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ZION'S
Watch Tower
AND
HERALD OF CHRIST'S
PRESENCE.

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C. T. RUSSELL, Editor and Publisher.

The Editor recognizes a responsibility to the Master, relative to what shall appear in these columns, which he cannot and does not cast aside; yet he should not be understood as endorsing every expression of correspondents, or of articles selected from other periodicals.

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This paper will be sent free to any of the Lord's poor who will send a card yearly requesting it. Freely we have received and freely we would give the truth. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat--yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and

without price." And you that have it-- "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently--and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."-- ISAIAH 55:1,2.

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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

Looking out in every direction, we note like a grand panorama, the changing affairs of Church and State fulfilling the "sure word of prophecy." Every development in the affairs of the nations or the nominal Church systems, or the true saints seems to confirm the teachings of Scripture, that we are living in the Day of the Lord. The saints seem to be having a more thorough sifting and testing, which eventually shall separate every tare and garner every grain of wheat. The nominal systems are in distress at the spread of intelligence and thought among their supporters; and the nations in uneasiness are endeavoring not only to form alliances of power, but to protect each other's dominion from revolutionists.

Wonderful things are spoken concerning this dark day--this "Day of the Lord" in which we are living. The student who will take his concordance and reference Bible and search out what is said of "that day" will be astonished. Note the following as an example and see if you can find the application, and whether you think the description begins to fit the facts in passing events:

"As I live saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and fed not my flock; therefore, O, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to CEASE from feeding the flock. Neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more, for I will deliver MY flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

"For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in THE DAY that he is [present] among his sheep that are scattered: so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezek. 34:8-12).

This is having a fulfillment in the gathering of the sheep of both folds-- the natural and the spiritual Israelites-- out of their respective bondages and dispersions, and how pointed and applicable are some of the references to shepherds--they shall

feed the Lord's sheep no more--they cannot. This is due too at that day--into which we have already entered some nine years.

The report from Bro. Seagrin, who for some six months has been travelling among his fellow countrymen, the Swedes, preaching the "Glad tidings," will be of great interest to you all. Our brother has only seen these beauties and harmonies of the Word about a year, but the seed seems to have found good ground--prepared--in which it is bringing forth much fruit, as already he has been instrumental in helping about two hundred out of darkness into this marvellous light, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Of course this means two hundred preachers of "this way" among that nationality.

All this goes to demonstrate the necessity of some tract issues in the Scandinavian tongue and the German, but especially the former, who are a more religiously inclined people. We know that it will surprise many of our readers to learn that there are in this land nearly two millions of people (Swedes, Norwegians, etc.), who speak the Scandinavian language, and of these there are very few indeed who can read or understand English. We shall not give up the hope of issuing the tract papers for these as proposed some time since, but must wait until the Lord provides the means. Our regular Tract Fund is still behind, and the special SWEDISH TRACT FUND, started some time since, has not flourished thus far and contains less than thirty dollars. It would require about three hundred dollars to issue a proper edition. Our Master is rich-- he owns the cattle upon a thousand hills, as well as the hills themselves, and all the gold and silver are His. If he deems the work necessary he will make the necessary provision. The German Fund has made even less progress, but as the interest in that direction is less we shall for the present be most interested in the Swedes. We deem it proper to thus inform the household of faith and especially the contributors to the Tract Fund.

We here give you extracts from a few of the many good letters which continue to come to our office. May they

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strengthen and encourage each of you as they do us, is our prayer.

Fayetteville, N.C.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST:--For sometime I have been thinking of writing to you. I found in the March number of Zion's Watch Tower, for 1883, a communication under the caption, What is Duty? which answered my inquiry satisfactorily--perfectly. I have been a searcher after truth from youth up. Joined the Baptist Church at the age of 22 years, am now 49. I have been preaching over 20 years, but everything

seems new to me since I have read your books. Why is it that such light has not been revealed by some of the so-called wise and great before this? I suppose the time for it had not come. I have not language sufficient to express my gratitude. May the Lord increase you in strength physically and mentally to go on in this great work until thousands like myself shall be able to see the light and beauty of the Bible.

I am determined to heed the words of Paul not to confer with flesh and blood, but to go out of Babylon lest I be partaker of her sins. Last Sabbath I preached from John 6:68, "Lord to whom shall we go?" I expect to preach my last sermon for them as their elder, from Numbers 22:18, as my course is beginning to be talked of among my friends. I don't know what they will say more, but they will not say worse of me than they did of our Savior. They said He had a devil. I rejoice that I am accounted worthy to be reproached, and to bear stripes for his (Jesus') sake.

Yours in the love of Christ,

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Boston, Mass.

DEAR BRETHREN:--The "Z.W.T." is a great blessing, there is spirit and life in it; it is not like the dead theology that abounds; it helps and strengthens me wonderfully. But it would make my heart leap to meet a brother in this hope, for I am all alone, and what is precious wisdom to me is foolishness to all my brethren here, yes, an unknown tongue to them. How wonderful it seems to come out into the sunlight, to feel the mind and heart expand under God's love and truth, and to realize that we have an unassailable position, not dependent upon the wisdom of man for its defence. Truly that which can bring heart and mind into perfect unison, so that they shall work together as one, instead of antagonizing one another, must be the wisdom and the power of God. How we ought to thank God that he has so led us out of the mists and fogs of Babylonian theology. It is a great privilege to preach these things, and I count that man thrice blessed who can do it, but we can't all be preachers in a large way; and not every man's lips are "touched with fire." But as God wills, if the Spirit shall lead me to leave my work here-- a quiet and humble one-- and go elsewhere, to any large work I trust he will give me the necessary strength.

May your work be to the praise and glory of God.

Your brother in the hope,

P.S. If the work needs money I shall count it a privilege to help in that way so far as God shall bless me from day to day. I have nothing laid by for myself.

Seguin, Texas.

DEAR FRIENDS:...From seventeen to the present time, sixty-seven years old, as I look back my spiritual experiences, all the varied relations in life, locations and interests, seem to have opened my spiritual vision, aspirations and longings, for the coming of our dear Lord, our Beloved.

Though a member of the Presbyterian Church in New York City, carefully taught in its doctrines by a most faithful elder in one of the oldest churches, I never could acknowledge the interpretations of divine truth, as just to God's great character and purposes, as truth demanded. So with all the formulas of our orthodox churches, but the cornerstone was there, and I thought the wood, hay, and stubble would be replaced by the living light coming from the same Divine source as the corner-stone, on which the church was built. Patiently I have been watching, and of late I have been filled with joy and ardent expectation, and have wanted to proclaim the blessed news, though I am a retiring woman. I recognize our Lord by the description His herald gives us. His name is called the Word of God, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. That is our Beloved: that sword is the one the dear searchers of the Word are aided by. Soon the truth will replace the wood, hay and stubble of creeds. This continual searching is to bring forth golden nuggets never dreamed of. Heretofore this searching has been committed to ministers, and too frequently men paid them for doing the searching, while they bowed to the shrine of mammon and unquestioningly assented to whatever conclusions their ministers suggested. Now all must for themselves search for the truth. I have studied for years the Bible by reference, always for fear the pure truth would be watchful, diluted by human reasoning. Now I seem so filled with its light and truth, I long and pray the Holy Spirit with mighty power to open all eyes to the glorious light of God's word.

With loving sympathy, your sister in Christ,

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BROTHER SEAGRIN'S LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I became acquainted with you through reading Zion's Watch Tower publications, some time since, but as I have never given you a very particular account of myself, and endeavors to spread the glad tidings among my fellow countrymen, I do so now, believing that you will be encouraged thereby.

Some time ago finding my Bible teaching one thing and sectarianism quite another, I determined to go out as a lay

Evangelist to preach the truth as nearly as I could understand it, among my own countrymen, the Swedes, and in my own language. While traveling and laboring in this way I met a friend in Iowa who had a copy of "Food for Thinking Christians." As he did not fully understand part of its teachings, he brought it to me to know my opinion of it.

In answer to his questions I spent a whole evening trying to explain away its teachings, and afterwards retired to spend much of the night in thinking over the subject. The next morning I got the "Food" and my Bible, and began in earnest to compare the two to see if these things were really true-- after careful study of the Bible I came gradually to see the beauty of this real glad tidings.

I began in my preaching to introduce the teachings; yet to avoid reproach and secure the favor of men, I was tempted to limit or explain away these glorious Bible truths. Once on a text involving Restitution I had begun to explain it in the old manner, but the Spirit cut me off; I then thought to avoid saying anything to the point, but God did not forsake his Jonah-like servant. I saw at once the evil of so doing, and conquering the tempter, I did plainly preach "the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began." I have never since compromised with error.

I find many who will listen for hours

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with close attention. Some reject the truth, but many hear with joy. Some that I thought slow to receive it were only trying the foundations thoroughly, and some of these are becoming its most firm and able defenders, many of these humble teachers with their Bibles in hand, are able to overthrow the wise and learned preachers of traditions.

For nearly a year I have preached this truth with more or less fullness as I gradually came to a knowledge of it. I have suffered much reproach and some trials and persecution for the truth's sake, but never since the time mentioned have I faltered or mixed truth with error to make it palatable to formal Christians. I find some infidels who, hearing the truth, are beginning to think the Bible is true, and some have accepted the truth and are telling the good news to others, showing that the Bible is reasonable when understood.

During the time that I have preached this truth some two hundred Swedes have received it and are rejoicing in it and telling it to others.

As an incident of the work, I mention the fact that in my congregation at one place were two noted infidels, who doubtless came from curiosity, but they listened and evidently had an ear to hear, for the next morning they came to see me

very early. I asked them, Well, now do you want to have anything to do with Jesus? They said, Yes, since we have heard of these glad tidings of God's love we do want to have some interest in Jesus. We prayed together, and since I have received a letter from one stating how he had gone to the infidel club room and told them of the new Jesus he has found.

Some places, the preachers coming after the people have heard these glad tidings, find it hard work to interest them again in the terrible and unscriptural doctrines which bound us and blindfolded the eyes of our understanding for so long. In one place a brother got up after the service and advancing to the desk said, You did not tell us the truth, your sermon was unscriptural; hereafter when you preach we want you to give us God's Word and quote it from the Bible.

The established ministers, called orthodox, sometimes oppose me and would hinder me from preaching if they could, but the Lord opens up some place, and the truth hungry are fed and rejoiced. Leaving one such place recently, several brethren bade me good-bye, and with tears in their eyes said, Bro. Seagrın, whatever happens let nothing hinder you from boldly proclaiming this glad tidings, that others may be blessed as we have been.

Many of our nation seem to have an ear to hear, and "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." I urge my Swedish brethren who have been favored with truth, that has brought such joy and strength to them, to try to explain to others that they may rejoice and be strong also; searching out those saints who can discern truth and comforting and stimulating them to run well for the rich prize before us.

Pray for me, dear brother, while I try to labor among our Swedish brethren, and if it shall please our Lord to send the Swedes the October number of the Tower in our own language, as you proposed some time ago, I shall be so glad. If we could have Food in Swedish also it would be of great good under the Lord's blessing.

Brother, pray for me that I may be able to do my part of the work acceptably to our Father.

Yours in Christ, CHAS. SEAGRIN.

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VARIORUM BIBLES.

We have obtained more of this special lot of Teacher's Bibles; called Variorum, because in addition to the matter in other Bibles of the sort--concordance, maps, index, etc.--it has foot-notes giving the readings of the old MSS. where they differ from

the ordinary text, also the opinions of various scholars, on the translation, where it differs from the usual rendering.

We can furnish these to our readers at about half the usual prices, viz., plain French Morocco, \$3.25, and best Turkey Morocco--Divinity circuit, \$5.50 (Retail rate, \$9.00). These are published by Eyre & Spottiswoode, London. Postage 25 cents extra--registered 10 cents additional.

We still have the Variorum Testaments mentioned particularly in our last, cloth bound, 50 cents, post paid. Those who cannot afford the Bible, should avail themselves of the opportunity to get these Testaments at this price.

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THE SERVANT HEIR.

"Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all."-- Gal. 4:1.

We have heard these words frequently quoted to support the theory that Jesus was in no essential respect different from other men.

That he belonged to the fallen race; that he redeemed himself as well as the rest of mankind; that he was in "all things" (not excepting his moral nature) just like other fallen men. Another text which is used to support the same idea is that "in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17).

We regard these texts as strong as any we know of to support the doctrine, referred to, but that, we reckon, is no support at all, when carefully examined. In the first place the passage under consideration, including the second verse, is a general statement, and by itself alone has no reference to Jesus Christ as an individual, but to the Church of Christ; and in the third verse the Apostle makes an application, saying, "Even so WE, when we were children, [speaking of the Church while under the shadows of the Jewish age] were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his SON, made of a woman, made under law." Now, how did it happen that he was under the law? Was he there in the same way that all Adam's race were? No. All the descendents of the first Adam were under law on account of sin; they were there because they could not help it, they were there by descent, their father was a bondman, and their lives were all forfeited; the law was to teach them that, and their need of a Redeemer and Savior.

Jesus Christ was "made under law" for a purpose, not of necessity, but of grace, viz., that he might redeem ("buy off"; see Diaglott, interlineary trans.) those that were under the law,

that we being then (afterward) called might, receive the adoption of sons.

The Apostle's argument as he advances to the 9th verse is to show that

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the law is but the rudimentary part of God's redeeming scheme, and that up to the time of the close of the Jewish economy, the plan of God, and all those embraced in it AS SUBJECTS OF REDEMPTION, was immature. He is not speaking of individuals, but of a system (in which individuals are included), which was yet in its childhood, and he uses the text to illustrate the subject.

That the Apostle is referring to the immaturity of the joint-heirship and plan in its unfoldings during the age of shadows, is apparent from the connection between the last clause of the 3d and 9th verses; wherein he speaks of the time when they "were in bondage under the elements (rudiments) of the world," and of their tendency now to "turn again to the weak and beggarly elements."

It is very evident that this statement of the Apostle has no reference to Jesus, for the reason that as an individual he differed in many essential respects from those whom he came to redeem; because he bought them with himself: gave himself; whereas if he had been in all respects, sin included, like them, he too would have been a debtor to the law; and COULD NOT redeem them.

Though a servant, he was not an "unprofitable servant," which he told the disciples to say they were when they had "done all which was their duty to do." Luke 17:10.

But a "righteous servant" who could redeem the rest, would be a very profitable servant, according to our way of thinking.

But it may be asked, how does that harmonize with the sentiment that he was "made in all things like unto his brethren?"

We answer that we think it harmonizes well, when we consider his own statement regarding who his brethren are. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother," &c. (Matt. 12:50.) "For both he that sanctifieth, and they [notice] who are sanctified, [set apart, consecrated] are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call THEM brethren" (Heb. 2:11).

It is such "as are perfect," i.e., whose will is in perfect accord with the will of "our Father in heaven," who are reckoned sons of God and "brethren" of Jesus. We are reckoned, what he ACTUALLY WAS.

He "did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22), and to the reckoned sons, Jesus' brethren, no sin is imputed. Herein is the blessedness of "the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8).

In view of the gradual development of the "joint-heirs" during their minority, but who are to become one by virtue of their union with "the heir," how appropriate the illustration made use of by the Apostle in the text quoted.

J. C. SUNDERLIN.

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SECRET PRAYER.

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

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

The closet removes all the external restraints to devotion. The sentiments of the public service are suited to the general sympathy; and this measure of emotion is not transcended, except in cases of overwhelming power and overflowing feeling, when the impetuous tide breaks through all restraints. But there

are no restraints whatever in the closet. There, no feeling need be suppressed. The tear may flow. The passion of penitence may be indulged. The agony of prayer may be exercised. There are none to be annoyed, none to pass the harsh judgment, none to ascribe your feeling to weakness or hypocrisy. In that lone place there is no ear but God's to hear. And are there not confessions to be made which no ear but his should hear? In that lone place there is no eye but God's to see. And who but God can understand and sympathize with your secret sorrows? He is thy father--thy father in heaven. "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you." And this is the promise of Jesus: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." A father loves his sick and sorrowful child most. So Jesus has an especial love and sympathy for him that has no helper. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted."

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

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

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

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THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

The Catholic Mirror caustically remarks:

"When Protestantism began, it was to create a new era in the religion of the world. 'Rome' was to go down with all sorts of crashes, the 'superstitious dogmas' of the Middle Ages were laid aside forever, and a rational creed was to rule the future. Loud and fierce rang the triumphant war shouts of the champions of the new order of things. But soon--wonderful spectacle!-- protests began to be entered against Protestantism. At first, feeble and lost in the blatant roars of the blind giants who were hurling things to pieces, they gradually grew louder, as the triumphant cries grew weaker. Time went on, bringing its silent revenges. 'Rome,' so far from being down had recovered her ground in Europe and extended her spiritual empire in other parts of the world. And, meanwhile, Protestantism was splitting into an infinite variety of sects, each powerful in respect of wealth, considering members, but powerless on account of the want of cohesion.

"So the matter stands now. Decidedly, something is the matter. Our beautiful concern is decaying. Protestantism is sick. So, call in all the wise doctors; let's have consultations, conferences, evangelical alliances, and what not. But the end, friends, so far as we can see, is an abundant flow of gabber and endless waste of ink in all sorts of 'symposiums' (vide the North American Review), and nothing else. And, indeed, it needs no great insight to pronounce upon the disease's issue, since even James Anthony Froude, its special champion in the past, writes: 'Protestantism is dead.' There is the epitaph in three words. It is dead as a moral force that counts in the world, and slowly the little disintegrated forms are withering around the spirit that gave them life, but now lies mute."

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THE TEMPTED AND TRIED.

Tempted and tried, Oh! the terrible tide
May be raging and deep, may be wrathful and wide;
Yet its fury is vain, for the Lord will sustain,
And forever and ever Jehovah shall reign.

Tempted and tried, yet the Lord at thy side,
Will guide thee, and keep thee, tho' tempted and tried.
Tempted and tried, there is one at thy side,
And never in vain shall his children confide;

He will save and defend, for he loves to the end,
Adorable master, and glorious friend.
Tempted and tried, whatever betide,
In his secret pavilion his children shall hide,

'Neath the shadowing wing, of eternity's King,
His children may trust, and his children may sing.

Tempted and tried, yet the Lord will abide,
Thy faithful redeemer, and keeper and guide,

Thy shield and thy sword, thine exceeding reward,
Then enough for the servant that he be as his Lord.
Tempted and tried, the Savior who died,
Hath called thee to suffer and reign by his side.

If his cross thou wilt bear, his crown thou shalt wear,
And forever and ever, his glory shall share.

--Selected.

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THE ARCH-ANGEL.

This term signifies chief-messenger, and occurs but twice, Jude 9; 1 Thes. 4:16. It is never used in the plural, and altogether seems to teach that there is but the one chief-messenger of Jehovah.

While we are not directly told who is Jehovah's chief-messenger, except that his name was called Michael, the thought suggests itself, Can it be that he who was called Michael--Jehovah's chief-messenger--was none other than our Lord in his pre-human condition? He who "did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6,7 --Diaglott), and whom Jehovah in consequence highly exalted and gave "a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father"? (Phil. 2:10,11.)

We call to mind that Jesus was called "the messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1), and from what we learn of his pre-human glory (see Dec. issue, "Consider Him"), we conclude that HE must have been "chief messenger." Surely we may well reason that Jehovah's first-born, the beginning of the creation of God, would be the chief. And the thought gathers force as we remember that he was the "only begotten of the Father"--the only being whom Jehovah directly created, and in this sense the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of Jehovah's creation, who "was before all things, and by whom [as Jehovah's agent] all things consist" (Col. 1:16,17), "Without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

Surely chief-messenger would be a fitting title for this being. And we inquire, If he was not the chief-messenger, who was his superior?

In the above quotation (Phil. 2:6), Paul seems to suggest an inference not directly stated; that he is contrasting the course of the pre-existent Jesus with that of Satan--the rebel-angel--the

chief of "those messengers which kept not their first estate." In Isa. 14:12-15 we seem to have an account of how Satan did meditate a usurpation of Jehovah's honor and power, saying in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. ...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."

In his pre-human condition, Jesus, as the first-born and chief-messenger, must have outranked Satan, whose rebellion must have been directed against His, as well as against Jehovah's authority. Thus Paul's language inferentially shows that the very exaltation which Satan sought by pride and rebellion, and failed to reach, is in substance obtained by the chief-messenger who humbled himself and has now been exalted to the Divine nature.

One expression in Scripture may at first sight seem to conflict with this thought that Jesus and the arch-angel are identical. It is Heb. 1:13: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Unto none of the angels, we answer, but to Him who was superior, a chief over angels--the only begotten of the Father. Thus seen, this Scripture not only does not oppose but supports this view.

Examining the various connections in which the word is found should teach us something. We find Jude using it (vs. 9) with profound respect, as of one in superior control. In Daniel 10:13-21; 12:1, Michael is again mentioned in great respect, and as the superior of Gabriel, who himself was one of the most honored angels (Luke 1:19). Further it is significant, that in the announcement of the conception of Jesus, Gabriel was sent (Luke 1:26), a fact which can scarcely be accounted for otherwise than as we now do, by supposing that it was the chief-messenger whose existence was transferred from being in a form of God (a spiritual being), to the babe of Bethlehem, to become a man. Doubtless the chiefest messenger remaining in the courts of glory was sent on that most marked and notable occasion.

In Dan. 12:1, the prophecy touches the Day of the Lord and its events--the very time in which we are living--the time of resurrection, etc., and instead of saying, Then shall Messiah set up his kingdom, etc., it says, "At that time shall Michael stand up [begin to exercise his power and dominion]--the GREAT PRINCE, etc." We reason that this Great Prince--Michael--Jehovah's chief-messenger, is none other than the Lord of glory, whose presence we are now proclaiming.

But the key to the whole matter seems to be in our hands when we learn that the name Michael means: "Who as God," or "Who is like God."

Who is like God but him whom God hath highly exalted and given a name above every name; who is partaker of the divine nature, and "the express image of the Father's person," of whom

it is written, that "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father," also--"And let all the angels of God worship him"? With the meaning of the word Michael in this last text how significantly it reads: At that time shall he who is like God stand up-- come into power--the Great Prince. Yes, he shall take to himself his great power and reign. (Compare Dan. 12:1,2; Rev. 11:17,18.)

Paul's mention of the Arch-angel is in harmony. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the chief-messenger and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise," etc.

Yes, beloved, we believe that the great chief-messenger is present, and is even now standing up or assuming control and organizing his kingdom; hence the unrest among the kingdoms of earth, which are tottering to their fall--the voice (of command) from the chief messenger is now distinctly heard by those who have an ear to hear, hence the dissolution of present systems. "He uttered his voice, the earth melted"-- symbolically. (Psa. 46:6).

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THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

We began some months ago a series of articles on The Seven Messages to the Churches, of Rev. 1 to 3.

Absence from home and other reasons have hindered their continuance. We have already examined the first four, but it is suggested that we partially review these before proceeding.

We hold that the book of Revelation is a book of symbols. We are told that our Lord "sent and signified [made signs] by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1).

We know that the book abounds in symbols or signs, and we are satisfied that these are the rule, and the literal-- when unavoidable--is the exception.

To be in harmony, then, with the rest of the book, "the seven churches which are in Asia" must be symbolic: and as the book is chiefly "history written beforehand," they must also symbolize seven successive stages in the history of the Christian Church; covering the period between the first and second advent of Christ. The fulfillment, we think, proves the correctness of this position.

In the first chapter we have a description of "one like unto the Son of man,"

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as seen in a vision by John. Some one or more of the features of this description are peculiarly appropriate to each of these successive stages of the Church; and in each case he who sends the message is thus described.

The names of the churches are also characteristic, as we shall see when we come to look at them.

The last part of each message, or the promise to the "overcomers," is also peculiarly adapted to the different periods.

To give a sort of birdseye view of the arrangement, we would notice their chronological position. Ephesus covers the period during the lives of the Apostles; Smyrna during the time of the Pagan persecution, reaching to about A.D. 323, when Constantine became sole Emperor of Rome, and declared in favor of Christianity. Pergamos embraces the transition period in which the Papal Church had its rise; Thyatira the space during which the true Church was in the wilderness, and the mother of Harlots sat as a queen, cohabiting with the kings of the earth. Sardis takes in a short interval just before the Reformation. Philadelphia, from the Reformation until recent times; and Laodicea, the nominal Church of to-day.

Ephesus means, first, desirable. In this period our Lord "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand," etc. (compare chap. 1:20). The messengers of the Churches (Paul, Peter, John, etc.) during that period were so powerfully led and kept in the grasp of the Lord Jesus that we accept their teachings as we accept his, believing that their words were really his. This Church is commended for its faithful, patient labor, and its discernment of truth and teachers (Acts 20:28-30, 1 Cor. 11:19). It was a characteristic of that period that "they forsook all and followed him"; they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; they sold what they had, and gave to those in want. Though often deprived of the bread of this life, they not only had the living bread, but the promise of "the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Smyrna means bitter, [Myrrh and Marah (Ex. 15:23) are kindred words.] It was the period of most bitter persecution, under the Roman Emperors from Nero to Diocletian. "The devil [Pagan Rome] shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (last and most severe persecution, A.D. 303 to A.D. 313).

Those who have read the history of this period can understand the depth of the words, "that ye may be tried." Some of the most sublime pictures of Christian endurance that the world has ever seen were enacted during the Smyrna period.

The call was for faithfulness "unto death"; the promise was "a crown of life." Also "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Pergamos means an earthly elevation. The speaker is he who has "the sharp two-edged [Greek, two-mouthed] sword" --the Word of God. During this period, while the nominal Church was growing popular, the true Christians were tested by the introduction and development of Pagan and Papal ideas. The Pagan priests, unwilling to lose their positions of honor and influence among the people, sought to bend their theories to fit the new religion; and while nominally professing Christianity they brought many of their ideas with them; which were eventually engrafted upon the true stock. Thus the Church was led into error, evil practices, and away from God. This is what is alluded to in the reference to Balaam and Balak. Balak tempted Israel to sin, and thus brought about what he could not accomplish by his own powers (Num. 31:16). So these priests taught the Church to indulge in spiritual fornication, and thus brought upon her the withering blight of God's wrath.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes seems to be the theory of lordship or headship in the Church. Nicholas means a lord. The strife as to who should be greatest existed among many of the Patriarchs (fathers) of the prominent churches. At their councils there was a bitter fight for supremacy. The tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many wanted the honor. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome, were most prominent. The first two dropped out, but the strife continued several hundred years between Constantinople and Rome, and was only settled by a division of the Church: the Eastern, or Greek Church accepting the Patriarch of Constantinople for its head, and the Western, or Papal Church acknowledging the Bishop or Pope (Father) of Rome.

Many of the true in the churches denounced this attempt to disobey the direct command of Jesus, "Call no man Father" (Matt. 23:9), and of course received the persecution promised (2 Tim. 1:12). This class in Pergamos our Lord commends under the symbol of "Anti-pas my faithful martyr." In the Greek, anti means against, and Papas, father; so in the usual formation of words Antipas would mean an Anti-papist, one who protests against the Pope or Father.

In this age also those who sought to be popular received the emoluments of the Church, but the promise to the overcomers is of pleasure and honor that shall be eternal.

Thyatira seems to mean "The sweet perfume of a sacrifice." It was the period of the Papal persecution. The Antichrist had seated himself in the temple of God, announcing himself through his minions as "Our Lord God the Pope," ruling the nations and the churches with a rod of iron; dashing in pieces like a potter's vessel those who would not acknowledge his authority. The virgin church was enduring the hardships of the wilderness, while the harlot, reveling in her lewdness, sat on the throne of her royal paramours.

The message is sent by one who has "eyes like a flame of fire" to watch over his faithful ones as they wandered through the dark valleys, or hid in the darker caves of earth; and "feet of hard brass" to walk by their side as they scale the rugged mountains, or wander footsore and weary seeking a place to plant the seeds of truth. An allusion is made to a faithful old prophet who had to flee for his life into the wilderness from the idolatrous wife of a king. The picture is from the history of Elijah, Jezebel and Ahab. Jezebel was the protector of the priests of Baal. Her husband was king, and she wielded his power for her own ends. The drouth of three and a half years was evidently a type of the "time, times and a half"--1260 years--of the spiritual famine, "not of bread nor of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). "And I gave her space [chronos, time] to repent....And she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed [sleep, stupor], and them that commit adultery with her into [the] great tribulation." A symbolic "time" is 360 years, as the three and a half above. Her time for repentance has been, of course, since the light of the Reformation dawned upon her. On Oct. 31st, 1517, Luther nailed his ninety-five propositions on the church door in Wittenberg. The news and light spread rapidly. Dating the beginning of this "time" from the spring of 1518, allowing the intervening months for the light to spread, 360 years bring us to the spring of 1878; when, according to the parallels, the announcement was made, "Your house is left unto you desolate"; and the fall of Babylon was due to begin. The "world" who supported her are also already entering the "time of trouble." "And I will kill her children [daughters] with death." Spiritual death is what ails the Churches of to-day. The Physician has given them up and the spiritual gangrene is surely doing its work. [See article Seven Last Plagues, by ED., 1st Plague, in this issue].

The characteristic of this Thyatira

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period was the reign of the false church, therefore the promise to the overcomers is, "To him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

The false Church claimed infallibility, that she alone could interpret the Scriptures; but to the faithful is here promised not only light before the day, but the same proof of the time of night and of the dawning--"I will give him the morning star."

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THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

SARDIS, REV. 3:1-6.

"To the messenger of the congregation in Sardis write." Sardis is said to mean--that which remains; as if it were perhaps a useless remnant; or something out of which the life or virtue had gone. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." They had the appearance of being what they were not, having the form of godliness without the power.

Hypocritical, perhaps, without knowing it. A kind of carnelian, Sardian stone, is found near Sardis, from which it received its name. It is of a blood-color, sometimes covered with a thin layer of white. Thus it may look like purity, but a close examination will reveal the deep red or flesh-color below the surface. To outward appearance and by profession spiritual, but in heart animal, fleshly, carnal. Sardis was the remains of the true Church which had been driven into the wilderness; but when persecution began to abate, her zeal also subsided. Persecution has always developed the life and vigor of the Church: ease brings languor. Thyatira was specially commended for her works (Rev. 2:19). Sardis for the

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opposite--"I have found no works of thine fulfilled before my God" (REV. VER.)

Their love and understanding of the Scriptures had evidently decreased. They were warned to "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." God's Word is spiritual food. He who continually feasts upon it will grow vigorous, healthy and powerful. He who neglects to eat, or fails to digest this living bread must be weak and sickly; remaining at best only a spiritual dwarf, powerless to discern "the signs of the times," ignorant of what the Lord is doing, or what his plans are.

Many having the Sardis characteristics are living to-day; to such there is a fatal warning in the declaration: "If perchance, then, thou mayest not watch, I WILL HAVE COME as a thief, and in nowise mayest thou get to know during what kind of hour I SHALL HAVE COME upon thee." (Rotherham's trans.)

They do not expect him to come "as a thief," stealthily, silently. Seven times his coming is so described. To those only who are watching is the thief's approach known. Those who are in bed know nothing of his whereabouts until after he has entered the house. Those asleep will only be awaked after he has taken full possession. As he progresses in his work of destruction they gradually wake up. They wonder what that noise means. They rouse themselves, but it is too late; they have been "overtaken." Thus he will be present--invisible and unknown (except to the watchers) for some time (years) after his arrival, and will only

be recognized by the sleepers as the noise gradually increases, and they slowly realize what it is. The reason many cannot comprehend his presence now is that they are looking for, first, a fleshly Christ, visible to the fleshly eye, and with an imposing demonstration, which they cannot mistake; secondly, they suppose that from the moment of his coming there will be commotion in nature and among men. Thus they are unable to understand "the signs of the times." Failing to recognize the fact that spiritual bodies cannot be seen (without a miracle) by human eyes, they cannot understand HIS PRESENCE while all things continue as they were since the beginning of creation.

"But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Here are a little flock who are pure all the way through; these are entitled to wear a covering of spotless white: they are what they appear to be. "He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in nowise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Having been once cleansed and having our name written in the book of life is no guarantee that we shall always retain this position. We may become so defiled that our Lord will be ashamed of us, and drop our names from the record. "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

When the Lord would revive his work and bring to an end "the dark ages" by giving increasing light and knowledge in spiritual things, he did not give it to Sardis. She was "dead." He went into the stronghold of idolatry, and called one out who, like Abraham, cared not whither he went so long as he knew he was led of God. Luther came out of Rome.

It was easier to start a new tree from fresh and vigorous seed, even in a "Romish dunghill," as he called it, than to cause to sprout a decayed and lifeless stump. Even so it is now. The nominal Church has become too proud to represent the Meek and Lowly One, who humbled himself and preached the gospel to the poor. The Lord is calling out those who will speak his truth and do his bidding without consulting Babylon.

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TWO REIGNS CONTRASTED.

It may help some, to grasp the scriptural teaching relative to the coming reign of Christ and the present reign of Satan--the prince of this world--to contrast them as below.

God placed man in dominion of earth; Satan beguiled him and made him his willing slave, and thus become ruler of earth--"the prince of this world" (John 12:31). His power and dominion is to cease in due time, and though so long as it continues he seeks to oppose the will and law of God on earth, yet, under the guidance of our all-wise God, even the rule of evil is made to work out an ultimate blessing.

SATAN'S REIGN.

EFFECTS ON SINNERS.

"And now we call the proud happy--yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Mal. 3:15.)

"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter." (Isaiah 59:12.)

"I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree." (Psa. 37:35.)

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped: For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

"They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.

"Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." (Psa. 73:2,3,5,7,12.)

EFFECTS ON SAINTS.

"Men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:11,12.)

"He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." (Isa. 59:15.)

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.)

"The disciple is not above his Master." (Matt. 10:24.)

"In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33.)

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you....If they have persecuted me they will persecute you." (John 15:18-20.)

"If we suffer with him, we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:17.)

"We fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."
(Col. 1:24.)

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.)

Would that all of God's children appreciated the teaching of His Word relative to what constitutes marks of his friendship and favor--during this present age. They might then realize that earthly prosperity and wealth are not marks of divine approval and favor --that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth often, and that the wealth of the saints in this age consists of our abundance of grace and knowledge of God.

But now contrast this treatment of the righteous with their favor and exaltation under the incoming reign of the Prince of Peace who will make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. (Psa. 46:9.)

THE REIGN OF CHRIST.

EFFECT ON EVIL DOERS.

"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge. [The Adamic sin and curse being cancelled by the Redeemer, men will be freed from that condemnation.] But every one [who dies--the second death] shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." (Jer. 31:29,30; Ezek. 18:2-9.)

"The workers of iniquity ...shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb;...for evil doers [those who persistently sin against the high and helpful influences of the Millennial Day] shall be cut off." (Psa. 37:1,2,7,9.)

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be." (Psa. 37:10.)

EFFECT ON RIGHT DOERS.

"Then shall ye return [turn around--everything will be turned around] and [ye shall then] discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (Mal. 3:18.)

"To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2.)

"In his days shall the righteous flourish."

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psa. 72:7; 92:12.)

"Those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth." (Psa. 37:11.)

"The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psa. 37:11.)

Amen. Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth, as in heaven. The whole earth shall be filled with thy glory--and all nations which thou hast made shall come and worship thee--when the kingdom is the Lord's and He is the governor among the nations. (Matt. 6:10; Psa. 72:19 and 22:27,28; Rev. 15:4.)

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"FOOLS HATE KNOWLEDGE."

"When the wise is instructed he receiveth knowledge."--Prov. 21:11.

In this age of advancement investigation and proofs, truth and falsehood, light and darkness are engaged in a hand to hand struggle for supremacy; old theories, old creeds, and refuse of the dark ages, are being weighed and found wanting. Truth also is being assailed, twisted and distorted by the enemy of all truth and those whom he has only too well succeeded in blinding; therefore, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." The struggle is a vital one; none should be indifferent; and especially those who claim to be soldiers of Christ should not be unarmed, for we war not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places, therefore take the whole armor of God--"The sword of the Spirit," "the shield of faith," "having your loins girt about with truth," by which only can we "fight the good fight of faith," "Till we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God....So that being truthful

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in love we may grow up in all things into him who is the Head, the Anointed One" (Eph. 4:13,15). While fools-- those who act foolishly, wickedly--love not the truth, hate knowledge, the wise love the truth and seek it diligently. And none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

To know God we must gain knowledge of him, and knowledge is assured belief, enlightenment, acquaintance with or understanding of God, his plans and purposes as revealed in Christ, for it hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, therefore he could say, "I am the way [to the Father] and the truth [relating to him] and the life" [from him], "the light of men." John 1:4. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me; if ye had known [understood] me ye would have known [understood] my Father also." John 14:6,7. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you....I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made

known unto you." John 15:14,15. If he is not making known his plans to us we cannot be his friends, "for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth." "But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2:10. And "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." "And his sheep hear his voice [obey his word] and follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger will they not follow...they know not the voice [word] of strangers." Many who profess to follow him are being led by the "voice of strangers," words of men, and abide in darkness, but "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth [with knowledge of God] more and more unto the perfect day." These take heed unto the sure word of prophecy, as a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn. 2 Pet. 1:19.

Christ is become unto us who have received him, all things-- "Wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge, however small, and the putting forth of determined effort to find more, and the maintaining of the teachable spirit that will receive instruction in God's way; for, "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." Prov. 2:3-5. Many who lift up their voice--pray for knowledge--do not seek it as "hid treasure," therefore they do not find it.

To know God we must know his Son. He is the word, the mouth-piece or declaration of the Father. "He hath declared him," manifested his name, his power and character. He that receiveth him, receiveth him that sent him, and "this is life eternal." John 17:3. And as Christ reveals the Father, the written word reveals him, and we, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" or likeness to his character; and when born of the Spirit--born from the dead--likeness to his person, for "we shall be like him."

But "though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge,...and have not love, I am nothing:" (1 Cor. 13:2), "for he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." 1 John 14:8. We cannot know God without loving him and those who bear his likeness, for we "are taught of God to love one another." "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk as He walked." (1 John 2:4,6). And verily he pleased not himself, but delighted in doing the Father's will. Knowing that it was the Father's will that he should give his humanity a "ransom for all." "He was obedient unto death, the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. For "without shedding of blood is no remission." ..."So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. 9:22-28). And because of this willing obedience to the Father's will he could say, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again [in resurrection he took it on a

higher plane--a spiritual].... I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment (or authority to say this) have I received of my Father." (John 10:17,18).

Since we are to be co-heirs and partakers with him, members of the body of the anointed when we shall be united to him (for no virgin, 2 Cor. 11:2, is a member of the body of her espoused husband until united to him in marriage --then the twain become one flesh) we should also be sharers in his sufferings, and show the same willing obedience that he did, for "he is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him"--continue in his word--in his teachings--in the truth. "And the truth shall make you free" from deceptions of men, who are deceiving and being deceived; and from the snares of the world, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in ALL, goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9). Truth is the mirror in which we behold--recognize -- understand God, and we are sanctified through it. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

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(John 17:17). But if we take one-sided views we do not behold the image of the glorious God; but are suffering ourselves to "be turned out of the way."

"God our Savior will have all men to be saved [from the Adamic fall] and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4). In no other way but by the reception of the truth when testified to them can the world be saved. Conscience cannot save them, for Paul was chief of sinners "in all good conscience," nor can the deeds of the law, for "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." But when the living and the dead will be brought to a knowledge of God "the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day," (the millennial day) and the prophecy will be fulfilled, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad....His lightnings [truth] enlighten the world...the heavens [heavenly rulers--the saints] declare his righteousness and all the people see his glory" (Psa. 97:1-4).

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"THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE."

The inheritance of the saints is the crowning theme of all the messages to the Church since the day of Pentecost. Before that time no mention of it was made. In all his teachings Jesus never referred to it, but it was one of the many things he had to tell his disciples, which they were not then able to bear, because the Spirit had not yet come. (John 16:12.)

To the readers of the Tower, it is not necessary here to point out, the grandeur of the prize for which we are striving; it has been our central theme from the first up to the present time. The Tower has endeavored to continually hold it before the Church as the goal of their aspirations, and to point out with precision and care the "narrow way" which leads to it, and the dangerous snares of the adversary to arrest their progress.

Some with anxious solicitude now inquire, Is it possible for me yet to attain the High Calling, since the acceptable year of the Lord ended in the fall of 1881, as we have learned that any consecrating since that time, though acceptable to the Lord, are not acceptable as sacrifices, as candidates for the High Calling--the reign with Christ? Of all such inquirers we would ask, Have you "the earnest," or pledge of the inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit? If so, then you must have received it "after that you believed" (Eph. 1:13)--after you were justified and when you consecrated yourself entirely to God, as has been frequently explained, whether you can recall the time of your consecration or not. If, then, you have the earnest, or pledge, in due time you may have the inheritance also.

Addressing the consecrated ones Paul says, "Having [first] believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of the promise" (Eph. 1:13). The natural man, we are told, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). Now, if we are able to appreciate the High Calling to such an extent that we find our hearts filled with an intense desire to obtain it, and a disposition to drop all the weights of earthly treasure and run with patience the narrow, difficult way, then we may be sure that this desire receives its impulse, not from the natural man, but from the new creature begotten of the Spirit. The old things--old aims, old ambitions and desires--you find have passed away, and you are reaching out after the things unseen and hitherto unknown.

Your ambition now is to share with Christ, not only in his glory, but also in his sacrifice and humiliation. Now, Paul says those who have thus received the spirit (intent or meaning) of the promise have in that fact a pledge of its fulfillment. By the Spirit which we have received, and which enables us thus to comprehend the magnitude of the promise, he says we are sealed-- marked off--stamped as sons of God, adapted to the spiritual plane. If we find others who cannot understand or rightly value the High Calling, it is because they are natural men, and we should not upbraid them for not running for that which they cannot see or value. And as few can appreciate our hopes, we must expect to be a peculiar people and to be misunderstood by others.

In the light of these scriptures, any may readily know if they are sealed with the Spirit or not; and each time they contemplate the

grandeur of the prize, they should gather courage and strength from the thought that this is an earnest or pledge of their inheritance.

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Praise God for such an anchor to our faith!

But one inquires as he discerns this blessed assurance, Is it now settled beyond all peradventure that I shall obtain the inheritance? Well, let us see how Brother Paul regarded it. He certainly understood and rightly valued the High Calling, when, as he said, for it he "suffered the loss of all things," if "by any means" he might attain it. Yet, though he had this pledge of the inheritance, he says, "Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have attained it; but one thing I do, even forgetting the things behind, and stretching forth towards the things before, I press along the line towards the prize of the High Calling of God by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:8-14 --Diaglott.)

To illustrate--a son becomes heir to his father's inheritance, and as a pledge or earnest of that inheritance he receives from his father a deed signed and sealed; yet he may lose that pledge by carelessness, or in an unguarded moment, having his senses stupefied by intoxication, he may barter it away, and so never come into possession of the inheritance to which he once was lawful heir.

In the same way, it is possible that though we realize that we are sealed, stamped, marked out as heirs of our Father's inheritance, we may nevertheless, through lack of care, lose it, or becoming intoxicated with the spirit of the world, and our spiritual senses becoming stupefied, we may barter it away for a trifling gratification of the old nature. Let us, like Paul, watch and continue to press "along the line" marked out--the line of sacrifice, even unto death.

R. W.

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CONVERTING A SINNER.

"He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."--Jas. 5:20.

Some have supposed that this scripture conflicts with the teaching that there will be a restitution of all. They reason that if the converted ones are saved from death, then death must be the unalterable doom of all not converted. This seems a logical conclusion; but let us view the statement as it stands related to the context, and we will see that, instead of applying it to the world, James applies it to backsliders from the truth. This will

be seen by reference to the preceding verse. It is more clearly expressed in the Emphatic Diaglott; therefore we quote from it: "My brethren, if any one among you wander from the TRUTH, and some one turn him back; know you that he who turns back a sinner from his path of error will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."

From this we may see that the converting, or turning back, is of one who has once been enlightened and tasted the good word of God--the truth--but who had wandered into error. If men had penned this they probably would have said, wander from morality, or wander into vice. Few would think of laying so great stress upon what some would term "merely getting the head wrong on some doctrinal matter."

It is far from our aim to speak lightly of vice, or to declare "that it matters not what a man may do if he has a correct theology"; but we do say that the two, faith and character, are very intimately related, and we caution all against the too prevalent view that "it matters not what you believe [truth or error] if you live morally." This is a device and snare of the devil, by which he hinders many from searching for the truth, and thereby hinders the complete sanctification which is impossible without a knowledge of the truth.

Jesus attested that knowledge of truth was indispensable to entire sanctification; when he prayed the Father for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." And our text implies that to lose the truth, to wander into error, will result in the loss of the sanctifying power--hence a loss or cessation of their sanctification, which, if it continue--if they be not turned back from error--must result in death.

This does not apply at all to "the world of sinners." To turn such from a life of sin to one of morality and virtue would not "save a soul from death." No, none can thus save himself by a moral reform, for if so Jesus would not have died for our sins. It does apply to those who, having been justified freely from the Adamic sin and reckoned free from Adamic death (the first death), have become candidates for the divine nature and are reckoned as having begun life again as "new creatures." Yes, it is these, our "brethren," and it is the more impressive when we remember that it is the new life which might be forfeited, or the second death incurred, by turning aside from the truth.

Looked at thus, with what carefulness should we hold fast the truth ourselves, and with what earnest solicitude should we endeavor to help the brethren who have "wandered from the truth," and to shield the flock of Christ from the snares of error!

The word "wander" well expresses how all errors gradually grow and stealthily intrude upon the sanctified. Seldom or never does our Adversary commence with open error or direct infidelity; but the danger lies in the fact that Satan seeks to

clothe himself with a mixture of truth, so that as "an angel of light" he may cause the unguarded to wander. (See 2 Cor. 11:14.)

While many are seeking to turn the world to God, few are claiming the promise of our text by seeking the wanderers of the flock.

While watchfulness against the encroachments of the enemy has been very necessary all through the age, it is specially so now. As a "roaring lion" he has gone about in times past terrifying and persecuting the Church, but they fought the enemy in the open field, and many sealed their testimony with their blood. But in these last times our enemy, still the same, pursues a different policy. Assuming the garb of an angel of light, a messenger of truth, he seeks to poison the food of the hungry household of faith. The slow and cautious steps by which error has been introduced indicates the subtlety of our foe, and should put all on guard and lead them to note with care all the warnings of the Word.

Those who are drawn into the "snare of the fowler," and who unwittingly become his agents in disseminating error, are doubtless honest in a way, being first deceived themselves ("deceiving and being deceived"). And since error fast subdues the new nature and brings into prominence the proclivities of the old, it will not be strange if the endeavor to pluck them from the net of the enemy and to expose the danger to others, will, at least for a time, be misunderstood and bring the wrath of the Adversary upon the faithful servants of God. But if in the face of the foe a soul may be saved from death (the second death) that should be sufficient reward.

We cannot better express our feelings here than in the language of Paul: "We would that ye knew what great conflict we have for you [whom we address through the Tower] and for them at Laodicea [the Lord's children still in the 'spewed out' nominal Church], and for as many as have not seen our face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God. ...And this we say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words: ...As ye HAVE RECEIVED Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him and established in the faith....Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ" (Col. 2:1-8).

We can readily afford to let the work for the world wait God's due time while we spend all our little talent in ministering to the pressing necessities of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10), in view of the fact that this age is about ended and that the testing and proving for the new nature will soon be over, and the

opportunity for gaining the divine nature forever ended--in view also of the fact that the "overcomers" will soon be invested with power, and cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the earth: thereby accomplishing the turning of all men unto God. In view of both these facts it is pre-eminently our privilege and work to use our utmost endeavor to turn back the wanderers to the truth, and thereby to the sanctification upon which the new life depends. While thus employed, we rejoice to know that some benevolent human hearts sympathize, and some loving hands minister, to the temporal necessities of the suffering world; now "groaning and travailing in pain waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19-22.)

In conclusion, we remark that there are many truths. There are philosophic, and historic, and scientific truths, but from all these we may wander without loss of life. These are all good and valuable, and furnish excellent employment for the natural mind, and both in this and in the coming age will tend to bless and elevate. But these are not the truths commended to the sanctified in Christ Jesus. No, it is divine truth. "Sanctify them through THY TRUTH. Thy word is truth." We question whether it be possible to be proficient in more than one line of truth. Hence the propriety of following the examples set us, and giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure, receiving truth, which working in us, will sanctify us to the service of him who is "The Truth."

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OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

We mean those with whom we have had recent discussions on the nature of our Redeemer and of the redemption which he has effected. These contemporaries seem to be puzzled by the six simple questions recently propounded to them in these columns, and doubtless feel annoyed because of the weakness of their theories, which will not permit an answer to them without showing to all their readers their untenable position, and in fact that their theories make void the plain statements of Scripture relative to our ransom and purchase with the precious blood of Christ --which scriptures they quote frequently and thus prevent the lameness of their theories from appearing too prominent.

These theories, however different in some respects, are alike in that they ignore the ransom, which we have already noted as being the coming and fast-growing form of infidelity among Christians, which Satan seems to be stirring up in these last days. Another paper has recently been started in defence of this no-ransom theory, called The Millenarian. This is the third paper in advocacy of this error started within a year and a half. Our Adversary seems able to supply both talent and money for the

promulgation of such blasting and blighting heresies. But his power shall continue only for a little season--"He knoweth that he hath but a short time," for

"He who was slain on Calvary's mountain,
Soon shall reign a thousand years."

Now, since they cannot answer our questions in a straightforward manner without showing their theories in their true light, they endeavor to turn the attention of the flock away from the real issue--the importance of the truth in question--by seeking to enlist sympathy, as though they were being personally abused. And one throws out the inference that it is a martyr, and

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that it is more difficult to hold its peace than to reply, but says it will answer the question, on which they have already been deliberating for months--in time.

We answer, that if a man be suspicioned of any crime and be questioned regarding it, if he is innocent, it is his duty to state the facts, to answer the questions, that thereby he might clear himself. And what would be thought of such a one if, instead of answering, he should claim that he could answer, but thought it more noble and martyr-like to stand accused, merely claiming that the accusation was untrue, but refusing to give the evidence and so clear himself by plain answers? We answer, that to the mind of every right-thinking person he would stand justly condemned as guilty. Who would crown such a one with a martyr's laurels? But if such a course be condemned in an individual matter, what shall we say of a periodical which attempts to be a religious teacher, a feeder of the flock of Christ, who is accused of mixing poison with the children's meat?

Regarding personal attack, we would say that we have been no more personal than were our Lord and the Apostles, and that it would be impossible to so point out the error and danger that all the flock may be able to recognize it, without plainly mentioning the periodicals containing those errors. The names of the editors have never been mentioned, though if it were necessary for the truth's sake, we should not for a moment hesitate. Our personal solicitude for these is as great as for any of the flock, though we greatly fear the baneful tendency of their present course and error on themselves. It is a fearful thing to deceive others, but it generally begins in self-deception and then progresses in blindness. We believe that all these errors originate with the great Adversary; therefore we claim that "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"--places of influence.

We have mentioned pointedly your Adversary (the devil) and those whom we believed to be forwarding his cause by publicly spreading error. His servants ye are to whom ye render service. (Rom. 6:16). Among others we have mentioned Mr. Ingersoll, the out-spoken denier of the RANSOM, and Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, The Day Star, and The World's Hope, and The Millenarian, as those who quoted scriptural phrases and arrayed themselves thus in a "garment of light," while they really made void the doctrine of the Ransom by their unscriptural theorizing. These are all public teachers, and the flock of Christ could in no way be guarded against their wily twisting of Scripture, without mentioning them so as to be unmistakably understood. The truth, and especially this truth, the Ransom, never needed more to have the sword of the Spirit unsheathed in its behalf by every true soldier of the cross than now, and by the grace of God we hope to fight a good fight until called higher.

And now, relative to their claim that they will answer these six troublesome, yet simple questions, in time, we feel that it will be in the interest of truth for us to tell their readers how we interpret this: It means that when they think their readers have forgotten the points of the questions and their relationship to each other, then they will take them up one at a time, and devote a whole article to each little question, weaving the web of sophistry (false reasoning) around them, so that when they have read it none will be quite sure just what is meant. Their expressions will be so carefully guarded that none could find a single quotation which would show their true position. We thus judge from the past.

We protest. This is not the right way to deal with any subject, much less a religious one. A child, a babe in Christ, who had nothing to cover or conceal, nor any theory to sustain, should be able to answer those questions in one column or less. That the fundamental character and simplicity of these questions may be remembered, we repeat them here, at the same time declaring that by the grace of God we will agree to answer any six questions which they will propound on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And on any more advanced subject we are willing to give A REASON for the hope that is in us with meekness, in our OWN WORDS.

The questions were as follows:

- (1.) Why did Jesus die?
- (2.) How does it affect our sins?
- (3.) How did he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?
- (4.) In what way did he give "himself a ransom [Greek, antilutron--an equivalent price] for all"?
- (5.) In what way was he a "propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins"?

(6.) In what sense were we "bought with a price"?

The answer to these six simple questions would promptly decide the matter of our contemporary's faith or lack of faith in the ransom. It must not forget that it is on trial before its readers, and it must have little confidence in the intelligence of its readers to suppose that they will not discern the weakness of its policy. In the light of facts we can call its dealing nothing but policy--such as is indeed common among secular papers on political subjects, but which should not be once named among you as becometh saints.

The few changing expressions of our contemporary in its recent issues we cannot regard as an indication of reform on this subject. We could have no confidence in a reform unaccompanied by an acknowledgment of past errors. The retraction should be as public as the original statements. This appears to be God's unalterable law. Until it shall make a full, clear, unequivocal statement of its position, such as the answer to the questions propounded would involve, we must question whether the recently changed expressions mean anything more than that it is more guarded as to its phraseology since our criticism.

We quoted from its teachings in our last, and now we give some extracts from its very first issue (October, 1882) as proof that its teachings did deny that the Lord bought them; did deny that we were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. Under the heading ATONEMENT it sneers at the doctrine of substitution, claiming that it places our Father "in the UNGRACIOUS attitude of demanding the full payment of the sinner's debt before he will forgive." Is this an attempt of our contemporary to appear more gracious than Jehovah, who says he "will by no means clear the GUILTY," and who for this very reason "sent his only begotten Son that he should BE A PROPITIATION [satisfaction] for our sins," and who "by the grace [favor] of God tasted death for every man"?

Our contemporary continues to sneer at what it terms "the gross injustice of transferring the consequences of sin from the guilty to the innocent, allowing the innocent to suffer instead of the guilty." We answer that we are thankful that Satan has led us into no theory which would incline us thus to contradict the word of His testimony who bought us, who redeemed us, who "died the just FOR the unjust." My soul, come not thou into their secret who call good evil, and who find it needful to traduce the Almighty's character for justice in order to prove their theory, that we were not bought with a PRICE; which they claim has too much of a "commercial idea" to suit their aesthetic tastes and theories, and who deny and make light of those precious words:

Jesus died and paid it all,
All the debt I owe.

Now, hear its own statement of its faith. Our contemporary continues: "Repentance--complete change of heart and life--and forgiveness are the Lord's cure for the difficulty [sin]; and when this is accomplished 'the enmity' [see Eph. 2:16] is surely destroyed and the man RECONCILED TO GOD." No one can mistake this statement; and what is it? It is another and a different gospel from what the Apostles delivered. (See Gal. 1:8.) THIS gospel has no need of the death of Jesus as our ransom from

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the wages of sin. It has no place for Rom. 5:18,19: "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." It claims that repentance is the thing which saves men--that if they repent God will FORGIVE, and it calls this the Lord's CURE. We call this a man's remedy and theory, and in the name of Jehovah declare that

These for sin could not atone;
Christ must ransom, he alone.

This was the "Apostles' doctrine," viz.; that Jehovah laid upon Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all--and "by His stripes we are healed.

Notice again that in the above statement of its faith, our contemporary says that repentance and forgiveness destroy the enmity, but note how contrary this is to the teaching of Paul, who says that the enmity was destroyed by the cross. It declares further that man is reconciled to God by repentance and forgiveness, but Paul says: "When we were enemies we were RECONCILED TO GOD by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10.)

Truly the justice, rather than the love of God is manifested by His rewarding sin with death--but the LOVE, the great love wherewith he loved us, even while we were yet sinners and under proper condemnation of his just laws, is manifested by the death of his Son to release us from that just condemnation -- opening up a way by which God could still be just yet the justifier of sinners who believe in Jesus as their ransom. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).

The child of God who can feel an indifference on this most vital point of all the Gospel, this attempt to ignore, deny, and remove the very foundation upon which the entire temple of God fitly

framed, is builded, shows either that he does not appreciate the importance of the question, or else that he possesses so little of the spirit of Christ as not to have the zeal for the Lord's house and work and Word swallowing up all other considerations and interests. An appreciation of the value of the death of Christ is all important as a basis of entire consecration; hence the prominence given it in the Word. It is very important as a part of the truth without which we cannot be sanctified.

We commend to all a careful study of chapters VI and VIII, in "Food for Thinking Christians" as a help on this subject.

In conclusion--we have done our duty by those of our readers who are also readers of our contemporaries. "He that hath an ear, let him hear"; and we feel convinced that only such will hear with proper force and power the Word of the Lord on this topic. We have dealt with this subject at the greater length because we believe that this, which now assails those of "this way," is but a ripple of the mighty wave of unbelief in the cross of Christ which is even now beginning to sweep over the entire nominal Church. It is clearly described by the Apostles as the form of error which would be prevalent in the last days of this age. Our hope has been and is, that by clear, forcible and plain statement, we might help some to forearm themselves for the conflict--putting on Christ as their helmet, breastplate and shield.

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WORSHIPING ANGELS.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Col. 2:18,19.

The word angel signifies messenger. All of God's children become messengers of truth when they tell the glad tidings to others. All the members of the Church of Christ are taught to help one another. No member of the body of Christ is so insignificant as to be of no service to the others. If any lay away their one or two talents, neglecting to use them, they soon become paralyzed members of the body--dead branches of the vine, and must be cut off. If one member of the body has more talents than another, in carrying out his consecration he will faithfully bring them all into active service.

Just here our warped human nature is apt to run to either one of two extremes, against both of which we are faithfully warned. Some who have many talents are tempted to become puffed up,

and to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think; and that weed, Pride, if not promptly dealt with, may soon gain full control and sink its possessor in ruin and death. Others are naturally timid, and neglecting to use their one talent or two, they rely solely upon other members. The latter class is by far the most numerous.

The danger to this class must be very apparent when we call to mind the words of Paul (Acts 20:30): "Of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." And in the above text he says they will "vainly intrude themselves into those things which they have not seen" -- attempting to wrest scriptures which they do not understand and apply them to their own theories, in their desire "to draw away disciples after them," being "vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind." Such, ministering to their own exaltation as teachers, would lead the flock into dangerous paths.

How strange that it should be so! but the flock of Christ is not left without warning, and a way of escape, narrow though it be, is open to every faithful follower of the Lord. How natural is the disposition to worship, to give undue honor to the messengers of truth. While we should honor and love all of God's messengers, we should ever bear in mind that all truth comes from Him, and that no human skill ever discovered the hidden treasures of infinite wisdom, until, in God's due time, He has chosen to reveal it. All honor and praise to him; and we may love for their work's sake the humblest instrument he may chose to make his messenger.

John, the Revelator, who typified the living Church in the last days, when he had received in symbol the truths now made plain to the saints, made the same mistake that many now are prone to make. He fell at the feet of the messenger to worship him. But the faithful messenger said: "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; for the testimony of [concerning] Jesus is the spirit [import] of prophecy --worship God." (Rev. 19:10.)

Yes, we are all servants one of another and messengers of the glad tidings as fast as we receive them; and we are all brethren who have received the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Jesus. Our worship must not be one of another, but of the great giver and author of the wondrous plan. Who can tell which brother messenger will prove faithful to the end, neither becoming puffed up, discouraged, overcome or weary in well doing? Indeed we are told some will run well for a time and then fall away, becoming the enemies of the cross of Christ; if worshipping or leaning on such messengers how insecure would be our standing.

Many think it is a mark of humility to discard reason and blindly follow others. It is against such "voluntary humility" and

worshiping of messengers that Paul warns the church, saying that in so doing there is danger of losing the reward--the High Calling.

To the Master we look for example and direction, though not ignoring each other, for all help that comes through our brethren and fellow servants comes from him. But while we esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, rejoicing in the talents through them given to the whole body, the little flocks should ever remember to hold our Head, our Bridegroom in highest esteem as our redeemer and guide.

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.

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THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels having the seven last plagues: [last] because by them the wrath of God was to be completed."--Rev. 15:1. DIAGLOTT.

Among the weird pictures of this wonderful book of symbols, this one of the pouring out of the "seven vials of wrath" stands out in marked prominence. As its name indicates, it is understood to be the closing act in the drama of this age. An important difference exists between our view and that of many others however, in that they suppose the end of the age to be accompanied by the destruction of the people, and of the earth itself; while we understand that it is the ending of the present reign of evil, and a necessary preparation of mankind for the reign of righteousness. The connections in which we find the vials mentioned in the record are in harmony with this latter; it is followed by the symbolic pictures of the new age--new heaven and earth, binding of Satan, and reign of Christ.

The great source of error in understanding these, as all of Revelation's symbols, is a too literal interpretation. It is read as though it were a statement of facts, instead of a statement of symbols. Before proceeding to the account of the plagues, the inspired penman records another symbol--the "sea of glass." This indicates that it stands related to the plagues; hence we will consider it first. From the connections, we understand that that which this symbolizes immediately precedes the plagues.

"And I saw as it were a glassy sea, mingled with fire, and the conquerors of the Beast, and of his Image, and the number of his name, standing on the glassy sea, having harps of God."

Who these conquerors are is shown by what they overcome--viz., the Beast, Image and Number. Here we see the importance of an understanding of the symbols of chapter thirteen; for

unless we understood what those symbols meant, we could not understand who is overcoming their influence. In this way God has made his Word self-interpreting. The understanding of one part or symbol is the key to an understanding of another. In harmony, then, with Rev. 13, we understand the overcomers here referred to, to be those Christians who are free from Papacy-- the Beast--and from organized sectarian Protestantism--the Image--and from all who bear the characteristics of their Number--that is, free, to the extent that these have no influence over their actions, professions, or thoughts --free indeed.

This serves too, to show about when the plagues are due, and when this sea of glass condition may be reached; for if, as seems clear, the Image was formed by the organization of the "Evangelical Alliance," in 1846, then it is equally clear, that the overcomers of the "Image" could not occupy this position of favor and exaltation prior to that date. This furnishes a general reason for believing that the plagues must commence this side of the date mentioned, since it is during the pouring out of the plagues that the overcomers occupy this condition upon the "sea of glass."

Having, then, ascertained who these overcomers are, and about when they thus stand, we pass on to consider the "Sea of glass mingled with fire," on which they stand. Sea, as heretofore explained, we understand to symbolize the masses of the people, and fire, the judgments, or trouble. We therefore interpret this to mean--The people in trouble, under the judgments of God. Above the troubled people are the overcomers --calm, serene, untroubled. Their position shows that their standing is by faith. (Matt. 14:29.) To the eye of faith all is transparent as glass.

These overcomers sing a song. A song symbolizes a beautiful and harmonious expression. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb. That is, the song or preaching of these overcomers is in perfect accord with the Law and the Gospel. It is the same which Jesus (the "Lamb") taught, and which Moses taught in the Law and types. Not only does the description of the overcomers indicate that they are but a little fragment of the nominal Church, but the words of this song teach us the same--that the class who proclaim these things are few.

The words of the song are given, or the leading points of the preaching which will be done by the overcomers-- "Saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God, the omnipotent. Alas! how few are sufficiently acquainted with God's plans to recognize the fact that they are great and wonderful. Very few can sing this first note of the song, and fewer yet can sing it to its close. The second note is, "Righteous and true are thy ways, O King of the nations." (Diaglott.) Look at this; we can sing of the righteousness and justice of God's dealing with the nations, since we have come to see how he has permitted evil and death to come upon all, as a lesson, to teach

us to appreciate life and righteousness. We can see righteousness, justice, mercy, and love in God's dealing, since we see in his Word that there is to be a restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.) Who, but those who see the restitution to be accomplished in the next age, could sing this part of the song? Not one; Christendom in general fears to think of God's justice in dealing with the nations in general, the great majority of whom have gone down into death without any knowledge of the only name whereby we must be saved. The righteousness, and justice, and love of God's dealing, can only be seen by looking at the work of the next, as well as at that of present and past ages. Yes indeed we rejoice to proclaim to all who have an "ear to hear"--Just and true are Jehovah's ways in ruling the nations.

The next note is in perfect harmony with the last--"Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? since thou alone art bountiful." Our great Creator's every dealing is an act of favor--even the evil which man was permitted to bring upon himself is to be overruled for good; and we ask ourselves the question, Who shall not fear and glorify God when, in the coming age, his wonderful goodness is manifested, and when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth? We would be inclined to believe that every one should praise his love everlastingly, were it not that Scripture clearly discloses a second death, which tells of some who will be accounted worthy of it.

"For all the nations shall come and worship in thy presence, because thy righteous acts are manifested." This is the last note of the song, and is full of force and meaning. How few are proclaiming, either publicly or privately, this part of the song. Some believe that many of the nations now dead are in a place of mental or physical torture, there to remain to all eternity. Others claim that they are dead, and will never again have life; others that those who are dead, will be raised from death to pass a mock trial, and be destroyed. But how few can sing this song of restitution, declaring that all nations shall yet come from death, and shall worship their Lord and Redeemer, when brought to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:4.) Even Sodom, a nation long since destroyed, shall come and worship. (Ezek. 16:48-63.)

Another symbol is the "Harps of God." The song is sung in tune and harmony with the harps. The harp of God we believe to be the Bible, its many strings or chords are the Law, Prophets, Psalms, Gospels, etc. Many Christians have the "harp," but few have it so strung and tuned that they can bring forth harmony enough to accompany "the song of Moses and the Lamb." The overcomers have the harp well in hand--in fact, without it and the inspiration of its music, they never could have been overcomers. They have them tuned, too. How forcible this

picture! Truly, it would have been incomplete without the harp of God.

Another thought is suggested--The overcomers not only have the harp, and know how to sing this song of restitution, but they do sing it. There are some of God's children who have their harp considerably in tune, and who know the song, but who do not proclaim the glad tidings of coming restitution; they fear to face the opposition which this course would bring--the unpopularity which would attach to anything outside the religious rut of so-called orthodoxy. These are not among the overcomers; they have not yet gotten a victory over the influence of the Beast and Image; they are yet in some bondage. All of the overcomers sing the song. Each of us should inquire of our own hearts whether we are tuning our harps and singing this song. Now is the time.

Many of the Lord's dear children in mystic Babylon's captivity, have sat down beside her rivers so defiled by the mire of worldliness and error and wept when they remembered God's favor to Zion in times past. They laid aside the harps of God, hanging them on the willows that weep over the grave of truth in Babylon. They that carried them away captive (the Babylon system) require of them a song and mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." Yes, Babylon would like to see Zion's captives happy beside her muddy streams; and in the midst of her worldliness, would like to hear an occasional song of Zion, that she might boast of the Lord's favor. But "how shall the captive daughters of Zion sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psa. 137:1-6.) To all such we cry: Take down your harps from the willows; flee out of Babylon into full liberty of thought and expression; tune your harps and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Sing of God's mighty love and the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets."

The next thing shown to John is the coming of the seven messengers out of

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the temple to pour out the plagues. Since it is the saints who are "to execute the judgments written" (Psa. 149:9) we interpret these "seven angels" to mean the saints--the living saints, they being the representatives or active agents of the entire anointed company--as "the feet of Him." It is the feet, or last part, who sing the restitution song of Moses and the Lamb, above the sea mingled with fire. "How beautiful are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." (Isa. 52:7). These same feet as representatives on earth of the entire body, are to pour out the seven vials, or be associated more or less directly with the judgments coming. These are clothed with white linen; these have kept their wedding garments; they are robed in the

righteousness of Christ--"justified by his blood." They are the servants of God; the girdle representing a servant, and the gold of it representing divinity. They, as the servants of God, have a divine service to accomplish.

When they had all gone forth from the temple it was filled with smoke, so that none could enter it. The temple symbolizes the nominal church. The coming of the messengers out of the temple, symbolizes the coming of the overcomers out of the nominal church. When all such have come out, the temple (church) will be so full of smoke (confusion), that no man would care to go into it. It was "filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power": that is, the glorious harmony and beauty of truth as presented by the overcoming class, shows the deformity and confusion of man-made creeds. As the truth though rejected, shines out with increasing glory, the whole nominal temple is seen to be full of smoke-- confusion and darkness; and all who remain in it become so blinded by it, that they cannot see the glory of God either as displayed in his Word or its fulfillment in passing events.

The messengers are now nearly all out, and already the smoke, or confusion in the church, is considerable. Few care to enter even now, and recent reports of various sects show that the increase has been very slight for the past year. When we remember that the large proportion of new members received is from the Sunday-School, we can realize how, even now, very few men (persons of mature thought) enter the nominal temple. The nominal church will be in this confusion until the seven plagues are poured out; during that time the Babylon, or confusion element, will be destroyed, and the cleansed temple of truth be again opened to receive justified believers--then as heirs of the earthly promises.

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, GO YOUR WAYS and pour out your vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."-- Rev. 16:1.

The nominal systems are anxious to retain every member, for each one counts, and their boast is in numbers and wealth; but when they find any who count all earthly considerations but loss and dross, and who will not be fettered and bound by man-made creeds they thrust such out, saying, Go, then, do your worst, "GO YOUR WAYS."

The unfettered, the overcoming class, have nearly all gone forth, we believe, now. These do not require the plagues since the truth has made them free. This little flock by no means constitutes the whole house of God. No, the house of God--the household of faith--is a large class, the majority of whom are still in the nominal Church, fettered by its creeds and dwarfed by its worldly conformity. For their sake--that they may be brought into the liberty of the sons of God, even through great tribulation

(Rev. 7:14)--we are told that "judgment must begin at the house of God." They must be liberated first, and the overcoming class shall be the instruments in striking off the shackles of error. The plagues are really blessings in disguise, just as an amputation is a blessing though a trying ordeal of suffering to those who require it.

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THE FIRST PLAGUE.

"And the first went forth and poured out his bowl on the LAND; and there came an evil and malignant ULCER on those men having the mark of the BEAST, and on those WORSHIPING HIS IMAGE." --(Chap. 16:2. Diaglott.)

These evils, called plagues or bowls of wrath, are designed to rid the world of every form of evil and wrong. The class symbolized by the land or earth, we understand to mean all people under religious restraint, of whatever name or order. Land or earth as a symbol represents settled, organized religious society, as sea represents the restless irreligious, unsettled masses of humanity. Those having the mark (characteristics) of the Beast (Papacy) and those worshiping his Image (Protestantism), as hitherto shown, are the great mass of non-overcoming and nominal Christians.

It is upon this class that the trouble first comes. While Roman Catholics constitute an important proportion of this earth class, yet the trouble does not affect them at first, as shown from the fact that the ulcer is not upon those worshiping the BEAST, but on those worshiping the IMAGE and having the marks or characteristics of the Beast (Papacy), which indicates clearly the various shades and degrees of Protestantism.

Their trouble is compared to an ulcer --"an evil and malignant ulcer." To appreciate the symbol let us consider the literal: An ulcer is a running sore; it is an evidence of constitutional disorder, and very painful. A CANCER in its worst stages, becomes a malignant ulcer. An ulcer is a cankerous sore, that is, one which eats, corrupts and destroys. Now carry the thought--what an ulcer or bad cancer is to a man will illustrate the character of the consuming, life-draining trouble coming upon the systems constituting Protestantism, so called, which ultimately will destroy it. It arises from within itself; it is a constitutional disorder, caused by the errors inherited and retained from the "Mother of harlots and abominations." There is no cure for this evil --the blood is poisoned, it has permeated

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the entire body, and death must ensue.

There was a time--in the days of Luther and reformation--when the daughters might have been radically healed, but her false ministers "healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace." (Jer. 8:11.) Now there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there--therefore she is not healed. Her King is not in her, she is spewed out of his mouth. (Jer. 8:22, Young's Trans. See also Rev. 3:16 and 18:23.) There is no remedy, these systems must die. The disorder comes from within. Already these disorders have broken out, and though the canker is carefully concealed, the bad odor and distress are noticeable.

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THE SECOND PLAGUE.

"And the second poured out his bowl into the SEA; and it became blood, as of one dead, and every living soul died -- THOSE IN THE SEA."--Vs. 2.

Bear in mind that the sea symbolizes the irreligious masses of mankind-- those not under religious restraint.

To appreciate the trouble upon this class we must study the symbol. Blood in a living creature is full of vitality, but the blood of a dead person is the very reverse. After death, the blood rapidly begins to separate into two parts--a watery liquid called serum and a more solid substance termed clot. As soon as this separation has been accomplished the CLOT begins to PUTREFY or corrupt. Applying this, we understand it to teach that a great and thorough disintegration will occur in this large class of humanity, after which, one element will rapidly corrupt and putrefy. Among the irreligious masses have been numbered such noble specimens of humanity as Stephen Girard, Geo. Peabody, and Peter Cooper, besides many less notable, honestly skeptical souls. The result of the commingling of such with the masses imparted a life principle and vitality. But reading this plague, we realize that a separation of these two elements is due, the result of which will be decay and death to every principle of morality and virtue in this class--when every living thing (active element of virtue and benevolence) in this sea class will perish. In other words, remove the element which advises prudence, morality, and right-doing, from the counsels of the restless masses--from the Labor Leagues and other associations, and let the lower element control itself, and the result would quickly be the destruction of life, property, laws, and peace--a grand reign of anarchy in the name of communism.

From other Scriptures we are taught to expect just such an uprising--which eventually shall overthrow the kingdoms of earth. But the beginning of this is all we must look for now--the

separation of the serum from the clot--of the vital from the corrupting element. This seems to be now in progress. Men of noble minds who realized the oppression of the masses by money and governments and desired to assist in their amelioration, are forced to withdraw because of the spirit of recklessness which pervades the mass, leading to assassinations, etc., in other countries and threats of the same in this land. In England Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Parnell and others, have attempted to provide some relief for Irish oppression, but must disown all fellowship and sympathy with the dynamite and assassination policy of hot-headed leaders among the masses.

But we should remember that the full results of this evil or plague will not be felt for many years; it has its beginning only, now. It is well also to remember that one plague or evil goes on increasingly, after a second and a third, etc., are added, until in the end the entire

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seven forms of evil will be operating simultaneously.

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THE THIRD PLAGUE.

"And the third poured out his bowl into the RIVERS and into the FOUNTAINS of waters and they became BLOOD. And I heard the angel [messenger] of the waters saying--Righteous art thou, the one who is and who was, the bountiful one, because thou hast judged these. Because they poured out the blood of Saints and Prophets thou gavest them also blood to drink; they deserve it."--vs. 4-6.

This third element of trouble results from the turning of the rivers and fountains of water into blood. Running waters symbolize truth. The river channels through which water (truth) has flowed, symbolize the various sects or denominations. The fountains symbolize the founders and schools of these various systems--the places or men in whom these channels had their start or beginning.

For a long time, water--truly very muddy in some, but nevertheless a mixture of water has flowed in these various systems, of which many have partaken and have been refreshed. But a change comes, and that which once refreshed, will (gradually) become loathsome as blood. [Blood has been advised as a medical remedy, but in such cases it is taken immediately on being drawn from the animal, else it would be poisonous for its change is rapid--hence a river of blood could symbolize only loathsomeness and death.]

This we understand to be a picture of a change rapidly taking place in religious channels--their creeds, though containing as much truth and error as ever, they are coming to regard differently. General enlightenment is greater, and what was once received without question, is now becoming loathsome and death-like. As in a similar plague (literally) upon Egypt, the people digged wells for water because they could no longer drink of the bloody rivers, so here--independent thinkers are digging for themselves, for purer waters than the regular channels afford. Truly this turning of the waters of their channels into blood, is among the causes of anxiety and great annoyance to the sectarian, but only the few yet realize this trouble.

The angel of the waters--or the messenger of the REAL truth--is able to see in this a righteous judgment of God against those systems, as expressed in vs. 5 and 6. The direct cause of this trouble is mentioned--they had poured out the blood of the saints and prophets.

Is it inquired in what sense this was done? We answer that blood in a person is life and to pour it out is to waste it. The life of the saints is truth--God's word--as it is written: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit [vitality, life] of prophecy." Hence to have wasted the life-principle of saints and prophets, would be to have wasted the words and testimony of Jesus. This they did by neglecting his word, and receiving instead the traditions of men, which errors have corrupted and defiled the truths they possess to such an extent that the thinking ones are fast coming to that condition where they cannot drink from those channels.

In these very channels, or systems, where the teaching of Satan has been preserved, viz.: that man has an existence which can never cease, and hence must continue forever (Gen. 3:4), nine-tenths of them in misery, in these same channels, the teachings of the Prophets, that the wages of sin is death, but that God has provided for "times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21) is neglected, cast aside, WASTED. And hence it is that they will get blood to drink shortly. The creeds of these systems being so mixed with error by the retaining of Satan's lie and the rejection of the Lord's testimony, both through the words and example of prophets and saints, they will soon come to recognize them as too obnoxious and nauseating to be palatable to either themselves or the world.

"And I heard the ALTAR saying, Yes, O Lord God, the omnipotent, true and righteous are thy JUDGMENTS," verse 7.

The altar represents the class of prophets and saints whose testimonies for truth were sealed with their lives, the testimony

of whose lives had been wasted. These speak not audibly, but in that figurative way in which Abel's blood is said to have cried out. The testimony of these condemn the present systems as worthy of having this trouble or plague; because of their previous disregard of truth. While nominal Church systems have become great and popular in worldly favor, both in the days of the prophets and ever since, in the days of the saints, yet now as ever, this success and popularity has been the result of an alliance with the world and a participation of its spirit. Since, as well as in the days of the prophets, to live separate from the world and to boldly advocate the truth in opposition to the worldly mixture of error, has cost persecution and either literal or symbolic beheading--or cutting off. The testimony of every sacrifice for truth acceptable to God is here represented as condemning the course of these systems and justifying the retribution represented in this third plague--"FOR THEY ARE WORTHY."

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THE FOURTH PLAGUE.

"And the fourth poured out his bowl on the SUN, and to him [it--ROTHERHAM'S TRANSLATION] it was given to burn men with fire. And men were burned with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of that God who has authority over these plagues, and they reformed not to give him glory."--vs. 8,9.

Here the misery of some is caused by an increase of sunlight. As the moon symbolized "THE LAW," so the sun symbolizes the GOSPEL LIGHT. The former was but a shadow or reflection of the latter, and the relationship of the two to the Church (the woman) is beautifully symbolized in Rev. 12:1. The increase of the sunlight means an increased brilliancy of Gospel light and knowledge.

This increase of light is to affect all classes, as is indicated by its not being limited to a certain class as are the other plagues are limited; to "sea," "land," "rivers," etc. It comes upon men--mankind in general and upon representative leaders of men, in particular. It is the increase of light--knowledge-- which is causing independence of thought and action among all classes of society. It causes differences between kings and subjects, between capital and labor, between clergy and laity; the increasing light is doing it all. It is Gospel light too; for no matter how Infidels may scoff at the Bible and affect to have superior liberty to that which it teaches, it nevertheless remains a fact, that the grandest liberty is that where Christ makes free; and the essence of Gospel light is in the Master's words, "Ye shall know the TRUTH and the truth shall make you free." It is truth that is spreading--truth on every subject: truth relative to

the rights and authority of kings; truth relative to the rights both of capital and labor; truth relative to the claimed superiority and lordship of a self-elevated class termed the clergy.

The conflict is between truth and superstition --light and darkness; it will be a severe struggle, but TRUTH is mighty and shall prevail; debasing the proud and exalting the humble. Those whose deeds are evil--who are in the wrong,--hate the light, is the Master's testimony. It would curtail their power and lower their position to elevate all others to equality. These are scorched or troubled by the increase of light, and none more so than religious lords, for it is the increase of light which doubtless helps to turn the waters of their cherished channels into blood--corruption --making their doctrines and creeds, which emanated from fountains of the sixteenth century, distasteful and obnoxious.

After preaching for years doctrines which called God just and loving, but proved him to be worse than the gods of the heathen--after having defended for years their sectarian isms, some of which teach that God has foreordained the salvation of a "little flock" and their children, but has also foreordained eternal misery as the lot of the great mass of humanity and their offspring-- thus teaching, that "there are infants in hell not a span long," etc.--no wonder that such who worship and honor their sect and such teachings, more than they do God and His Word, would feel scorched and annoyed with the great light and heat of truth, as it is now beginning to shine out and reach them.

"And they blasphemed the name of that God." Blasphemy, as the word is used in Scripture, does not signify profane swearing, but rather a misstatement of character. For instance Jesus was accused of "blasphemy" because he said he was the Son of God (John 10:33). These zealous sectarians become so angry against present unfoldings of truth which prove the Love and Mercy of God as well as his Justice, that they go to the very extreme of opposition and grossly misstate God's character and often wrest his Word from its true import to sustain their theories.

This, which is a plague to others, is a wondrous boon to those who are out of Babylon and humbly enjoying the leading of God's Spirit from the one fountain direct--the Word of God. This increase of Gospel light, and consequent increased light thrown upon the Law shadows--showing the true teachings of the Tabernacle and its services and sacrifices, are pointedly foretold in symbol by the prophet (Isaiah 30:26) who says: "The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." It is the same day (period) in which He assembles the outcasts, and makes up His Jewels.

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We hail thy bright beams,
O morn of Zion's glory;
Thy blessed light breaks on our sight
O hail, happy day!

The day that brings a sweet release,
That crowns our Jesus Prince of Peace,
And bids our sorrows cease!
O hail, happy day!"

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THE lily is my symbol of fortitude, white and pure and royal,
even as I have seen some dear children of God triumphant
though in darkened chambers, and on beds of pain. The
mignonette, most unobtrusive, yet most tenderly subtle, of all
things in the floral world, is my emblem of patience. Its perfume
pervades its neighborhood.-- M. E. Sangster.

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