements be still while the message of wise counsel and of hope goes forth in connection with the opportunity of returning to Paradise and to life eternal. We relate next the journey homeward by way of Rome.

Faith and Providential Circumstances

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."-Rom. 8:28.

ONE OF the richest and most priceless blessings of the Christian life, of the life of faith, is that of the providential care and protection over all the way. No privilege can be greater than that of having the Divine oversight and interest in all of the affairs of our lives, so that everything will contribute to our best and highest good. Yet how few there are comparatively who really in their hearts enjoy this state of mind; due to a failure to live up to their privileges and profession; or to a lack of faith which trusts God and believes His Word, wherein He has multiplied promises giving assurance that He really loves and cares for His obedient children.

Weighed in the Presence of God

Many there are who speak of the "finger of providence" as being relied upon for guidance, whereas they are expressing more the idea of being directed by circumstances. We need not hesitate to declare that this is far from being the proper kind of guidance for the child of God. Without doubt there are times when the Lord may indicate our path by certain providential circumstances; but it is important that we be sufficiently in touch with and submitted to Him to enable us to construe the providence correctly, or else we may discover that what we termed "an opening of providence" may really prove to be an occasion or opening by which we slip off the holy path of obedience. So, says another, "surrounding circumstances, just like our inward impressions, must be weighed in the presence of God, and judged by the light of His Word, else they may lead us into the most terrible mistakes. Jonah might have deemed it a very remarkable opening of providence to find a ship going to Tarshish; but, in truth, it was an opening through which he slipped off the path of obedience. Had he been in communion with God, he would not have needed a ship.

"No doubt it is the Christian's privilege to see his Father's hand, and hear His voice, in everything; but he is not to be guided by mere circumstances. A Christian so guided is like a vessel at sea without a rudder or compass; she is at the mercy of the waves and winds. God's promise to His child is, 'I will guide thee with Mine eye.' His warning is, 'Be not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held with bit or bridle, lest they come near unto thee.' It is much better to be guided by our Father's eye than by the bit and bridle of circumstances; and we know that, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, 'providence,' is only another word for the impulse of circumstances.

By Faith Moses Forsook Egypt

In no more forceful manner is the power of faith experienced than in refusing and forsaking at times what seems to be apparent openings of providence. Take for instance the case of Moses:

His was most certainly an extraordinary faith. We read that "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. . . . By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." - Heb. 11:23-27.

In our review and contemplation of "the path of Moses, we observe how that faith led him entirely athwart the ordinary course of nature. It led him to despise all the pleasures, the attractions, and the honors of Pharaoh's court. And not only that, but also to relinquish an apparently wide sphere of usefulness. Human expediency would have conducted him along quite an opposite path. It would have led him to use his influence on behalf of the people of God-to act for them instead of suffering with them. According to man's judgment, providence would seem to have opened for Moses a wide and most important sphere of labor; and surely, if ever the hand of God was manifest in placing a man in a distinct position, it was in his case. By a most unaccountable chain of circumstances, every link of which displayed the finger of the Almighty -- by an order of events which no human foresight could have arranged, had the daughter of Pharaoh been 'made the instrument of drawing Moses out of the water, and of nourishing and educating him until he was 'full forty years old.' With all these circumstances in his view, to abandon his high, honorable, and influential position, could only be regarded as the result of a misguided zeal which no sound judgment could approve.

"Thus might poor blind nature reason. But faith thought differently; for nature and faith are always at an issue. They cannot agree upon a single point. Nor is there, anything, perhaps, in reference to which they differ so widely as what are commonly called 'openings of providence.' Nature will constantly regard such openings as warrants for self-indulgence; whereas faith will find in them opportunities for self-denial."

The Meek will He Guide

It is to be observed that the Word of God is the only one sure test and perfect touchstone for settling everything; for outward circumstances and inward impressions, for feelings, imaginations, and tendencies-all should be placed under the searching influence of the Divine Word, and there, calmly and seriously judged. None other can be the true path of safety, peace, and blessedness for God's children.

Probably it will be urged by some that we cannot hope to locate a text of Scripture to guide us in the matter of our movements or in the thousand little incidents of the daily life. Even so; yet are there not certain essential principles laid down in Scripture, which if properly applied will afford Divine guidance, even where we might not be able to locate a particular text? Not only so, but we have complete assurance that God can and does guide His children in all things. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord"; "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way"; "I will guide thee with Mine eye." If such Divine guidance cannot be relied upon, where are we? How are we to succeed? How are we to be governed in our movements? Are we left to be driven hither-and thither by the tide of circumstances? "Thank God, it is not so. He can, in His own perfect way, give us the certainty of His mind in any given case; and without that certainty we should never move. If we are not sure, let us be quiet and wait. Very often it happens that we harass and fret ourselves about movements that God would not have us make at

all. A person once said to a friend, 'I am quite at a loss to know which way to turn.' 'Then, don't turn at all,' was the friend's wise reply.

Waiting on God

"But here an all-important moral point comes in, and that is, our whole condition of soul. This, we may rest assured, has very much to do with the matter of guidance. It is 'the meek He will guide in judgment, and teach His way.' We must never forget this. If only we are humble and self-distrusting-if we wait on God, in simplicity of heart, uprightness of mind, and honesty of purpose, He will most assuredly guide us. But it will never do to go and ask counsel of God in a matter about which our mind is made up, or our will is at work."

In the case of Moses, it was "by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and "by faith 'he forsook Egypt." Had Moses taken the viewpoint of the natural man, and judged according to the sight 'of his eyes, he would have seized the "proffered dignity, as the manifest gift of a kind providence, and he would have remained in the court of Pharaoh as in a sphere of usefulness plainly thrown open to him by the hand of God. But, then, he walked by faith, and not by sight of his eyes; and hence he forsook all. Noble example! May we have grace to follow it!"

"Master, speak! I cannot doubt Thee;
Thou wilt through life's pathway lead;
Savior, Shepherd, oh! without Thee
Life would be a blank indeed.
Yet I seek still fuller light,
Deeper love, and clearer sight.

"Master, speak! and make me ready,
As Thy voice is daily heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee:
Master, speak, speak on, to me!"

Three General Conventions for the Coming Season

Though it is somewhat early in the year, it is nevertheless quite appropriate as well as interesting and encouraging to learn that the friends in various sections are desirous of knowing what are the plans for General Conventions during this coming season; and we are very pleased to report at this time that three different centers have been decided upon for general assemblies of the brethren. Each of them are of excellent location and should afford opportunities for a large number of the brethren to, avail themselves of the convention joys and privileges. These three general centers are as follows

AT BROOKLYN, N. Y. SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND MONDAY, MAY 28, 29, 30

Acting upon the suggestion made by some, and believing it to be in harmony with the wishes of a large number of friends, the Pastoral Bible Institute is this year arranging for a General Convention in Brooklyn, N. Y., that it is hoped will accommodate the entire East at the dates above given, which cover a holiday season. Further, it is a favorable time also from the standpoint that being near the regular annual meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, it can be arranged that this meeting be held in connection with the convention. Another favorable feature is that the extremely hot weather will scarcely yet have appeared, thus affording what may reasonably be expected as a more favorable season from the natural standpoint for the brethren to spend three days together in the contemplation of those things that relate to their heavenly interests and prospects. By having this early notice now the brethren will have opportunity to make plans so that if possible they may be able to be present at the Brooklyn Convention the latter part of May.

AT BUFFALO, N. Y., SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND MONDAY, JULY 2, 3, 4

The second of the General Conventions will be as above. Quoting from a letter received from the Secretary of the Buffalo Class : "It was voted to again serve the brethren in this vicinity, and as many others as find it convenient to journey to us, with a convention on July 2, 3, and 4. Advance notice is made thus early so that the brethren can plan accordingly. . While it was our wish to allow some other Class in this vicinity to have the privilege and blessing of holding this convention, the Buffalo friends are peculiarly blessed in that a very good hall is at our disposal for no extra cost. In these distressed times, this is an item to be considered.

"Another point it will be well for the friends thinking of conventions to consider, is that it will be the last year for some time that the holidays arrange themselves so conveniently. It makes absence from work for the brethren a minimum....

The little conventions we have had in the past have been a blessing to those in attendance. We feel it will be even more so now as the time of trouble is so closely upon us. We need every opportunity possible of gathering together and encouraging each other to 'hold fast that which we have that no man take our crown.' . . .

"More particular information will be sent you later, but we will say the services will be held in Delta Temple, 692 East Utica Street, as formerly, and will probably be from 2 p. m. on Saturday to 9 p. m. on Monday."

As is recalled, Buffalo is quite centrally located to accommodate quite a large circle of the friends, including a considerable portion of Canada, and it is hoped that many will find the opportunity to attend the convention in Buffalo in July.

**AT PITTSBURGH, PA., FRIDAY, SATURDAY,
AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 29, 30**

The third convention of the season is to be at Pittsburgh on the dates given above which, as will be remembered, includes the anniversary of Brother's Russell's death. The conventions held in Pittsburgh at that season during the past three years have been indeed fruitful in spiritual blessings and encouragement in general to 'a large circle of friends. The brethren in that city are just as anxious as in the past that the convention they contemplate holding next October may prove to be an occasion and opportunity for many friends to renew their acquaintance and join in an earnest effort to help one another spiritually and stir up one another's pure minds by way of remembrance. Pittsburgh is also excellently located to suit the convenience of quite a number of Classes especially in the Middle West, and no doubt many will avail themselves of this privilege of fellowship as in the past.

The brethren in each of these centers above mentioned also request the united prayers of the friends that the Divine blessing may accompany their endeavors and that the Lord may prepare the hearts of His people so that in coming together during these seasons of fellowship, their hearts may be greatly enriched and encouraged to lay hold of the glorious hope set before them.

It is then in the confidence that the sweet benediction of the Lord will attend not only the efforts of those who are responsible for making the arrangements for these conventions, but also upon all those who shall attend, that we take pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to these general conferences and seasons of fellowship during the coming months of this' year. Further details of information regarding each of the gatherings will appear later.

"So Much the More as Ye See the Day Approaching"

The following letter presents an example of how, in various sections of the country, brethren today are seeking to draw together and to encourage, one another in the things that are pertinent to their laying hold of the exceeding great and precious promises,- the things that appertain to life and godliness. Sunday conventions and general gatherings arranged particularly in central localities where the friends may come together from, a number of points surrounding, are indeed to be encouraged. We trust that the reading of the letter below may inspire interest and desire in still others to avail themselves of the privileges of spiritual fellowship and of stirring up one another's pure minds by way of remembrance. -- EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

For some months past we, i. e., the dear friends within a radius of fifty to one hundred miles of Neodesha who are standing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, untrammelled by the bondage and confusion so prevalent among the Lord's people of the present day, have been meeting from time to time, approximately once a month, in little services of fellowship and study of God's Word, reminiscent of old time services of our dear Pastor's day.

The programs as a rule have consisted of praise and testimony service, Berean study, and discourse, usually by a local brother; augmented on two occasions with a timely discourse by a former Pilgrim brother. . .

These services were suggested by Pilgrim Brother McKeown on the occasion of his visit to Iola on May last. They began with two services for the first meeting, consisting of a prayer and praise service and a discourse. Interest has grown to a point that our next service, which is, to be here at Neodesha, February 21, will consist of four, services beginning at 10:00 A. M. and continuing throughout the day. Attendance has been from about a dozen to thirty, some coming from a distance of nearly one hundred miles, all expressing in no uncertain, terms their gratitude at being permitted in the Lord's providence, regardless of present affiliations, to once more assemble as of old in untrammelled services in the liberty wherewith herewith Christ makes free.

These services have so far consisted of parlor gatherings, but we have hopes of an increased interest to a point where a public service will be justified.

Recognizing these little gatherings. of the Lord's;- "little-ones" as being in the Lords' providence, and having unquestionable evidence of His attendant blessing, we **are** writing you wondering if it might' not be well to **pass** the word along with the thought that the above mentioned plan might be helpful in other communities where, like ours the liberated brethren are more or less isolated and yearning for the sweet fellowship and liberty and consequent attendant blessings of former days.

We feel the Lord has abundantly blessed our efforts, along this line and we would be delighted to know of other communities of the friends profiting by like services. Grateful to a kind Providence for the privileges, and blessings above 'mentioned, and trusting this meager report, together with the suggestions humbly submitted, might be helpful, to others of the Lord's isolated *children*, and praying His blessing upon the work in your hands and the Lord's people in general, we are,

Yours in the Lord's service,

A. L. Vining,

218 S. Fourth Street,

Neodesha, Kans.

Encouraging Letters

Dear Friends:

I felt that as another year has passed and gone I should write you, not that you would exactly wish me to thank you for your interest in our behalf here, but I know you will be pleased to have some word of encouragement and also that you will be glad that your efforts in different ways have been appreciated by the few there are here that are still holding on to. those things that are dear, the things that, were dear to many but to whom they now seem to have lost their charm. I can say that we, have appreciated the Pilgrim visits. We wished more could have attended the meetings and had the help and blessing which we have ourselves enjoyed but we cannot do more than ask them to come. . . .

The "Herald" has been a great blessing to us here and surely to all who are striving to attain to a place in that glorious Kingdom. While we do not know the different contributors of articles that appear, we would like them to know we appreciate their work and labor of love on our behalf. We pray their own hearts may be filled with that peace and joy and that they may in the year before us have that wisdom which is from above to guide them in all their ways. .

1932 promises to be eventful; situations and problems will develop which we have not had to meet before, but we know there is One in charge who is in perfect control of the situation. . .

With best wishes for the year before us,

Yours in Him.

T. W.-Ont.

Dear Friends:

I have been a consecrated Bible Student and a subscriber to the Watch Tower for about 35 years, and just recently some of your literature came into my hands through one of your subscribers in Pioneer, **0. I am** much interested, and am sending \$1.00 for a year's subscription to "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom." If you will mail me about ten or twelve May 1931 issues I will be responsible for distributing them to our Class; also any tracts that you may have on hand that would be good for the world. I am planning by the dear Lord's grace to go to Florida for my health this winter, and desire very much to get in touch *with any* of the brethren in the vicinity of Tampa and St. Petersburg, if you will kindly inform me.

Yours in much Christian **love**,

J. F. H.-Ind.