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ZION'S WATCH TOWER

AND

HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.

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THE ASSASSINATION OF CARNOT.

The death of the President of France, at the
hands of an assassin, will do much to intensify
the feeling of opposition to anarchists and
socialists, which for the past year has been
growing in the minds of conservative people.

The result will be laws looking toward the
suppression of Socialism in its moderate as well
as its radical phases. This will in turn mean
the curtailment of liberties; and, while successful
for a time, it will intensify a smouldering
discontent, which eventually will break forth
in an uncontrollable violence, and produce the
"time of trouble such as was not since there
was a nation."

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DELUSIVE STATEMENTS.

The idea seems thoroughly entrenched in the minds of men that a restitution to life of all of Adam's race would crowd the world until there would be standing room only, if, indeed, they were not piled one upon the other or crowded off into the oceans.

These fallacious ideas come to people through the public press, and often are accredited to college professors. We give below one of these statements, sent in by a TOWER reader, and quote his comments following it.

"A Berlin Professor finds that Europe contains 272,000,000 inhabitants; Asia, 720,000,000; Africa, 89,000,000; America, 200,000,000; and Polynesia, 2,000,000--total, 1,283,000,000. Of this little crowd, about 32,000,000 die in each year, which is 87,761 a day or 61 per minute. Another professor calculates that 36,627,843,275,075,558 people have lived on the earth since the creation."

Our correspondent adds:--

"The DAWN says 252 billion. The German Professor says, 36 quadrillions, 627 trillions, 843 billions, 275 millions, 75 thousands 558-- a big difference. The Professor is a close calculator: he has gotten down to the last eight."

Comment upon this is necessary, only because many accept such sweeping statements without criticism. Let us prove this matter to the satisfaction of all.

Take this German Professor's figures, respecting the daily death-rate, as the foundation for our examination. He asserts that 87,761 people die each day. If we multiply this number by 365, it will give the total deaths of a year; and the total is 32,032,765. This number is sufficiently large to satisfy anyone that the Professor has not under-estimated.

Now multiply 32,032,765 by 6021, to ascertain the total number of persons who would have died since Adam was created, and the total will be found to be 192,869,278,065. Now add to this the living 1,400,000,000, and we have a grand total of 194,269,278,065. Thus, taking the German Professor's figures, we find them nearly sixty billions less than our liberal estimate presented in MILLENNIAL

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DAWN, VOL. I., pages 160, 161, and which, as

we there stated, we consider at least double the actual number.

Notice, too, that in this calculation, based upon the German Professor's figures, we have certainly counted two persons for every one that has actually died; for back in Adam's day we know of no deaths but that of Abel, for nearly a thousand years; and then the death-rate must have been very small, in comparison to the present.

As already shown, a person standing occupies about one and two-thirds square feet of space. At this rate the present population of the earth (one billion four hundred million persons) could stand on an area of eighty-six square miles--an area much less than that of the city of London or of Philadelphia. And the island of Ireland (area, thirty-two thousand square miles) would furnish standing room for more than twice the number of people who have ever lived on the earth, even at our exaggerated estimate.

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"THE PRIZE SET BEFORE US."

ALL who are familiar with the Scriptures well know that the Christian course in the present life is represented therein as a race-course at whose farther end is a prize for all who so run as to obtain it. In the WATCH TOWER and in MILLENNIAL DAWN we have frequently pointed out this fact and, upon all professing to be God's people, have urged faithfulness in running the race.

But in showing the Divine Plan of the Ages --from Eden lost to Paradise restored--it has been both necessary and proper to point out that the prize set before us in the gospel is a different one from that before Israel after the Flesh, during the Jewish age, and different also from that which will be set before mankind in general during the Millennium. And now something more upon the subject seems necessary from the fact that some have misunderstood us, and gotten the idea that there are two or three prizes, any one of which may now be run for successfully, and equally to the Lord's pleasing. These are defined to be,

(1) The high calling, to divine nature and glory; (2) Spiritual nature of a lower order than the divine nature; (3) Human perfection by restitution.

The advocates of the errors referred to proceed to explain three sets of conditions or terms to be complied with, and that which of the three prizes is won at the end of life's journey, will depend upon which of the three sets of conditions has been followed. (1) To gain the chief prize requires a full consecration of heart, followed as absolutely as possible, in thought, word and deed. To this we assent. (2) To gain the second prize, say they, one should live a good, honorable, Christian life, but need not specially sacrifice the good-will and esteem of worldly people. In other words, an honorable and generally esteemed Christian is supposed to be running for this second prize --successfully, whether he knows it or not. From this view we dissent, and will give our reasons later. (3) They hold that for the third prize little or no running is necessary, that if one merely feels his own unworthiness and trusts in the merit of Christ as the ransom for all, accepts the restitution promises, and avoids open wickedness, he will get this prize. Some, indeed, take credit to themselves in the matter, erroneously considering that they are cultivating the grace of humility,--saying, I don't aspire to be a king on the throne of God's Kingdom. Oh, no! a humbler place will do me. From all this also we dissent.

The facts are these:--

(1) There is but the one prize held out by the Scriptures as an offer during this age, as there was a different one held out previously, and as there will be a still different one held out during the Millennial age. The Scriptures are very definite respecting this one prize of the Gospel age. See Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15.

(2) None of God's laws or regulations conflict with Justice: they all harmonize with it. And hence God could not require less than a full consecration to him and his will, on the

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part of all whom he accepts into his family--either on the divine or human plane. Nor could he accept as satisfactory or worthy of any prize the self-pleasing or the world-conforming rules above laid down for the second and third prizes.

Things are either right or wrong; and the right side is always God's side. The reason

that the path of the "little flock" is declared to be a narrow or difficult one at present, is, that it is God's path--the right path; and the world being wrong,--out of harmony with God, and consequently out of harmony with righteousness --is in opposition, directly and indirectly, to all who are in harmony with God and righteousness. And the more progress we make into harmony with God and righteousness the more the worldly minded will hate us, and the more narrow and difficult the path of life will be. Hence the Apostle's words: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (Jas. 4:4.) Can anyone suppose that God offers prizes of any grade or degree to those at enmity against him even to the extent of sympathy and harmony with his enemies and opponents? Surely not. Hence this one text alone would contradict all this theory respecting a second and a third prize being now offered.

We repeat, what we have previously stated many times, but evidently not yet often

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enough, that precisely the same requirements of God's law will be in force during the Millennium as are now in force. Nothing less could be accepted; for God's requirements of the Church are as moderate as justice would permit, at any time, viz.: (1) faith in Christ as Redeemer; (2) obedience, as far as possible, to his law of Love.

We ask, Could God either ask or accept less than this, and yet be just,--either now or at any time? Assuredly not!

But while the Gospel age requirements and those of the Millennial age will differ nothing, there will be another point upon which there will be a difference--viz., obedience to that law will be easier in the next age than now; because then Satan will be bound, and blind eyes opened to discern right from wrong on every subject. Hence the Lord has attached a greater prize to the call made during the Gospel age, which he designs shall select not only those who love righteousness and truth and the divine favor, but who so love them that they would sacrifice all else for the sake of these.

True, we have taught that there will be a second class or company of saints saved during this Gospel age--the tribulation saints of Rev. 7:9-17--but we have nowhere intimated that they will be accepted upon any

other terms than those given the overcomers, the first class. The terms for all who will attain to either class will be full consecration, even unto death. The difference between the two classes on account of which the one class gets the prize and the other class is "saved so as by fire" is that the overcomers have more zeal; they pay their consecration vows gladly. The tribulation saints fail to get the prize, because although consecrated lovers of the Lord, their love lacks the proper fervency to hold their lives constantly up to the point of self-sacrifice, where their own preferences would be yielded always and promptly to the Lord's.

Because they lack this fervency of love they are not "overcomers," and cannot be rewarded as such with the great prize. But they have a measure of love and consecration, and they trust in the merit of Christ's great sacrifice, and thus abiding under the shadow of the New Covenant they are not wholly rejected by the Lord, although unworthy to constitute members of his "bride" or "body," joint-heirs of his glory, honor and power.

In order to bring such of these as can be brought into full fervency of spirit and to a right estimate of their covenant, the Lord's rod of affliction is brought to bear upon them, until the souls melt in the furnace and the dross is separated, so that the precious element may be saved.

But it may be asked, Is not this the experience of every Christian? And if these tribulation saints, the second or "great company" are to be purified from dross as well as the first company or "overcomers," why should they not be all of one class or company?

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Yes, we answer, it is true that the majority of Christians are of the tribulation class, that is the reason it is called "a great company," while the overcomers are called a "little flock." The difference between them is not in the degree of purity finally attained, but in the manner of obtaining it. God has a special pleasure in those who delight to do his will, and who do not need to be whipped into an appreciation of right and wrong. These he calls "overcomers." These have the likeness of the Lord (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Col. 3:4), and are accounted worthy to be with him where he is and to share his honor, glory and Kingdom and power.--Rev. 17:14.

It is not because the "little flock" of "overcomers"

suffer more than the great company of tribulation saints that they are to get the prize, but simply because they suffer gladly, willingly, self-sacrificingly. The tribulation saints doubtless suffer as much as the "overcomers" or more; and the "overcomers" have so much pleasure, in the divine favor, in connection with their sufferings in this present time, that it makes their willing services and sacrifices seem but light afflictions which are thus working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

As for the Restitution race and prize: No one can run for it until it is offered. There is no such offer for the present age. True, there may be children and others now living who will continue down through the "great time of trouble" and into the time of the reign of the great Restorer and Life-giver, and some droppings and showers of restitution favor are already manifest, but the fact remains that full restitution is not yet offered as a prize, and cannot be offered until the Church shall first be perfected in glory.

It is true that restitution was the prize held before fleshly Israel, but that offer ended with the end of their Law Covenant.

But the misapprehension on this subject quite possibly arose from our showing in the DAWN and elsewhere that justification, the first step into the New Covenant and present high calling is the equivalent of restitution. Justification by faith is indeed a restitution by faith.

As a race we had fallen from divine favor into sin and degradation, and God could no longer deal with us, for we were unworthy. But after Christ had redeemed us--bought our formerly possessed rights and privileges--the offer was made to whoever believed this and desired to act upon it, that upon their mental acceptance of this they would be counted or reckoned in God's sight as though freed from all sin, as though restored to the perfection and divine favor enjoyed by Adam before he sinned. Thus it is true that the honest-hearted believer who accepts Christ stands in the divine sight as though fully restored.

But why reckon him thus? Why not let all wait until the Millennial age, and then actually start their feet in the way that leads to full restitution?

It is in order to make them eligible to the call of the present age. As shown above, the call of the present time is a call for willing sacrificers to present themselves as joint-sacrifices with Christ, in the service of God (his

people and his truth). And since Christ was a lamb without spot or blemish, and since no blemished sacrifice could be accepted upon God's altar, and since we by nature, actually are blemished, therefore it was necessary that we should be either actually or reckonedly made perfect men, before we could be invited to become joint-sacrifices with Christ and thus to become joint-heirs of his glory.

God chose to justify us or restore us or make us right reckonedly or by faith, instead of actually, so that those who chose might draw back after being justified by faith. All who, after being justified, draw back and refuse to use their reckoned justification for the purpose intended merely show that they received the grace of God that far in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1,2; Heb. 12:15-17.) Their reckoned justification lapses or becomes void,--not being used as a stepping-stone to full consecration, as God had intended.

The Gospel age as the great antitype of the Day of Atonement, must first close, its "better sacrifices" (the Church, Head and body) must be finished to the uttermost and be accepted before God, before the great High Priest can or will lift up his hand [power] to bless the people with the restitution call and blessings.

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"WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY."

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."--1 Pet. 1:22,23.

"LOVE is the fulfilling of the law" of God, and God himself is love. So all creatures in his likeness, whether human or angelic, have this same chief characteristic. Love presides and rules in their hearts, always exercising itself in ministries of kindness and benevolence. Its most refined and exalted impulses are necessarily toward the fountain of all goodness and grace and glory, but in sympathetic solicitude it reaches out to help and lift up the degraded and vile, while with tender and

fervent appreciation it regards the fellowship of all kindred minds. Thus, God-like love may be viewed in its three aspects--first, the love of reverence, which is centered in God, whose supreme goodness calls it forth; second, the love of fellowship or affinity for all those actuated by the same sentiments; and, third, the love of pity and sympathy toward all those who have fallen below the standard of moral excellence, or who suffer in any way. While we love God with supreme reverence, surpassing the love of self or of our fellow men, he also graciously condescends to take us into fellowship with himself; and all such are co-workers together with him in benevolent kindness for the lifting up of the fallen, whom God so loved that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem them, and then highly exalted him and gave him all power in heaven and on earth to restore them. --John 3:16; Phil. 2:8-11; Matt. 28:18.

As members of the fallen race we do not inherit this God-like quality of love. It is only in obedience to divinely revealed truth that we acquire it, being purified thereby from the downward and selfish tendencies of our fallen nature. In other words, as the Apostle here expresses it, by the incorruptible seed of divine truth, which liveth and abideth forever, we are begotten again, and have become new creatures in Christ, so that now as new creatures we partake of the new, loving, glorious nature imparted through the Word of truth.

Yet, since we still have this new treasure in the old, marred, earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7), it behooves us to take heed lest we lose it, and lest the old selfish nature of the earthen vessel again rise up and re-assert itself. Consequently, we must be diligent in the exercise and cultivation of the powers of the new nature, that it may thereby develop strength sufficient to ever keep the old nature under full control, so that none of its evil propensities may rise and gain the mastery. Therefore, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart [with disinterested benevolence] fervently."

The language here is addressed not merely to babes in Christ--though it is wholesome counsel to them also--but to those of some degree of advancement, to such as have purified their souls unto unfeigned (not merely professed) love of the brethren. Let all such cultivate this grace more and more, that the whole body of Christ may be firmly knit together in love.

The tendency of all divine truth is to purify the heart. "He that hath this hope [the

hope that the truth alone inspires] in him, purifieth himself." Otherwise, though he may for a time hold the truth theoretically,--hold it in unrighteousness--he cannot hold the hope; for the hope springs up in the heart only through obedience to the truth.

Righteousness, and the hope of the rewards of righteousness through Christ, are the legitimate effects of the truth upon the heart that truly receives it. But where it is only received into the head, and is resisted in the heart, it only deepens the dye of sin by hardening the heart, thus bringing additional condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment.-- Heb. 10:27.

This purifying of the heart by the truth is both an instantaneous and a gradual work. When a man is truly converted to God, there is necessarily a purifying of the heart (the will, the intentions)--a full turning away from sin and evil, and an unreserved surrender of the whole being to God. But as the constant tendency of the old, sinful nature is to

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re-assert itself, the purifying influences of the truth must be continually applied that the heart may be kept pure and acceptable with God. But let none make the mistake of presuming that the pure in heart are necessarily free from all imperfections. As long as we have this treasure in the earthen vessel we shall be conscious of its imperfections; yet if the heart, the will, the intentions, be pure, holy and true and loyal to God as the mariner's needle to the pole, we are pure in heart, holy and acceptable with God through faith in Christ Jesus, whose imputed righteousness fully supplements all the imperfections of our earthen vessels.

We notice also that this special love of fellowship, to which the Apostle here refers, is not to be exercised toward the world,--to whom belongs only the love of pity and sympathy, nor toward Satan or any of the wilful enemies of the Lord and his cause, against whom true love and loyalty to God ever arrays us in vigilant and determined opposition, --but toward the brethren--toward them of like precious faith and hope, and of one mind with us, and the Lord. Fervent love, the love of true brotherly fellowship, should indeed exist among all such. They should be in fullest sympathy and co-operation. They should bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of

Christ; they should in honor prefer one another,
and in love each esteem the other better
than himself. They should love as brethren,
be pitiful, courteous, kind, gentle, true
and loyal. As Jesus said, "Love one another
as I have loved you."--John 13:34.

May the love of Christ more and more
abound among his people, until the whole body
of the Anointed, knit together in love and
made all glorious within by its purifying power,
is "made meet for the inheritance of the
saints in light."

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RETROSPECTION.

"Thou shalt remember the way which the Lord thy God
led thee." "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence,
which has great recompense of reward."--
Deut. 8:2; Heb. 10:35.

He was better to me than all my hopes,
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears.
The billows that guarded my sea-girt path,
Carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on his love for the rest.

He emptied my hands of my treasured store,
And his covenant love revealed;
There was not a wound in my aching heart,
But the balm of his breath hath healed.
Oh, tender and true was the chastening sore,
In wisdom that taught and tried,
Till the soul he sought was trusting in him,
And nothing on earth beside.

He guided my path that I could not see,
By ways that I have not known,
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain,
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise him still for the pleasant palms,
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillars of flame by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day.

And if to warfare he calls me forth,
He buckles my armor on;
He greets me with smiles and a word of cheer

For battles his sword hath won;
He wipes my brow as I droop and faint,
He blesses my hand to toil;
Faithful is he, as he washes my feet,
From the trace of each earthly soil.

There is light for me on the trackless wild,
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place.
Has he changed for me? Nay! He changes not,
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood, and each crafty foe,
As safely as yesterday.

Never a watch in the dreariest halt,
But some promise of love endears;
I read from the past that my future shall be
Far better than all my fears,--
Like the golden pot of the wilderness bread,
Laid up with the blossoming rod,
All safe in the ark with the law of the Lord,
Is the covenant care of my God.

--Anna Shipton.

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THE CONCISION AND THE CIRCUMCISION.

"Beware of the concision; for we are the circumcision,
which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ
Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."--Phil. 3:2,3.

THE Lord and the apostles take special care
to point out to the Church the serious significance
of her present position, upon which
the weighty considerations of her eternal
welfare depend. They mark out the specially
perilous times, and forewarn us what to expect
in the way of persecution and fiery trials
of faith and patience, and then minister to us
beforehand all the words of counsel, warning,
encouragement, hope and promise that are
necessary to enable us to war a good warfare
and lay hold upon eternal life.

But while the Lord promises grace sufficient
for every time of need, he never encourages
any to rest supinely upon his promises: the exhortations
are always to activity, alertness and
indomitable energy and perseverance. While
he says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee

in the way which thou shalt go," he also adds, "Be not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." (Psa. 32:8,9.) In this intelligent and proper attitude he would have us beware--be cautious, careful and watchful--against all the deceptions and dangers that beset our way; because we have a wily adversary who is the leader of the hosts of darkness against the Lord and against his anointed--"For we wrestle not against [mere] flesh and blood [the visible tools of the adversary], but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [under the power and control of the prince of this world, Satan]." The exhortations to beware of dangers are quite numerous --"Beware of false prophets" (Matt. 7:15-20); "Beware of [evil] men" (Matt. 10:17); "Beware of the leaven [the false doctrine] of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6,12); "Beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15); "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. 2:8); "Beware lest ye, also, being led away with the

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error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17); and, in the words of the above text, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision," etc.

While the wholesome dread of all these should be ever before our minds and keep us continually on guard against sudden attacks of the enemy, the Apostle in our text calls special attention to three things against which he would have us on guard. In the Scriptures, dogs are generally used as symbols of evil, the reference being, not to our domesticated and often noble animal, but to such as are more common in eastern countries, which are indeed disgusting creatures--lazy, filthy, greedy, snapping, snarling, treacherous and generally pestiferous--apt symbols of a very dangerous and wicked class of people. Beware, then, of all such dispositions, no matter by what name they disguise themselves. If any man be an idler--delinquent in his own duties, but busy in those of other men; if he be filthy, breeding spiritual contagion wherever he goes; if he be greedy--self-seeking; if his disposition be to snap and snarl, to bite and devour, or to treacherously lie in wait to deceive--beware of that man. He is not fit company for a child

of God: his influence is contaminating. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

And "give not that which is holy [the truth] unto the [such] dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine [the two being classed together], lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.)

"Light [truth] is sown for the righteous," and not for those of the dog and swine disposition. When, therefore, we find any such, we are to beware of them--be cautious, and on guard against their contaminating influence.

The only preaching proper for such is, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" and "Flee from the wrath to come;" for "God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing." "He will reward righteousness and punish iniquity."

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Beware of evil workers: of those who go about to do evil, who have no bridle on their tongue, but who are given to evil-speaking and evil-surmisings which are improper. Indeed, evil surmising and evil speaking have become so common that very many professed children of God seem to think nothing of it; and little by little the habit grows, crowding out all spirituality; and thereby many are defiled and great reproach is brought upon the cause of Christ. Beware of all such evil workers: shun them as you would a pestilence; for it is a moral pestilence, most ruinous and fatal in its character. Our communications with such should be only to the extent of reproving, and, if that should fail, of exposing the evil work. The spirit that leads to slander is a murderous spirit, and should be recognized and dealt with accordingly.

"Beware of the concision," says the Apostle, --of those not fully and truly consecrated to God; but who stir up strife and factions in the Church; "for we are of the circumcision" --whose circumcision is in the heart. Yes, let us beware of all such; for the influence of the semi-worldly mind is often more subtle, and therefore more dangerous, than that which makes no profession or effort toward godliness. The works of the flesh are covetousness and ambition--for money, fame or any or all of the desires common to the natural man. But the works of the truly and fully circumcised heart are the opposite of all these: they are faith, love, joy, peace, heavenly hopes and aspirations,

and the daily crucifying of the flesh.

No natural man of the fallen race ever had a fully circumcised heart. And such as have it are dead to the world. Its hopes, aims and ambitions are crucified to them, and they are alive toward God. Any one who has the realization of such a condition of heart has in this fact a blessed evidence of his acceptance with God and of his heirship of all the exceeding great and precious promises--if so be that he so continue, faithful even unto death.

But let all such beware of the concision, the spirit of strife and division; for in the fiery trials of this evil day all such will surely fall, and only such as worship God in spirit and in truth can stand. Already the test of endurance is proving a severe test for some; and it will surely be yet more severe. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." There is no assurance whatever that any will be able to stand in this evil day who have not devoted themselves fully and unreservedly to the Lord. But those who have done so, and who are still faithful to their covenant, have cause to rejoice in Christ Jesus, whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose precious blood purchased their ransom.

"NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH."

Like the Apostle, we are to have "no confidence in the flesh"--in any works of the flesh or advantages of fleshly inheritance. Our confidence rests in God who accepts us through the merit of his beloved Son.

A very false construction, often put upon these words of the Apostle, infers from these words that he did not trust himself or anyone else;--that he put no confidence in any human being;--that he was always ready to be suspicious.

That this is a wrong view of the Apostle's words is very clear: (1) from the fact that in his various epistles he repeatedly expresses confidence in himself and in other believers, and (2) from the context of this passage. The following verses (4-9) show that the Apostle meant that his confidence toward God was not based upon his being a circumcised Hebrew, nor on his zeal for God and his law, etc. These things in which he did have confidence, once, he now counts as loss and dross. He no longer has confidence therein, but rejects

them as so much "loss" and "dross"
and "dung." His confidence now is based
upon faith in Christ's great sacrifice, and a full
consecration to his service.--Verses 10-14.

Let us be like-minded, and have great confidence
in God and Christ and in all who have
their word and spirit; and let us put no confidence
in works of the flesh--in anything that
we or others have done or can do aside from
the salvation which God has provided in Christ
Jesus, "through faith in his blood."

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"WHAT SHALL I RENDER?"

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits
toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call
upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto
the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people."
--Psa. 116:12-14.--

GRATITUDE is the responsive chord to
benevolence in every truly noble heart,
and no harmony is sweeter or more inspiring
to noble deeds and lofty purposes. God would
have his children cultivate for their own sake,
as well as for the sake of others, all the graces
of true nobility and moral excellence. It is
therefore fitting that we should keep in mind
a careful record of all deeds of love and kindness
toward us, and be careful to return the
gratitude due. How often does love go unrequited
because selfishness crowds out the
nobler instincts of the soul.

While human kindnesses often draw largely
upon us for the exercise of this grace, how
much more does the constant and disinterested
benevolence of our Heavenly Father. To him
we are indebted for every good that we possess;
and as his consecrated children we are
also the special objects of his grace. Which
of us cannot trace a long line of special providences
on our behalf? Let us call to mind
how he brought us up "out of the horrible pit"
of condemnation to death, and "out of the
miry clay" of personal sin, and "set our feet
upon the rock" Christ Jesus; and then by his
truth "established our goings." Yea, and
he hath put a new song in our mouth, even
praise unto our God."--Psa. 40:2,3.

How wonderfully God has helped his people:

they are his constant care; no good thing doth he withhold from them; and all things are made to work together for their good. In the smallest and in the greatest affairs of life he is ever watching for our interests, and the evidences of his care are all about us.

What, then, shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? What, indeed, have we to render that we have not received of him?

Nothing. But the inspired penman suggests what we may acceptably render as follows:--

(1) "I will take the cup of salvation."

Just as a parent loves to see his child gratefully and appreciatively accept his favors, so God regards our acceptance of his great salvation, --the gift of his love purchased for us at great cost. Therefore we will obey his call and take the cup of salvation through faith in Christ the Redeemer.

(2) "And call upon the name of the Lord."

He has invited our confidence and has proved his worthiness of it; therefore will we trust him and not be afraid. He who has redeemed us at a great price is both able and willing to perfect in and for us his great salvation. Yes, let us give him our fullest confidence.

(3) "I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people." This also the Lord will regard as an expression of gratitude. To render our consecrated hearts and talents, in glad and cheerful service, is but a reasonable return for all his goodness. Let us, therefore, do it gladly and with zeal and energy. It will be but a small return at best, but the measure of love and zeal that goes with it will indicate the measure of our gratitude. And let us do it promptly--"now"--and to such an extent that it will be blessedly realized by the Lord's people specially--"in the presence of all his people."

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"IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."--Eccl. 12:1.

THOSE of the Lord's children who early gave their hearts to him and committed their way to his guidance can all bear testimony to

multiplied blessings as the results of that early start in the right way. And we are glad to see some very young people among us now taking the first steps in the ways of life. To all such young pilgrims we would say, God bless you! You are starting out as young soldiers of the cross, and we want you to be

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brave and true soldiers, and to remember that the first duty of a soldier is obedience to the Captain--Jesus Christ. Give close attention and try to understand what he would have you do, and then be very prompt to obey, whether or not you are able to comprehend the wisdom of his directions.

It is a question with many how early in life a child may give its heart to God and be fully consecrated to him. But the Scriptures make very plain the fact that they may and should be consecrated to the Lord by their parents before their birth or even their begetting, that thus their pre-natal influences may insure them a mental and spiritual inheritance tending to godliness, and that with the dawn of intelligence this disposition should begin to be cultivated and warmed into vital, active piety, so that at a very tender age the little ones may intelligently ratify the parental covenant of entire consecration to God. This they should be expected and led to do as early as possible.

Of such early consecration to the Lord we have many notable examples in the Scriptures. Of John the Baptist it is said that his parents "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," and that John was given them in answer to prayer--"filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb." (Luke 1:6,15,44,66,80.) Paul was similarly endowed from his birth (Gal. 1:15; Acts 26:4,5), and was zealous toward God long before his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. (Acts 22:3,4.) So also were Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11,24-28; 2:11,18,19) and Moses.--Exod. 2:1.

Those thus early devoted to the Lord escape many a snare and many an entanglement, which in later years bring distress and trouble to so many. They do not have to reap the bitter harvest that always comes from the sowing of "wild oats;" they do not find it so much against the current of their nature to live godly lives; and they have in later years the strength of character born of continued self-discipline

and self-restraint, and all the blessed advantages of a long acquaintance with God and of the instructions of his Word and of the leadings of his gracious providences.

How wise is the counsel, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth--while the evil days come not," etc. Those evil days of bitter disappointment and despair never will come to those who in youth commit their ways unto the Lord, and trust him to guide their paths. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. They are not by any means smooth and easy ways, but they are always peaceful and pleasant, because he

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who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5), is always present to comfort and to bless, and to make all things work together for good to those who love God --the called ones according to his purpose.

Those of the consecrated who have children and young people under their care have much to do in shaping their course and in leading them to Christ, by throwing around them the influences of their own consecrated lives, and imparting to them such instruction as their own acquaintance with the truth and their more matured experience and judgment can give. Such efforts, properly directed, are not lost upon the young.

Let them see both in your example and teaching how distinctly the line is drawn between the consecrated believer and the world;--that there is no compromise with the world: that to follow Christ is to renounce the world with all its ambitions, its gayety and its pleasures and companionship. Let them see the hollowness of worldly pleasures, and improve occasions for calling attention to the dissatisfaction and unrest of those who pursue the delusions, and the peace and joy of those who have left the world to follow Christ. It is helpful also to tell to others how graciously the Lord has led us, to speak of the various turning points in our course, where the friendly crook of the Good Shepherd kept us from straying away into the wrong path; or how when once we strayed his mercy tenderly pursued us and brought us back to his fold; how he has shielded us from evil; comforted us in sorrow; satisfied our longing souls with the joys of his salvation; and made us to sit down with him in heavenly places.

Before the mind becomes engrossed with the frivolities of this world it is easily led by wise and loving hearts; and none should lose these precious opportunities, which a few years later may bring forth a rich harvest to the Master's praise. Our object, however, is not to turn aside the saints from the great work of harvesting the mature wheat of this age, to the less important work of instructing the rising generation; but, rather, to point out the wayside privileges of very many who otherwise might not observe them. Many consecrated parents have these privileges every day; and many others come in contact with the young and forget to let their light shine upon them, under the erroneous impression that they cannot be expected to understand or to have any spiritual aspirations.

It is a great mistake to presume that the young must first run in the race of pride, ambition, frivolity and folly with the world, and then be converted to God. It is the business of those who have to do with them to shield them as far as possible against such influences, and to help them to center their affections and hopes in God before the world throws its ensnaring charms about them.

To all the dear children and young people who have given their hearts to God, and who are trying daily to follow Jesus, the WATCH TOWER sends its greeting. We know some of the very little ones who love Jesus, and who are not ashamed to stand up for Jesus among other children who do not love him or try to please him; and who are brave and true to God, even when laughed at and thought peculiar by their school-mates to whom they tell the good news of the Kingdom. And we are rejoiced to see some young people, who have bravely renounced the world and its ambitions and pleasures, among the most faithful of those who have consecrated their lives to the Lord. Some of our Office helpers as well as many of the successful colporteurs are still young in years.

May the good work go on in the deepening and widening course. Let the young rejoice in the prospects of a lengthened campaign and great usefulness in the Lord's service; let those of maturer years bear up bravely and wisely under the burden and heat of the day, doing valiant service as veterans in the army of the Lord; and let the aged pilgrims, leaning upon the staff of divine truth and rejoicing in

its steadfastness, stand as beacon lights to others and at the end of their course be able to testify, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith."

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PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT.

A brother inquires:--Does God look with displeasure on those who, knowing his plan thoroughly, as laid down in MILLENNIAL DAWN, just give up sin of all kinds, while still retaining their love of the good things of this life? Before reading MILLENNIAL DAWN I was a professing Christian; but, I see now, in name only. While trying to lead a pure life, I do not feel ready to enter on to a life of self-sacrifice. Do you think there is anything wrong in this course?

To this we reply:--We do not believe that the Lord looks with displeasure upon a life which seeks to avoid sin, and which recognizes the merit of Christ's righteousness as the ground of acceptance. Nevertheless we hold with the Apostle, that it is but a "reasonable service" on our part to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God; for we judge that, Christ having died for us, we should live the remainder of our lives in his service.-- 2 Cor. 5:14,15,20.

The spirit which would permit us to please simply ourselves, to the neglect of others who might be greatly blessed by the same truths which have so refreshed our hearts, would certainly be the spirit of selfishness--the opposite to the spirit of love. I trust, therefore, that your reception of the truth will lead to the development in you of the spirit of the truth--love; for we know that this spirit alone is the holy spirit--the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ--and that whoever does not sooner or later develop a spirit of love will not be accounted worthy of everlasting life, either as a member of the little flock, or of the great company or of the world during the Millennial age. None will be accounted worthy of everlasting life except he have the spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."--Rom. 8:9.

Nevertheless, as we said before, the Lord is very merciful through Christ, and those who

at first merely shun sin and accept the Redeemer will be recognized of God and patiently dealt with, that perchance the fruit of the spirit may ultimately be developed. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control." --Gal. 5:22,23--Diaglott.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I want to get out of Babylon; but, if I meet not with the Church to which I have been attached for years (Disciple), I feel lost. I realize the necessity of close fellowship with spiritually minded people. And, now, the following please answer as fully as you can, either by letter to me personally or through the WATCH TOWER. If a man attempt the race for the "high calling," what is the nature of the sacrifice he must make? You say (MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I.), he is not only forbidden sinful things, but must deny himself the "good things" of this life. Please make this plain. Be explicit. Please come down to particulars. Again, are there any in the world doing so at present, to your knowledge? Any who are suffering for righteousness' sake? I say suffering; because to be slighted and misrepresented for the truth's sake does not cause one much "suffering." It is more of the nature of "sorrow."

I stand amazed at the wonderful, wonderful light, which beams from the pages of the three volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN.

God help me in the way I should go.

Your brother, EMORY A. SADDLER.

REPLY:--What we mean by "suffering" is not the infliction of wounds or other injury to the person, but self-denials. The suffering is small--"not worthy to be compared to the glory to follow;" but it is the result of the ignoring of the hopes, ambitions and feelings of the sacrificer.

Since it is to be a sacrifice, the things to be sacrificed are not specified in the Scriptures; nor may we speculate as to what you should sacrifice; but each one should seek to sacrifice something of comfort, pleasure or luxury in the service of the Lord, his truth and his Church.

A person of means might deny himself several hundred or thousand dollar's worth of luxury in a year--luxury which he foregoes simply in the interest of the truth, that the means may be used in a better way. A poor

brother, for instance, recently sent in \$2.00 to the Tract Fund, saying it was the result of his walking instead of riding to daily work, and other small extras which he had willingly denied himself to be able to share in the spread of the truth.

These both represent self-denials, self-sacrificings; the one of much out of much, the other of less out of little; but both, if done from the same pure, worthy motive, alike acceptable to God. See Mark 12:41-44.

Then there are other forms of sacrifice,-- the practice of economy for the truth's sake, the sacrifice of time and strength in doing good, feeding the physically or spiritually hungry, the spending of time and energy in preaching the Word, either by voice or pen or printed page--tracts, etc. Any service rendered to God, his people, or his Word, which costs the flesh something, is a sacrifice, acceptable in God's sight through Christ. But a whole burnt-offering, the giving of all that we have and are to the Lord, is most pleasing to him, and our reasonable service. When practicable (i.e., when previous obligations as husband or wife, father or mother, do not prevent), this often leads to the Colporteur work, or some other service which ignores worldly ambitions; but where impracticable, the Lord equally accepts the will with lesser deeds, when they are faithfully done as unto him.

Glad that you are able to take joyfully the spoiling of your goods; for amongst all the possessions of this present life, a good name is one of the chief.--EDITOR.

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STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

--INTERNATIONAL S.S. LESSONS.--

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THOSE OF OUR READERS WHO ATTEND BIBLE CLASSES WHERE THESE LESSONS ARE USED; THAT THEY MAY BE ENABLED TO LEAD OTHERS INTO THE FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

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THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

III. QUAR., LESSON II., JULY 1, LUKE 2:1-16.

Golden Text--"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."--Luke 2:11.

That our Lord Jesus existed prior to his incarnation, and in a more exalted nature and condition, is clearly stated in the Scriptures. See John 17:5; 2 Cor. 8:9; John 1:1-3,10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 4:11. See also WATCH TOWER of August 1888 and April 15, 1893.

This change of nature was a miracle, the philosophy of which, like that of all miracles, transcends the limits of human thought; and, like all other miracles, it was performed to meet an emergency for which no natural law could otherwise provide. The philosophy of the divine plan of redemption which required it is, however, very manifest to the thoughtful mind guided by the Scripture statements. The Son of God was made

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flesh that he might give his flesh--his humanity --for the life of the world; that as by a man (Adam) came death, so by a man ("the man Christ Jesus") might come the resurrection of the dead. (John 1:14; 6:51; 1 Cor. 15:21.) In other words, he was transformed from the spiritual to the human nature, so that in giving his life for the world's redemption he might give the exact equivalent or corresponding price for that which was lost.

For the sake of brevity we must of necessity pass by many points of interest connected with this narrative of our Lord's birth, e.g., the prophecies of his coming (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:6,7; 11:1-9; Dan. 9:24, etc.); the announcement of his coming (Luke 1); the date of his birth (See M. DAWN VOL. II., page 54); his human lineage as a Son of David and of Abraham, and his divine origin as the only begotten Son of God; and, lastly, the condition of the world at his advent. But these the student can with profit look up for himself. On the last point, however, we would have none fail to observe the evidences of the Lord's preparatory overruling providence in so shaping the world's affairs as to accomplish the purposes of his plan at that time. (1) The

world was then for a time at peace, and quiet, the Roman dominion having brought all the world under its powerful control; and as all men were in expectation of Messiah's advent (Luke 3:15) according to the Jewish prophets whose fame had gone out into all the world, the sudden announcement

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of his birth attracted wide attention, as it would not have done in less peaceful times. (2) The Greek language, noted by all scholars as the most nearly perfect, exact and precise medium for human speech, had at that time been fully developed and widely disseminated. Thus was prepared in due time the very best medium for the communication of the gospel of the new covenant.

(3) The Old Testament had been translated into the Greek language three centuries before Christ (This version is called the Septuagint); and the Jews had been dispersed among all peoples, carrying the O.T. with them and bearing witness to its prophecies of a coming Messiah. (4) It was a time, too, of increased intellectual activity, which was ready to operate on this and every other question of public interest. Thus the circumstances of the time were peculiarly adapted to the announcement of this wonderful event,--the advent of the world's Redeemer. The fulness of time had come, and, under the overruling providence of God, the conditions were ripe.

It is worthy of notice that the announcement of the Savior's birth was not made to an assembled world, in whose most vital interest he had come; nor even to assembled Israel, the chosen people of God; nor yet to all of those who, like Simeon and Anna, with devout hearts had long been looking for the hope of Israel. But it was made to only a few devout shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. The grand truth was one to be received by faith; and it was sent through humble, but trustworthy, human agents, who were the honored instruments in God's hands. And any who proudly despised the instruments were unworthy of the good tidings.

The announcement was one which modern "orthodoxy" could not justify; for it was the very reverse of its bad tidings of great misery to nearly all people. The Angels' message was, "good tidings of

GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

The tidings are of redemption and restitution and everlasting life for all who will accept this blessing on the terms on which it is offered;--viz., faith in Christ as the Redeemer, and full repentance from sin, which of necessity implies the forsaking of sin and the cultivation of righteousness. Christ was born to be a Savior by subsequently giving his life a ransom for all. These good tidings --this miracle of divine goodness and mercy to fallen and doomed men--met a marvelously cold and indifferent reception. The world in general, though apprised of the fact and its import, manifested no faith nor interest in it, while it is written that he came unto his own people (the Jews), and they received him not. But the jubilant heavenly hosts, who were capable of appreciating what fallen men could not appreciate, and will not until their blind eyes are opened and their deaf ears unstopped, broke out in a rapturous strain of heavenly melody, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*

*This expression--"good will toward men"--as rendered by a majority of translators is confirmed by the latest found manuscript, the Lewis manuscript of the Gospels, discovered in 1892 in the convent at Mt. Sinai.

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The full import of this song will not be fully realized by men until the Millennial reign of Christ shall proffer them full emancipation and deliverance from sin and its entailments.

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PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

III. QUAR., LESSON II., JULY 8, LUKE 2:25-38.

Golden Text--"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."--Luke 2:32.

VERSES 25-31. Simeon was one of the kind of characters to whom God reveals his truth--a just and devout man, waiting

in faith for the consolation of Israel. "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." And the holy spirit was upon him, so that, being thus inspired, he prophesied concerning the infant Jesus.

VERSE 32. Under divine inspiration, therefore, Simeon declared this child to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. John also pointed to him as the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9.) And Paul adds, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved [from their blindness and deafness], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4.) As the vast majority of mankind have never been thus enlightened, and thousands more have been only partially so, it follows logically that the full enlightenment of the world tarries until the Millennial reign of Christ shall call forth all that are in their graves--when "the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings." Then he will enlighten the whole world, and believing Israel will glory in him.

Simeon's further prophecy of verse 34 is partially fulfilled. The world has witnessed the fall of Israel from divine favor, and their sad condition as outcasts for nearly two thousand years, because of their rejection of Christ. And now the time for their rising again has come (beginning A.D. 1878): and they will be raised up nationally to all the favor from which they fell nationally. Today we are witnesses of the regathering of Israel, preparatory to the turning away of their blindness and their coming again into divine favor and blessing.

"And for a sign which shall be spoken against." This has been true all through the age; and the reproach of the cross has not yet ceased.

VERSE 35 had reference to Christ's tragic death, and the test of faith thereby instituted, both in that day, and even to the end of the age, thus (by the test) revealing the thoughts of many hearts,--proving which are loyal and faithful to God as true soldiers of the cross, and which are not. It is not probable, however, that Simeon, who spoke thus under divine inspiration, understood fully the import of his words.

VERSES 36-38. Anna, a prophetess, another devout, faithful soul, recognized and pointed out the infant Redeemer. It will

be observed that she was of the tribe of Aser--another evidence of what we have frequently called attention to in connection with the Anglo-Israel question, that the entire house of Israel (twelve tribes) was represented at Jerusalem in our Lord's day, and not the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only. See TOWER, Dec. '91.

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VISIT OF THE WISE MEN.

III. QUAR., LESSON III., JULY 15, MATT. 2:1-12.

Golden Text--"They saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him."-- Matt. 2:11.

VERSES 1,2. That even the Gentile world was in expectation of the coming Messiah (Luke 3:15) is manifest from this visit of the wise men (Greek Magi, sages) from the east--possibly from Persia. The term originally belonged to a class of priests among the Medes and Persians who constituted the king's privy council and who cultivated astrology, medicine and occult and natural science. Ancient authors make frequent reference to them. Later the term was applied to all eastern philosophers.

In the far east, the Chinese and Japanese and other nations have cherished a very ancient tradition that God would descend to the earth in visible form, to enlighten men and to redeem them from their sins. Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus all testify that there prevailed throughout the entire East at this time an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that ere long a powerful monarch would arise in Judea and gain dominion over the world. Virgil, who lived a little before this, tells that a child from heaven was looked for who should restore the golden age and take away sin. Confucius, in China, about B.C. 500, prophesied the appearance of such a deliverer, and a deputation of his followers going forth in search of him was the means of introducing Buddhism into China. Zoroaster

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taught the Persians that a pure virgin

would bring forth a child, and that as soon as the child would be born a star would appear, which he added, "follow wheresoever it leads you, and adore the mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the Almighty Word, which created the heavens."

These expectations doubtless arose from the intermingling of the Jews with foreign nations. The Prophet Daniel was himself associated with some of their wise men. (Dan. 2:48.) His prophecies were made known to them, and the calculations by which he pointed to the time of Messiah's advent. These in course of time were woven into their literature. Nearly all of the ancient religions are confessions of human need: and in their blind gropings in the dark, they reveal the depths of man's degradation and misery.

The miraculous star in the east, for which some of the Gentile wise men had been taught by a mere vague, groping superstition to look, finally made its appearance, and guided those blind feelers after God to

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the wonderful light of the world. Thus kindly God condescends to human ignorance and weakness. "A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench." All men will in due time have full, clear testimony to establish their faith in the Holy One of Israel and all who love righteousness will gladly accept him. Those who now can walk by faith have all the evidences which hopeful, loving faith requires. But none the less shall all the doubting Thomases and all the now blinded world in due time have the more tangible evidences in store for them. But more blessed are those who can now walk by faith.--
John 20:29.

The inquiry of the wise men (verse 2) betokened a proper condition of heart--(1) It showed that they had respect and reverence, and that they desired to render homage to the mighty God of Israel, and to his messenger to men. (2) It showed faith in the divinely inspired prophecies which had been irregularly interwoven with their own vague ideas and traditions. (3) It showed their zeal as truth-seekers, and their humility of heart in leaving their own philosophies, etc., and coming to inquire of the

God of another nation. They seemed to desire truth on the great subjects of God and of human destiny, regardless of all other considerations. And they accordingly declared their disposition to render the homage due to the appointed ambassador of Israel's God, when they should find him.

Jesus was born to be a king as well as a savior. The latter term includes the former; for the great salvation is secured by both his humiliation (even unto death) and his exaltation (as a king and deliverer). By his vicarious sacrifice our salvation was made legally possible; and by his glorious reign it will become an accomplished fact.

VERSES 3-6 show the faith--though it was an irreverent and selfishly jealous faith --of Herod and his official staff in the God of Israel and in the words of his inspired prophets; and also the thorough acquaintance of the Jews with the prophecies. Without hesitation they pointed to the predictions of time and place and repeated Christ's foretold mission. Indirectly, we have here strong evidence of the esteem which the Hebrew Scriptures everywhere commanded. Herod's selfish faith, which sought the infant king that he might kill him, was in strong contrast with the reverent and devotional faith of the wise men. Fearing the overthrow of his own power, he was moved with envy toward the infant rival who was already attracting the world's attention. But, as usual, the wrath and duplicity of an evil man was overruled for good; for the king gave to the wise men the directions from the Jewish prophets--to go to Bethlehem, --an additional assurance to that of the star that they were being rightly guided, and that too by the God of Israel.

VERSES 7,8,12 show the duplicity of Herod's wicked heart, which the wise men could not discern, but which God knew and guarded them against by a warning dream. The devout wise men obeyed the warning and, disregarding the king's command, departed into their own country another way, bearing the good tidings with them.

VERSES 9-11. Leaving the king's presence, they observed that the star also led in the direction of Bethlehem, and, standing over where the young child was, the miraculous luminary had accomplished its mission: the infant Redeemer and King was found and reverently worshipped and presented

with the choicest and most costly gifts.

Thus even in his infancy this light that was to lighten the Gentiles began to shine into some waiting and devout Gentile hearts.

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ZION'S WATCH TOWER

AND

HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.

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CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?

Seventeen years ago people said, concerning the time features presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, They seem reasonable in many respects, but surely no such radical changes could occur between now and the close of 1914: if you had proved that they would come about in a century or two, it would seem much more probable.

What changes have since occurred, and what

velocity is gained daily!

"The old is quickly passing, and the new is coming in."

Now, in view of recent labor troubles and threatened anarchy, our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can hold out so long under the strain.

We see no reason for changing the figures--nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but for the end of the time of trouble. We see no reason for changing from our opinion expressed in the View presented in the WATCH TOWER of Jan. 15, '92. We advise that it be read again.

TRACT NO. 21.--DO YOU KNOW?

We published one hundred and fifteen thousand copies of this tract, and have sent samples to all our TOWER readers. It seems to give general satisfaction, and orders from all quarters are large. We advise the circulation of this tract by all of you--on street cars, steam cars, at hotels and depots, and Sundays on the street-corners,--until everyone within your reach has been supplied. Order all that you will agree to use. Never mind the money. Many have opportunity for distributing sample copies of Old Theology Tracts who have no money to spare to pay for their printing, etc., but others, again, who have less opportunity for distributing tracts, take delight in meeting the publishing expenses, and thus help to preach the "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

The first edition, although large, is already exhausted; but we have another edition of over two hundred thousand under way which will be ready in about ten days. Send in your order and have a share in this feature of the harvest work. There should be a million copies of this tract in circulation within a year.

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VOL. XV. JULY 15, 1894. NO. 14.

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

LABOR PANGS OF THIS KOSMOS.

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,...waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God" in Kingdom power; for which we [the sons of God who are to be manifested for the blessing of all the families of the earth] also groan, praying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven."
--Rom. 8:22,23,19; Matt. 6:10.

NO one can be indifferent to the phenomenal times in which we are living; for although the rush and crush of business and pleasure continue, and even increasingly, there is, deep down in men's hearts, even at the theaters and sporting grounds, a feeling of unrest which cannot be better described than by the prophetic words of our Master,--"Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after [toward] those things coming upon the earth."

We who know what is coming are relieved from anxiety; for, although we see near us a dark night of intense trouble, such as has not been since there was a nation, we see also the glorious beyond--the Millennial day, which "lights the gloom with healing ray." We can wait patiently, although not without interest and deep concern, for the development of God's great Plan of the Ages, now so near its consummation.

It is interesting to look back and note the accuracy of the fulfilment of God's Word, so that our hearts may be established with the greater confidence respecting the future,--the things coming upon the earth. For instance, as we look back and note that the Scriptures marked 1873 as the end of six thousand years from Adam to the beginning of the seventh thousand, and the fall of 1874 as the beginning of the forty-year harvest of the Gospel age and day of wrath for the overthrow of all the institutions of "this present evil world [or order of affairs],"* we can see that facts have well borne out those predictions of Scripture. We see that the present world-wide distress had its beginning there; that it has been progressing with increasing momentum every year since; and that, as the Apostle Paul declared it would be, so it has been, and so it is--"As travail upon a woman with child." Each spasm of pain is more intense; and so it evidently will continue

to be until the death of the present order of things and the birth of the new.

It might be presumed that all this would seem plain to us who have been so preaching and writing for nearly twenty years on these lines; but it will be interesting to our readers to note that now, twenty years after, others who have no knowledge of our writings, or of the prophecies upon which our expectations were and are based, are calling public attention to these very dates. Rev. Josiah Strong, D.D., a man of world-wide reputation as a thinker, calls attention to the year 1873, as laying the foundation of present troubles, saying:--

"Profound economic changes have attended the transition of the world's methods of production and distribution which has taken place during this century and more especially during

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chaps. 2, 6, 7; VOL. I., Chap. 15.

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the past twenty-five or thirty years. It is to this source we must look for some of the principle causes of popular discontent which has been pronounced ever since the commencement of the industrial depression which began in 1873 and affected all classes."

Even more widely known is Mr. Powderly, for years at the head of one of the chief labor organizations of this country: he places the date of the beginning of present labor disturbances as 1874--just following the financial strain of 1873 noted by Mr. Strong. Thus both gentlemen and both of their dates agree with the Scriptures. Mr. Powderly says: "Go back twenty years [to 1874], and you will find that the employer and employee had interests in common."

But Mr. Powderly's address, of which the above is a part, will all be interesting, and we quote it below, from the N.Y. World of July 2.

MR. POWDERLY'S ADDRESS.

T. V. Powderly, ex-General Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, spoke at Prohibition Park, Staten Island, yesterday, on the railroad strike and the coal strike of Pennsylvania. He carried the strain of total abstinence

throughout his remarks.

"Until the laboring men of America," he said, "are made to realize that they carry their worst enemy with them in the shape of liquor, they will not solve the great problems that now confront them.

"You all probably have made up your minds that I am a very terrible sort of a man. You have read of the hundreds of strikes that I have ordered, strikes that have paralyzed the business of the country, and carried want into tens of thousands of homes. Standing here before you and before my God, I can say that I never ordered a strike in my life. All the strikes that I have been credited with ordering have been precipitated before I knew anything of them; and then I have, as leader, simply made the best of what I have always regarded as a very bad situation.

"We are all now intensely interested as to the outcome of the strike in the West. Every strike that takes place upon a line of railroad is a strike against the whole country. Our railroads

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are so closely identified with the life of the nation that when you stop any one of these arteries through which the life blood of the nation's prosperity flows you injure those whom you least expect to injure and whom you would least desire to harm.

"There is now a great feeling of unrest in this land. Go back twenty years and you will find that the employer and the employee had interests in common. But machinery, that Juggernaut which for good or for ill has crushed millions in its march of progress, has made men merely subordinates to it. Then, too, money has become centralized, and unheard-of fortunes are in the hands of individuals. There are twenty-four men in America to-day who possess more money than there was in the whole world when this country had the revolution which gave us a name and a flag.

"Taken altogether the brotherhood of man seems to be a long way off. Is it any wonder that men who are working for wages that will barely sustain life should take desperate measures to undo a wrong? There is a cause for all these labor demonstrations, whether they be right or wrong, and the cause is not of to-day or of yesterday, but one that has grown with the century.

"The great national highways, the railways, are as much the property of our Government

to-day as were the old coach roads. There are many who believe that these railroad strikes, which during the past twelve years have become more extensive, will continue, doing more injury each time, and that there will be less chance of controlling them in the future, until we adopt a plan of national co-operation and run the railroads under the supervision of the United States Government, by and for the whole people.

"This strike to-day is not for wages, not for the recognition of any association or organization. It is a strike for the control of the arteries of trade and industry.

"If all the railroads could be nationalized, then all strikes upon them would be at an end, for every man, whether he be an employee of the railroad or not, would be an equal owner in it and equally interested in the system and equally anxious for its well being.

"These great labor problems will not be solved by the laboring men alone, however. Men and women not directly engaged in labor must act and vote so that they will be a power between what are now called the opposing forces."

After demonstrating the ridiculously low wages that the anthracite coal miners of Pennsylvania have been reduced to, Mr. Powderly said: "Place yourselves in their places. Ask yourselves whether you would go down into the mines every day to slave and toil for the purpose of supplying others with coal, when by your labor you could not supply your own household with the common necessities of life.

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"The day will come when these coal deposits, too, will be owned by the Government that represents the people, who must have the coal.

"Do you believe that God intended that six men sitting here in New York should dictate as to whether all the people should or should not have coal--whether they should be kept warm or cold; whether they should have their meat cooked or raw: by fixing prices to suit themselves? If I thought so, I would be a rank infidel.

"This may sound like Socialism. Well, there are Socialists, and there are men who think they are Socialists. I believe that at heart most of the people are Socialists to-day, for any man who believes that the social conditions need improvement is a Socialist."

A SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

All speak of the present world-wide troubles as "strikes;" but this name is not appropriate to present disturbances. Strikes are revolts against employers, because of real or fancied grievances, or for better pay, shorter hours, etc.; but recent uprisings such as that of the dock-men and coal-miners in England, a year ago, the recent general combination of coal-miners throughout the bituminous coal regions of the United States, and the present uprising of railway employees which is disturbing the comfort and welfare of millions, are not strikes,-- they are more, they are incipient revolutions. They do not express dissatisfaction with employers or wages; for between the employers and the so-called striking employees in many instances there is respect, if not friendship;-- but they do represent a rebellion against the present social system. They are "sympathy strikes," the employees often declaring that they have no grievances, but want to show sympathy with others whom they believe have grievances.

Laborers, mechanics and employees in general are beginning to realize what we pointed out twenty years ago (but what was then scoffed at), that machinery and invention, with the natural increase of the human family, would soon [under present social and financial arrangements] show an over-supply of humanity, because the power of profitable employment would be centralized in the hands of the few, who, operating under the general law of self-interest, would always employ the cheapest competent service; and thus the masses of humanity, being thrown into competition for the necessities of life, would soon become the slaves of the few--their very living necessities depending upon the charity of their employers in providing work. This is what we see in many parts of the old world;-- e.g., millions in China and India barely subsisting upon a wage of four cents per day.

This is the meaning of the "sympathy strikes:" the masses are realizing that their cause is one, and that if something be not done to alter the present social condition and its tendencies, they will become the chattel slaves of corporate wealth. They feel that what is done must be done soon, too; because each year the pinch becomes tighter and they fear that the time may come when they as a class will be too poor to strike or to offer any resistance to oppression; for already they feel as poor, with a wage of one dollar a day, as the East Indiaman does with

four cents per day.

Can we wonder, then, at "sympathy strikes," no matter how unreasonable they may appear on the surface? Surely not: to those engaged it seems to be a question of life or death, socially. To them the future looks not only dark, but black, and without a ray of hope except through the methods now being pursued. And others, in other departments of life, equally hopeless, are only restrained from joining a general revolution by the well-grounded fear that the results would be worse than the present condition, and by the undefined and baseless hope that somehow matters will right themselves. Surely such conditions call for sympathy on all sides. And the people of God, who have gained the good hope of the Gospel of God's Word, can sympathize heartily with these hopeless ones, and should point them to the only real remedy, the Kingdom of God, and earnestly continue to pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

And then can we not also sympathize with the rich and those who employ labor? Surely this is their day of trouble in an especial degree, as said the Prophet and the Apostle. (Zeph. 1:14-18; Jas. 5:1-6.) Present conditions are not, as is sometimes claimed, the result of special legislation secured in their favor, but the result of increased knowledge, and with it, increased ambition. (Dan. 12:4.) The case is like that of an outgrown shoe: once it was a comfortable fit and a desirable shoe; but now it pinches;--not because the shoe has grown narrower and shorter, but because the foot has grown larger. So the metes and bounds of the present social order, that once were easy and favorable, now pinch;--not because they are being contracted, for the reverse is the case: they are being stretched in every direction. They can never again prove easy, however, but will prove more and more distressing, because the general increase of knowledge daily increases the desires and discontents of the masses.

Evidently the rich men are not to be blamed for this, even though they be blameworthy for not recognizing the changed conditions and adapting themselves thereto. Indeed, only millionaires

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could do anything out of the current of social and financial custom. Others are powerless: the average mine-operator, storekeeper, and manufacturer is so beset with competition and with maturing debts that even an attempt to change from the rut of present custom

would mean financial suicide--the wreck of his own business and that of others more or less dependent upon its prosperity. Indeed, we may safely say that the majority of this influential class of busy brain-workers recognize the situation and would rejoice if they could see any feasible method of bringing about a moderate change. And yet in times of strikes and riots, when their business is most disturbed, and when they feel themselves close to the brink of financial ruin, these men cannot call out for public sympathy as can the laborers and strikers; they cannot tell their distress, because to do so would be to spoil their credit and only hasten their ruin. And these men also deserve the sympathy of all who "look not every man upon his own things [troubles and interests], but also upon the things of others."--Phil. 2:4.

But, as selfishness is the basis of the present social system, so love must be the basis of the new and better order; and that radical change can only come about by the sound conversion of the majority of the people to God and his plan (which is not supposable under present conditions), or the interposition of divine power and law,--the very thing which the Scriptures predict. What can we advise? To all the "brethren" we say, "Have patience, brethren;" "avenge not yourselves;" they that take to the sword will suffer therefrom the more themselves.

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Trust in the Lord, wait patiently for him, and he will bring to pass in his due time and way (the best time and way) all the gracious promises of his Word--including the blessing of all the families of earth.

We see the various inequalities and wrongs of the present system of society more clearly than others, because we see them from the standpoint of the Lord's Word; but we can see also that, if it were within our power to suddenly revolutionize matters, that would be undesirable: it would produce a condition far worse than the present. Far better the present social system than none; and far better, while the present system continues, that the power remain in the hands of men of judgment and moderation than that the lever of power be suddenly transferred into the hands of the rash and inexperienced masses, unused to weighty responsibilities, and mere novices and experimenters upon all questions, social and financial. A thousand times better is a social system in the hands of education and experience, even though selfish,

than no social system, or an experimental one in the hands of novices equally selfish, but not equally moderate. We much prefer then to stay as long as we can where we are than to change to any other arrangement that men can originate, or assist in any way to precipitate the trouble which sooner or later must inevitably involve all nations and all individuals.

Better, far better, wait on the Lord,--wait until his time for establishing his Kingdom and have it come about in his way. He will eventually restrain the forces of evil and selfishness in both rich and poor and bring in equity and everlasting righteousness.

So, then, although we know that the revolution and anarchy and trouble are surely coming, let us, "brethren" of Christ, do nothing to promote or hasten it. Let our advice be to the contrary, to any of our friends who seek our counsel. Especially let us improve the opportunity for pointing out to them the true and only remedy for present distress--Christ's Kingdom and its new social order under the law of Love. And, to all who have ears to hear, preach Christ the Redeemer, soon, as the Great Physician, to be the Restorer of all who cheerfully obey him. Point him out as now our Savior, your Savior. Tell them of the joy and peace and blessing which he gives and which he promises shall abide with us in every condition. Tell them that it is for this reason that "We will not fear though the earth [society] be removed; though the mountains [governments] be removed and carried into the midst of the sea [the ungovernable masses]; though the waters [the people] thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains [governments] shake with the swellings [riots, tumults, etc.] thereof."

And if they become interested and willing, lead them to the Lamb of God and the streams of truth that make glad the true people of God, --and if they be converted to God, seal them in the forehead (mind, intellect) with the wonderful present truth with which God has caused us to be sealed.--Rev. 7:3.

Remember that now is the time to be active co-workers with God in doing this sealing work, and that the disturbing winds are being held back until the sealing work is done. Therefore, when the present disturbances pass away and another season of comparative calm follows, continue earnest and zealous in the sealing work, knowing that the time is short and that "the night [the darker period] cometh when no man can work." We must labor while it is called day, and cannot hope for a more favorable opportunity

than the present. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," is the promise.

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"ANGELS WHICH KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE."

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose....And they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown."--Gen. 6:2,4.

THE Scriptures not only point us to the future age and call the spiritual government of Christ which shall then exist a "new heavens," and earthly society and institutions under it a "new earth," but the present spiritual rulership (under Satan, "the prince of this world"), with the earthly institutions under it, is termed "the present evil world," dispensation or epoch.* Moreover, we are informed that the present dominion of evil has not always existed, but that it was preceded by a still different dispensation or epoch, spoken of as "the world that was before the flood," which also had a heavens, or spiritual ruling power, and an earth, or condition of men subject to that spiritual dominion.

The three worlds mentioned by Peter (2 Pet. 3:6,7,13) designate these three great epochs of time. In each, God's plan with reference to men has a distinct and separate outline, yet each is but a part of the one great plan which, when complete, will exhibit the divine wisdom, justice, love and power, to the wonder and admiration of all his creatures.

Since that first "world" (heavens and earth, or that order of things) passed away at the time of the flood, it follows that it must have been a different order from the present, and hence that the prince of this present evil world was not the prince of that order which preceded this --the dispensation before the flood--however widely his influence was then exerted and felt.

Several Scriptures throw light on God's dealings during that first dispensation, and give clearer insight into his plan as a whole. The thought suggested by these is, that the first world (the dispensation before the flood) was under the supervision and special ministration of the angels; who were permitted to do what

they could and desired to do to recover and rule the fallen race, which, because of sin, needed a government other than its own.

That angels were the rulers of that epoch is not only indicated by all references to that period, but may be reasonably inferred from the Apostle's remark when contrasting the present dispensation with the past and the future. He endeavors to show both the righteousness and the enduring character of the future rulership of the world, saying, "The world to come hath he not put in subjection to the angels." No, it is put under the control of our Lord Jesus and his joint-heirs, and hence it shall not only be more righteous than the present rule of Satan, but it shall be more successful than was the previous rule by the angels.--Heb. 2:2,5.

In their original estate all the angels, it seems, possessed the ability to appear in earthly forms.

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., Chapter iv.

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Thus Satan appeared to Eve as a serpent, or acting through a serpent. Other angels frequently appeared as men, thus performing their ministry, appearing or disappearing, as the work demanded.

It was at this time, it seems, that the fall of some of the angels occurred. It is a common supposition, though we think without foundation, that the fall of Satan's angels occurred before man's creation. We are told that Satan was a murderer (man-killer) from the beginning. (John 8:44.) Certainly not the beginning of his own existence, for every creation coming from God's hand is perfect; nor can we think any other beginning referred to than man's beginning, in Eden. But, so far as we are informed, he was then alone and had no followers or angels.

The ambition of Satan, one of the mighty angels, to become a ruler seems to have developed as he beheld the first human pair with their procreative powers, and the grand possibilities of an extended dominion through their posterity. He probably reasoned that, if he could obtain the control of this man, he would have the dominion over all his offspring, and be in power and influence above others--a rival of Jehovah himself; and his growing ambition said, "I will be like the Most High."--Isa. 14:14.

Successful in contaminating the stream at its source, Satan gained a great influence over the

race; but his power over them was limited because of the competition of the great company of angels, who, as guardians, instructed and ruled mankind for a time in harmony with the will of God. But man's corruption was contagious, and some of these angelic rulers soon fell victims to the plague: left their own habitation, or condition as spiritual beings, keeping not their first or original estate. They misused the powers which they possessed, of assuming a human form, and became of a reprobate and licentious mind, copying after degenerate man, and started a new race of men in the world, as the above text (Gen. 6:2-4) affirms.

This Scripture is applied by some to two classes of men--one class, more righteous than the other, called "sons of God." But such a position is untenable; for it is not a sin for one

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man to take for a wife another man's daughter. Marriage among men is never in the Scriptures condemned as sinful. On the contrary, it was ordained of God, and has always had his sanction. (Gen. 2:24; Heb. 13:4.) Our Lord attested his approval by his presence at the marriage in Cana. (John 2:1-11.) Neither is the propagation of the race, under proper conditions, condemned as sinful. God commanded it, that the earth might be filled with a race of beings generated from one pair, and in order that the redemption of the race might be secured by the obedience and sacrifice of one--Christ. (Gen. 1:28; Rom. 5:19.) However, those to whom the Lord has granted a knowledge of his truth sometimes forego marriage, as they deny themselves many other earthly rights and privileges "for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12), if they consider that thereby a more efficient service may be rendered to the Lord.*

Again, if it were merely a union of two classes of the same race, why should the offspring be specially called "men of renown?" If the righteous and the wicked marry to-day, are their children therefore giants or mightier or more renowned men?

Through the deterioration of several hundred years, mankind had lost much of its original vigor and perfection of mind and body; but with the angels it was different. Their powers were still perfect and unimpaired; hence it is clear that their children would partake of that vitality and much more resemble the first perfect man than those around them, among whom they would be giants both in physical and mental

strength.

Those angels which kept not their first condition, but sought the level of sinful men, and left their own habitation, or spiritual condition, God placed in age-lasting chains. That is, God restrained or limited their powers, taking from them the power and privilege of appearing in an earthly form, human or other. Hence, though we know that they did thus appear before the flood, there is not one instance recorded in which they have been able to free themselves from this restraint or chain since. On the contrary, the angels who left not their first estate are not so restrained, and have appeared frequently as men, as a flame of fire, as a pillar of cloud, etc., as recorded in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Having become depraved in their tastes, and being given over to a reprobate mind, and debarred from all association with God and his works and plan, these fallen angels have no longer any pleasure in things on the spiritual plane, but crave association with depraved mankind and a participation with men in sin. How wise and kind the Almighty hand which has restrained their power and influence over men, by preventing their personal intercourse! Now, they may indeed enter and act through any who invite their companionship, as spirit mediums, but no more can they do. Thus far shalt thou go, saith the Almighty, but no further. This is the explanation of what is known as Spiritism.

Some of this class, possessed by devils, our Lord and his disciples met in their ministry. Out of one he cast a legion of devils. (Mark 5:1-15.) Anxious in some manner to become associated with humanity, yet unable to assume human form because restrained, when they found a man willing to have such company, a legion crowded into him, thereby making him a maniac. Even when they perceived that the Lord would release the man from their possession, they in despair requested as a favor that they might be permitted to inhabit and use the bodies of a herd of swine near by. But the swine were crazed thereby, and madly rushed into the sea.

Jude (6,7) gives conclusive evidence on the subject, and clearly shows the nature of the sin for which the fallen angels were condemned and restrained, when, after mentioning the angels who sinned, he says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah,...IN LIKE MANNER giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh." That God prohibits any mixture or blending of natures, and designs that each should keep its own original or first estate is clearly

taught by this passage and also by Lev. 18:23; 20:15,16. And that our race as it exists to-day, coming through Noah, is purely Adamic stock, and contains no mixture, is shown by the expression--"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation,"--i.e., not contaminated in the manner before described.--Gen. 6:9.

Glancing back, then, we see the first epoch under angelic control, the inability of those angels to lift man out of his fallen condition, and the debasing influence of man's continued degradation upon some of the angels. The angels were utterly unable to accomplish the great work of man's recovery. Doubtless they were anxious to do it, for they sang and shouted for joy at his creation. God let them try it, and it was doubtless part of their trial and discipline, but they failed. Some joined the ranks of evil, while the rest stood by powerless to arrest the terrible course of sin. Later we find the good angels still interested, desiring to look into the plan which God has since been working out, and ever ready to do his bidding in our service. (1 Pet. 1:12.) Thus was proven to

*See issue of July '93--"Man and Woman in God's Order."

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both men and angels the futility of angelic power to save men.

In the beginning of "this present evil world," notwithstanding Noah's endeavor to serve God and to teach his posterity to follow his example, and the exhibition of God's judgment in the deluge, the tendency was still downward; and soon the wickedness of Sodom brought its destruction. Mankind were bent on an evil course, and God permitted them to take it. Then the ministrations of angels, except to the few of God's children, was withdrawn; and now, instead of sending heavenly messengers to declare to us his will, he has given us his Word, "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished [thereby] unto all good works."--2 Tim. 3:16,17.

Ever since the fall, God's plan has been gradually and quietly developing, and in due time will bear abundant fruit unto eternal life; and he has now demonstrated to all his creatures that his plan is the only one which could accomplish the great work. It selects and tests first of all the "little flock," the Royal Priesthood,

and then reaches out to lift up and restore
all who will accept life upon God's conditions.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened in the spirit. By which also [in addition to this work done for us] he preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime [before] were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."--1 Pet. 3:18-20. See Diaglott, foot note.

A satisfactory interpretation of this Scripture has long been sought, and but few have found a solution perfectly consistent and satisfying even to themselves. But in view of the truth gleaned from the suggestions of the preceding article, the above statements of the Apostle Peter become luminous.

The two views of this passage commonly held we state first, and then give our present view of it.

The most common view is, that during the time that Jesus was entombed he was off on a missionary tour preaching to the antediluvian sinners who were suffering torture in a supposed place called hell.

If its advocates would consider it, they would find that their interpretation favors a view of future probation for the antediluvians, a thing which they strenuously oppose. For if Christ preached to them it must have been for some purpose. Surely it was not merely to mock and deride them. Consequently he must have preached a message of hope--a part of his blessed "good tidings of great joy." And if there is a future for the antediluvians, why not accept our position as correct--that in Christ

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"all families of the earth shall be blessed?"

This is the objection which consistency would urge against this view, from the standpoint of those who hold it. But if we view it from the Scriptural standpoint, and with the correct idea of death and "hell," we must reason that if Jesus were really dead during those three days, as the Apostles declare, then he could do no preaching; for "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5), and "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." (Eccl. 9:10.) Second, If Jesus had been an exception to the rule, and could have preached, the antediluvians could not have heard; for

certainly they have no wisdom, nor knowledge, in the grave. Hence this view is found generally unsatisfactory and as well as unscriptural.*

The second view, and the one which seemed most reasonable to us until the considerations of the preceding article threw light upon this scripture also, is to refer the preaching to that which Noah did under the direction of the Spirit of God to the antediluvians, who at this time were imprisoned in death. The objection to this view is, that the preaching was not to men, nor to the spirits of men, but to spirits, spirit beings; and the preaching was not done by Noah, nor by the Spirit of God, nor before the flood, but after they had been chained,-- by the death and resurrection of our Lord.

It seems very clear, therefore, that the spirits are those spirit beings who were disobedient during the days of Noah, and whom God therefore imprisoned or restrained in some of their former liberties and privileges, even "those angels who kept not their own principality, but left their own habitation [or normal condition]. He has kept them in perpetual chains [restraints], under thick darkness, for the judgment of the great day."--Jude 6, Diaglott.

This interpretation seems to meet all the circumstances of the case thus far. Now we inquire, In what way could our Lord preach to those spirits during the time he was dead? We answer that it is not so stated. It was by the facts that he preached, as we sometimes say that "actions speak louder than words." It was by his sufferings, death and resurrection that the preaching was done. Thus, as Jesus went from step to step in his work, his course was preaching a good sermon to those angels who once had been placed in control of man, and had themselves fallen, instead of lifting up mankind. In Jesus they saw exemplified obedience even unto death, and its reward--resurrection to spiritual being of the divine nature. Such was the great text; and the lesson from it is stated

*For a full treatment of the subject of "hell," future punishment, etc., see our issue of Feb. 1-15, '93. Concerning "immortality" see issue of Apr. 15, '94.

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by the Apostle (1 Pet. 3:22), viz., that Jesus was now highly exalted and given a name (title) above every name, that he was "gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God [the

position of highest favor]; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him."

They knew Jesus before he left the glory of the heavenly condition and became a man. They knew the object of his self-sacrifice as a man. They saw him obedient even unto death, and then that his high exaltation came as a reward. (Phil. 2:9.) They must have felt keenly their loss through disobedience, being cut off from communion with God, restrained as unworthy of former liberty and communion with the purer minded of mankind, and their own future an unsolved mystery. We can but imagine that sorrow and chagrin filled their hearts, as they contrasted their course of disobedience and its results with our Lord's obedient course and its grand results. We can fancy at least some of them saying, Would that we had realized before, as fully as we now do, the wide contrast between the results of obedience and disobedience. Would that we might have another trial: with our increased knowledge, our course would be very different.

A clear distinction should be borne in mind, as between Satan and these angels. Satan evidently sinned against great light, so that infinite wisdom finds no place to do more for him, and his ultimate destruction is clearly predicted. --Heb. 2:14.

But did not the Lord, in Matt. 25:41, declare eternal torment to be the punishment awaiting these fallen spirit beings? No: this scripture cannot be used as an argument against a hope for a probation for the imprisoned spirits; for though, by force of circumstances and restraint from any other service, they are now Satan's angels--messengers or servants--yet they may not always continue such, if an opportunity be granted them to return to God's service and be angels of God. This passage relates to the "lake of fire" or destruction (Rev. 20:10),* into which, at the close of the Millennial age, all are to be cast, who are out of harmony with God. Satan will be of those cast into that everlasting destruction, and with him all who do unrighteousness or have pleasure therein --all of whom, spirits or men, are reckoned to be on his side, his angels or messengers. All evil-doers shall be cut off from life. To cut off such, and such only, was God's plan from the beginning. The wilfully wicked and not the merely ignorant, misled, blinded or deceived are meant when it is said, "All the wicked will God destroy."

*See our issue of Feb. '93.

THE PROBATION OF ANGELS.

Will those "spirits in prison," "those angels which kept not their first estate," and who received such a powerful lesson from the ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord, ever have an opportunity to profit by those lessons? will they ever have an opportunity to repent of their sin, to leave Satan's service and to return to loyalty to God?

If at first we thought the Scriptures were silent on the subject, we have found that to be a mistake; and when God speaks we may reasonably conclude there is something profitable for us to hear. Hence, let us give ear that we may learn whatever our Father deems expedient to communicate.

Jude (verse 6) informs us that those angels which committed fornication and went after strange flesh, "also," "in like manner" to the Sodomites (verse 7), God is keeping under restraint (as a penalty or punishment) "unto the judgment of the great day." The "great day" is the Millennial Day, and mankind is also waiting for this judgment (krisis--trial). The Apostle Peter's testimony is in harmony (2 Pet. 2:4); and St. Paul settles the matter that these fallen and now imprisoned spirit beings, as well as mankind, will have a trial under the reign of Christ--the Church, the Kingdom of God in exalted power. Speaking of the impropriety of the saints appealing to earthly courts of justice for adjustment of their difficulties, he says, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:1-4.) The Greek word here rendered "judge," is krino, of the same root as krisis, rendered "judgment" in Jude 7, and signifies, to govern, to test, as to mete out to each individual blessings or stripes, according to the merit of his course when brought fully into the light of truth, and under all the blessings of the reign of Christ. Thus it is seen that it will be part of the work of the Christ to rule over and direct both human and angelic sinners--"to judge the world" of fallen men, now restrained in death, from which they have been redeemed, and also fallen spirits, restrained alive until this judgment or trial of the Great Millennial Day, when the Church under the headship of her Lord shall try their cause

also, giving everlasting life and favor to those who shall then prove themselves worthy of it, and everlasting destruction to those unworthy.

Besides, we find frequent references to a work Christ is to do in subjecting heavenly or spiritual, as well as human powers, when the Church has been selected and the work of judging and blessing is commenced. For instance, we

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read (Eph. 1:10), "In the dispensation of the fulness of times, to re-establish [under God's dominion and law] all things in Christ [the disordered things] that are in heaven [spiritual] and on earth [human] in him."--Douay translation.

Again, "In him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace by the blood of his cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things in heaven"--earthly and spiritual transgressors.--Col. 1:20.--Douay.

In Eph. 3:8-10, it is shown that the length and breadth of God's redemptive plan has been hidden by God until the Gospel age, when the apostles were commissioned to declare to men the conditions upon which they might become sharers with Christ in the execution of God's loving plans; and the intent is, ultimately, to have all the heavenly or spiritual beings know, through the instrumentality of the Church, the boundless wealth that is in God's great gift--His Son--and the different methods and steps his wisdom marked out for all his creatures. We quote the passage from the Diaglott translation:--

"To me, the very lowest of the saints, was this favor given--to announce among nations the glad tidings--the boundless wealth of the Anointed One: even to enlighten all as to what is the [method of] administration [or operation] of that secret [plan] which has been concealed from the ages by that God who created all things; in order that now [henceforth] may be made known to governments and the authorities in the heavenlies, through [the instrumentality of] the congregation [the Church] the much diversified wisdom of God, according to a plan of the ages," "which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

It would appear, then, that God's bountiful plan and diversified wisdom contains something of interest to the angels, and, if of interest to any, of special interest to those confined or restrained, and awaiting a trial in the judgment of the great day. They see the saints and seek

to look into things revealed by the Spirit and Word to these; but in no other way can they learn of their future, or of what provision has been made for them in the boundless wealth and diversified wisdom of God, because it is to be "made known" "through the Church."

These condemned angels have been learning much since the first text and sermon;--not only the lesson of our Lord's obedience and exaltation (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 1 Tim. 3:16), but also of his followers; for we read that "we are made a spectacle both to angels and to men." (1 Cor. 4:9 --Diaglott.) The spectacle and lesson are to both men and angels for the reason that both men and angels will shortly be judged by the Church, and blessed by it, if found obedient and worthy of life. When the testimony in due time is given, all things, both in heaven (the spiritual condition) and on earth (the human), shall bow to Jehovah's Anointed and confess him their Lord and Ruler; and those who refuse obedience to his righteous authority shall be cut off, as unworthy of life.--Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Acts 3:23.

The angels that sinned in the days of Noah have had a bitter experience since: no doubt

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death would have been preferable in many respects. Cut off from association with good angels, and placed in companionship of each other and Satan, without God and having no hope, they must have had a terrible experience with sin's demoralizing effects, while their observation of mankind, dying on account of sin, would lead them to surmise that death might ultimately be their portion also. That such was the fear of these unclean spirits is evidenced by the protest of one whom the Lord cast out: "Art thou come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Matt. 8:29.) But this no more proves that their suppositions were correct, than the belief of millions of professed Christians, that nine-tenths of humanity will be everlastingly tormented, proves that to be so. The fact is, we find that Satan, who taught men thus to blaspheme God's character through misrepresentation of his plan, was the master and chief over these cast-down spirits; and evidently he had misrepresented Jehovah's plan to the imprisoned spirits as he has to men. He is the father of lies.

Neither can we forget their respectful conduct toward our Lord and his apostles, and the message they delivered; far more respectful indeed

than that of the strictest sect of the Jewish Church. While the latter scoffed and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph?" (John 6:42), the former exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God." (Mark 3:11.) While the former said, "Thou hast a devil and art mad," the latter said, "I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God."--Mark 1:24.

The "legion," which had crazed the Gadarene, worshiped him, acknowledging him to be "Son of the Most High God."--Mark 5:6,7.

While they respected the true, they opposed the false, saying to some who pretended to exercise power--"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them."--Acts 19:15.

The Jews and Gentiles beat and stoned the messengers of God, when they came among them with the glad tidings of salvation; but

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some of these fallen angels seemed desirous of spreading the glad tidings. One followed the apostles, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us [angels and men] the way of salvation."--Acts 16:17.

THE BASIS OF THEIR HOPE.

But an important question now arises. The Scriptures show us that man's hope centers in the fact that a ransom-price was given for our sins; but what is the basis of hope for these fallen angels? On what ground can they have a trial and a hope of everlasting life? Did our Lord die for them?

We are not so informed: The ransom-sacrifice was human, a ransom for men. "Verily," says Paul, "he took not on him the nature of angels," etc. (Heb. 2:16.) Furthermore, they were not under condemnation to death, and hence have never lost their life in any measure, and need no ransom from death. It was because the sentence of death had passed upon men that a ransom was necessary in order that we might regain life. Those angels which kept not their first estate were condemned, not to death, but to restraint and confinement, until a day of trial, when God will judge both men and angels in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. (Acts 17:31.) They are therefore undergoing their penalty as truly as man is suffering

his, though the penalties be very different in kind,--"according to the much diversified wisdom of God."

And yet they had a great interest in our Lord's sacrifice; for though they were not being redeemed, bought by the precious blood, as was man, and did not need to be, not being under condemnation to death, yet their hope centered in the power which he should gain through his exaltation to the divine nature, in consequence of his obedience even unto death, to judge and restore them in due time.

Again, if we have a correct view of the matter, that these angels had been tempted and seduced by evil men, which had become very great (Gen. 6:5), we may see how the reconciliation accomplished by the blood of the cross for man could apply to and cancel both direct and indirect guilt, if it resulted from the one man's disobedience and was not consented to by the will of the sinner. So that now we are assured in the words of the Apostle, "It pleased the Father,...having made peace [propitiation--satisfaction] through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile unto himself all things [out of harmony];...whether things in earth, or things in heaven."-- Col. 1:20.

GOD'S COMPREHENSIVE LAW.

God's wisdom, love and justice decide on what is best, and that decision is his will or law. But, strictly speaking, only so much of God's will as he expresses to his creatures is law to them. Hence, while his laws never conflict, they may be more or less fully expressed on one occasion than on another.

All of God's intelligent creatures are under instruction, being taught those laws which his infinite love, wisdom and justice have enacted for the well-being of all. Though created perfect, each in his plane of being, yet they all lack that scope of knowledge and wisdom which belongs in full measure to the divine nature only. They all lack experience; hence, in giving them instruction in the wisdom and propriety of his laws, it has pleased Jehovah to make an illustration which would manifest and practically exemplify his own character and prove to his creatures the wisdom and righteousness of his laws.

It is evident that the spirit of his law is not to take advantage of some transgressive slip, occasioned by lack of experience on the part of

his creatures, but that he intends it to apply to the thoughts and intents of the hearts. That this is the real intent of God, we shall see illustrated by his dealings with those who have from lack of knowledge become sinners.

His law in full, as we now see it in the light of his Word, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength," and "thy neighbor as thyself;" and the penalty attached to the slightest deviation from that law is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;"--that no being shall be permitted to live, who, when fully informed of God's righteous will, and enabled to obey it, shall not conform thereto; that all such be cut off from life. But this is as it may be seen now. Once it was not so clearly expressed, nor so clearly seen.

To fully exemplify this law, God caused man to be used as an illustration before this extreme penalty was placed upon the angels. So man was placed under the extreme penalty of his law--death; God knew that through inexperience man would violate that law and come under its penalty; but he purposed to make an illustration to all his creatures of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its sure consequences, while at the same time his love and wisdom so marked out the plan, that mankind, the illustration, might not suffer loss, but be blessed by the lesson as learned.

Nor should we forget that God's dealing with man was perfectly just. He had a right to demand perfect obedience from a perfect creature; and the fact that he at first did not inflict death

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upon the angels was a favor toward them; even as toward man he has displayed his favor also, though in a different manner--through a ransom, and Savior, and restitution, and future trial for life, more favorable than the first, because of the knowledge of sin and its effects, meanwhile acquired by experience. This was a masterly stroke of wise economy on God's part; for had the death penalty been pronounced on the angels who sinned, a redeemer of their own kind would have been necessary for their recovery; and not only one, but many--one redeemer for each transgressor; for they were legion and were individually on trial; and the requirement of God's law is, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.

Let us briefly view the exhibition of God's character as displayed in his dealing toward mankind whom he made a spectacle to angels.

(1 Cor. 4:9.) In so doing, let us guard against the common error which judges of God's actions exactly as of our own. Let us remember that justice, love, wisdom and power, as commonly displayed by the fallen race, in dealing with each other, and by human parents with their children, are far from perfect. In our first parents those qualities were perfect: they were in the image of Jehovah; but in our experience, in consequence of the fall, these qualities are constantly at war with each other.

Sometimes love has a victory over justice, and sometimes justice has a victory over love.

But with Jehovah there can be no conflict; and neither ever gains a victory or ascendancy over the other. Both are perfect, and work only in perfect harmony.

Before man was created, the Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power of God held conference on the subject, and devised the plan which has since then been developing. The plan was suggested by Wisdom and concurred in by the other attributes; the arrangement and execution of it being left in Wisdom's hands.

Wisdom designed to have the largest returns from the experience of man, and the most valuable illustration of God's character to all his creatures, on every plane of being. Accordingly Wisdom said, Let the man come under the control of Justice, Love and Power, separately, that the force and operation of each may be the more forcibly illustrated. Let Justice first have complete control, let men be dealt with by the strict law, "Thou shalt not"--. "In the day that thou dost...dying thou shalt die." And it was so.

Man, inexperienced and unused to self-control and liberty, violated the law, and experienced the full weight of Justice, as Wisdom had foreseen and prepared for.

The lesson under Justice has been long and severe, but the lesson must be thorough, so that

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it shall never need repeating. Men and angels must learn that Justice is relentless, irrevocable and unalterable. Then, too, before it could be realized that the remedy for man lay only in Jehovah and nowhere else, an opportunity was offered for the trial of other methods for man's recovery. First, the angels were given rulership (during the age before the flood), and made a miserable failure; for, while man became more and more corrupt himself, his evil influence led to the fall of some of those who attempted

his assistance--"those angels which kept not their first estate."

With the deluge that order of affairs passed away. Then, under the Law Covenant, given to one selected nation, another and different opportunity was presented, to prove to man that even if God should cancel all enmity, or resentment, and receive the world into covenant relations, they would require a Restorer, so that they could continue in harmony with God, even after being forgiven. Hence sacrifices and offerings for sin were instituted, and God treated that nation as though original sin and guilt had been removed, and then placed them under laws to prove to them, to us and to all, their inability (as degenerate creatures) to keep his law without a restitution to perfection--to his likeness.

Meanwhile Love stood ready to manifest itself at the moment Wisdom should give the word. Love would have done so at once, but for two reasons: First, it could not oppose or interfere with the action of Justice in condemning man and delivering him over for the execution of the prescribed penalty. Second: though Love might have acknowledged Justice and approved its action by promptly providing a ransom (an equivalent price), Wisdom objected and did not permit this course at that time, because it saw best to make the lesson complete and thorough.

Hence for over four thousand years Love was not permitted to manifest itself, and might only speak in shadowy sacrifices and ceremonies, and more or less obscure promises. But, finally, when the right time had come, "in due time," "in the fulness of time," Wisdom gave the word, and Love began to manifest itself for man's relief. The first act was to produce a perfect and sinless man to be a suitable "ransom for all:" one not under the Adamic curse --who would lay down his life for the race, and whose sacrifice would meet all the requirements of Justice, and therefore be acceptable as a ransom and propitiation for man's sins. And Love's great exhibition was seen in the gift of the grandest and greatest and first of all God's

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creation, who stooped and became man, to redeem men: and "they called his name Jesus."

"Ah!" says one who judges by his own feelings, "Now comes Love's victory over Justice. We shall see that God is more loving than severe."

But not so; God is not more loving than severely just: he is perfect in both respects.

It will be indeed a victory for Love, but not over Justice. It will be much grander than that. It will prove a victory for both Justice and Love; for it will be gained by Love's paying the price demanded by Justice--a ransom, "an equivalent price." (1 Tim. 2:4-6.) The love of God, so long veiled from sight, was manifested in the gift of his Son to be our Redeemer and Savior. The record is: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [satisfaction or appeasement] for our sins." "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."

When Love had ransomed man, and was ready to reveal itself by restoring the willing and obedient of mankind to perfection and harmony with God, Wisdom postponed this on the ground that a further development of the plan would ultimately enhance Love's glory, and perfect the work: that an interlude (the Gospel age) must occur in which should be selected some from among the redeemed, some sharers in Christ's sufferings and reproach, who should be counted worthy to share his glory and to be his associates in the execution of Love's triumph in "the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets."

Long and faithfully has Love labored; but all her labor will yet be lost, unless in due time Wisdom shall commission Power to do its special part in the great plan.

Power thus far has stood in the background, doing nothing directly in man's relief, save in the resurrection of our Lord, and in the miracles which shadowed forth its coming work.

Now, we are living in the day when Power begins to act, not in opposition to Justice, but in harmony with Wisdom, Justice and Love. Oh, blessed day! The Lamb that was slain and who redeemed us by his blood is now invested with Power to bless all whom he bought; and he is now about taking unto himself his great power, and shall reign until he has subdued all enemies.--Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:25.

God has chosen the plan which most fully and grandly exemplifies his unalterable justice, and exhibits the exceeding riches of his grace --his love; and in the restoration of man ("all who come to the Father by him") from destruction, from death, to perfection and life, will God's power be illustrated far more forcibly than even in man's creation. And as men and angels come to recognize the full fruition of God's plan in the ages to come, will they

not with one consent exclaim with our brother and Apostle Paul, as he caught a glimpse of it: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind [plan] of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ...Because out of him, and through him, and for him are all things. To him be the glory for ever."--Rom. 11:33-36.

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THE DIVERSIFIED WISDOM OF GOD.

"The much diversified wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10--Diaglott) pursued one course with reference to the angels, not delivering the latter over to justice under the extreme penalty of the law, but pronouncing a lesser penalty until they should learn of evil and its consequences from the "spectacle" furnished them in mankind.

But the result of Wisdom's course in either case is the same. The angels being perfect, and having had an example of the extreme penalty of the law, will be able to conform to God's law when again offered the opportunity, and doubtless many of them will be glad to do so. Man, who experienced the extreme penalty of the law, will also be able to appreciate forever good and evil, and, if he will, to choose that which is good, while both, in the event of non-conformity to God's will and a persistence in an evil course, will then be liable to the extreme penalty--the Second Death. Those counted worthy of everlasting life will then, as God does, love righteousness because it is good, and hate unrighteousness because it is evil.

Though the experience of angels might at first appear less severe than man's, yet when it is remembered that man's dying experience was limited to an average of three-score years and ten, while the angels who sinned experienced over four thousand years of living restraint under Satan's rule, it will generally be conceded that their experience was not less severe than man's.

In view of the great work to be accomplished, how necessary is the elevation of the Christ (Head and body) to the divine nature, since his mission is to govern, direct and bring to perfection "whosoever will," both of spiritual and human beings. And does not the selection of this class, made different from both angels and men--of the divine nature--illustrate yet

further the much diversified wisdom of God,
whereby he is able to work all things according
to the counsel of his own will? Verily it does!

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STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

--INTERNATIONAL S.S. LESSONS.--

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THOSE OF OUR
READERS WHO ATTEND BIBLE CLASSES WHERE THESE
LESSONS ARE USED; THAT THEY MAY BE ENABLED TO
LEAD OTHERS INTO THE FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

III. QUAR., LESSON IV., JULY 22, MATT. 2:13-23.

Golden Text--"The Lord shall preserve thy going
out and thy coming in."--Psa. 121:8.

There are five points in this lesson worthy
of special notice; viz., (1) The foresight
and providence of God. His fore-knowledge
is past our comprehension: the finite
cannot fathom the depths of the infinite
mind. But it is our privilege to know the
comforting fact that Jehovah's knowledge
and wisdom are superior to all the
exigencies of his universal empire; and
that the wrath of man and of all the combined
powers of darkness cannot in the
slightest degree frustrate the divine plan.
The same power that was able to transform
the spiritual Son of God to the human
nature was able also to protect him against
all opposers, from helpless infancy up to
the appointed time of his sacrifice for the
world's redemption.

(2) We note again the ministry of angels
--"Are they not all ministering spirits sent
forth to minister for them who shall be heirs
of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Yes; and gladly
are they ready for any service.--1 Pet. 1:12.

(3) The faith and prompt obedience of
Joseph and Mary to the warning and counsel
of the angel of the Lord is notable. They

did not hesitate nor question, but immediately acted upon the command of the Lord; and his blessing and protection went with them, both in departing for Egypt and in returning to Palestine. In seeking to avoid the power of the new king Archelaus (Herod's son and successor, who even surpassed his father in oppression, cruelty, egotism and sensuality) and going to Nazareth instead of to Bethlehem which was near to Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary did not disregard the Lord's directions which were to go into the land of Israel--in any part of which they might settle.

(4) In the circumstances here recorded we see the fulfilment of several prophecies --viz., (a) "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." This, like many other prophecies, was one of double significance, applying originally to the exodus of Israel from the bondage of Egypt (Hos. 11:1; Exod. 4:22,23), and subsequently to the return of the infant Son of God from Egypt after Herod was dead. (Matt. 2:15.) And on a still larger scale Egypt represents the world, and Christ and the entire Church of God are the called-out promised seed. (b) The circumstances which led to the settlement in Nazareth thereby led to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Matt. 2:23, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (c) The slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem was also prophetically mentioned. See Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:17,18. It should be remembered, however, that in these cases the events were not made to fit the prophecies; but the prophecies were made to foretell the events, and become indications of the foreknowledge of God.

(5) It is also worthy of notice that in protecting the infant Redeemer God's course did not interfere with the existing order of things. Although all power was in his hand, he did not strike Herod dead, nor overturn nor interfere with his authority and power. The time for such radical measures had not yet come. The lease of power had been granted to the kingdoms of this world

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until the "Times of the Gentiles" should be fulfilled; i.e., until A.D. 1915. Consequently, they must (according to his plan) be permitted to take their own course for good or for evil, except in so far as their actions would interfere with the divine

plan. And in such cases God always either overrules or prevents them.

In the case here mentioned God interfered only so far as to protect his Son in whom the plan of salvation centered. But when the appointed time came for the sacrifice of that Son for the redemption of the world, then the rulers of darkness of this world had their way. They were then permitted to crucify the Son of God, because for this purpose came he into the world-- to give his life a ransom for many; and because his hour was come.--Matt. 20:28; John 2:4; 7:6; Luke 22:53.

The weeping and lamentation for the slaughtered infants who did not escape the wrath of the king, was but another note of the long wail of distress of the groaning creation, of which the Lord has not been unmindful, but which his far-sighted wisdom permits for wise and benevolent ends, until "the times of restitution of all things."

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The promise of the Golden Text) has special reference to the spiritual life of the Lord's consecrated people--spiritual Israel. As new creatures they are always safe in God's keeping, while they abide in Christ.

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THE YOUTH OF JESUS.

III. QUAR., LESSON V., JULY 29, LUKE 2:40-52.

Golden Text--"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."--Luke 2:52.

In this incident of the early life of Jesus we catch a glimpse of the rapid development of perfect humanity. "The [perfect] child grew and waxed strong* [physically and intellectually], filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." His humble birth gave him none of the advantages of education or social culture, yet even at the age of twelve years all that heard him in conversation with the matured and learned doctors of the law in the temple were astonished at his understanding and answers. (Verse 47.) And later, when he taught in the synagogues, the astonished

people said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother Mary? and his brethren...and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. 13:54-56.)

"And all...wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out his mouth." (Luke 4:22.) "And the Jews marvelled saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15.) And others said, "Never man spake like this man."--John 7:46.

At the tender age of twelve he was intellectually more than a match for the mature and learned doctors; and he did not assume to be a teacher, but with becoming modesty he heard and asked questions--questions, however, so keen and penetrating as to indicate a very superior comprehension of the law and the prophets. As a perfect human being his mind was active and strong, his reasoning powers were astute, his perceptive awake to every educating influence with which he came in contact, his moral perceptions always discarding every thing that was evil, and his memory treasuring up all that was worthy of a place in his mind. Thus he grew and waxed strong and was filled with wisdom.

Joseph and Mary were, of course, unable to measure the breadth and capacity of such a mind, or to realize that at such an early age their child was developed so far beyond his years. But, having some appreciation of it, they did not give themselves special concern as to his whereabouts all the time of their stay in Jerusalem. They even started home and had gone a day's journey supposing that he was with friends in the company. Finding their mistake, they spent another day returning, and a third in searching for him, and finally found him in the temple earnestly studying the law and the prophets in the midst of the learned doctors.

To their solicitous inquiry as to why he had thus dealt with them, his somewhat surprised answer was, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He evidently thought they understood him better than they did. But "they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." (Verses 48-50.) They probably had never told him of his wonderful origin, and that Joseph

was only his reputed father. How then could he know? thought they. The fact was that the mystery of his incarnation was incomprehensible to them. They did not know of the previous spiritual existence of this wonderful Son of God that he was now made flesh. They only knew him as the promised Seed of Abraham. But he knew; for as he grew and developed on the human plane of existence, memory carried him back to the glory that he had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), so that he knew who he was and whence he came (John 8:58,14), and that he came to accomplish his Father's business. He seemed somewhat surprised that Joseph and Mary did not more fully comprehend him; but since they did not, he meekly conformed to their ideas and was subject to them until he reached the years generally recognized as the years of maturity or manhood.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

(Verse 52.) Though the wisdom of twelve years surpassed that of the sages among men, neither his mind nor his body had yet reached full development. And not until he was a fully developed man was he suitable to the purpose for which he had been called. Not until he attained the age of thirty was he the full grown man ready for sacrifice.-- 1 Chron. 23:3; Num. 4:3; Heb. 10:5-9.

*Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit the words, "in spirit."

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