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THE RECALLED INTRODUCTORY LETTERS.

Some of these have not yet been returned; please send them in
promptly. In this connection we wish to correct the misapprehension
of some by explaining that the Introductory Letters were not recalled
because they were seen to be wrong. Quite the contrary: we considered

them entirely right and Scriptural; but since certain opponents of the cause miscalled them Letters of Authorization, etc., in total disregard of the facts and the statements of said letters, and since some of the beginners might thus be stumbled by the misrepresentation, it was deemed best to recall them; for no principle was involved or surrendered. As stated at the time, the Tract Society will no longer thus introduce anyone. But this in no degree curtails either readers or Editor of the TOWER from giving a letter of introduction whenever they think such a course advisable.

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VIEWS FROM THE TOWER.

WE called attention recently to the fact that Methodism is being considerably shaken internally. The people, or, as they term them, the "laity," are getting awake to the fact that they are being ruled by a clerical oligarchy, whose wire-pulling for place and power and title among themselves much resembles the methods of political parties; while the people, the Church en masse, have almost no voice in the councils of the church, but all the expenses to bear.

The following extracts are from a prominent article which appeared recently in the Chicago Chronicle, and which has excited considerable comment. It is headed--

"METHODISM AND REFORM."

"The old polity that was established in the time of Asbury, and that has been trimmed a little here and there by the general conferences, is as ungainly as a seventeenth century dress. Reform is abroad in the air...

"The laymen are evidently waking up to the fact that as they are payers they ought to have more voice in the matter of church government.

"At present their voice, what they have, is so limited that a consciousness of it produces nausea and disgust. They are beginning to clamor for a "magna charta," and as England's king was compelled to grant the people's request, so here the general conference of '96 in Cleveland will be obliged to heed and obey. They demand that the church members elect their own officers and that they be not the tool of the pastor and a self-perpetuating official board. They realize that every member is a stockholder, and ought to have his stock represented by vote. This encroachment will be fought bitterly by the 'big ones' and the bishops.

"It is hard to yield power once possessed. The bishops do not claim unlimited power, but it amounts to the same thing, and is so exercised as to bring about the

results obtained...

..."The present mode is for the bishop to appoint [elders]. What does he know of men, except hearsay, or uncertain popularity? And yet they do this, in consultation with a cabinet of presiding elders, who piously declare the bishop appoints them.

"If he does do so, in opposition to his cabinet, he is tyrannical. Any misfit is attributed to the bishop, who is in a position to snap his finger at impotent rage. Methodist ministers are loyal, or they would not stand such ridiculous assumption of power. The laymen are taking pity on the poor minister whose position is by the grace of his lordship, the bishop, and his cabinet. The laymen demand a free, untrammelled use of speech and action. Another step and we elect our pastors. At present, contrary to all law, a few churches do elect their pastors. This is demanded for all the churches. Election or selection of all churches in regard to their pastors is a settled fact. It is coming, it must come, or the earth will open and swallow us up....

"The spoken and unspoken actions and utterances of the laity were to curb the power--in fact to stop the "band wagon" long enough to climb in and ride. They already demand representation in equal numbers to all deliberations and conferences of the church. Their hitherto loyalty and devotion to their church has made them spectators rather than participants. Now they plan participation or alienation. No longer presiding elders and preachers ruled and controlled by bishops, and the laity in turn ruled and controlled by preachers.

"The bones of John Wesley must almost turn in their grave to see it. The old lumber wagon is doing good work, but a more modern vehicle is demanded. The greatest church in Protestantism has arisen, and will put on her beautiful garments. It looks revolutionary, but reform is always that. It is a strange fact that British Methodism, triumphant, is more American by far than the church in America....

"A good shaking up is necessary and it is coming. We are now weak, where to-morrow we will be strong. Let us pray for the day when we get down to a basis we can commend to the people--our church free from the shackles of an imperial ecclesiasticism."

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The Church of Christ has probably suffered more from pride and ambition for leadership than from any other one cause. The disciples were reprov'd time and again for disputing which should be considered greatest, until finally our Lord told them plainly that such a spirit of self-exaltation would be sure to keep all who possessed it out of the promised Kingdom. He said, also, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great

among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."--
Matt. 20:25-28.

The highest position in Christ's Church was to be "servant," and he declared himself the chief servant or minister of the Church. And surely--if "all ye are brethren," then all the brethren should have an equal right to express their judgment of the Lord's will respecting the leadership of meetings, and all other matters related to the welfare of the Lord's cause. There should be no rulership, lordship or masteries amongst those whom the one Master, even Christ, has put upon a common level. The division of the Church in the dark ages into "clergy" and "laity" came not from the Lord and the Apostles,

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but from ambition, fostered by the great enemy, Satan.

We trust that the brethren and sisters who rejoice in the present truth will be on guard against conditions which have done so much in the past to injure the Lord's cause, and which grow from almost imperceptible beginnings, until custom becomes a chain which perverts God's order and hinders the development of the talents of many of his children and permits one or two in the congregation to exercise lordship over God's heritage, without so much as recognizing the right of the Church to decide for themselves (under the guidance of the holy spirit) who are those who possess the qualifications for the service specified in God's Word.

We urge upon all the brethren, in every place, possessed of zeal and qualifications for the service of God's flock, that they carefully avoid trenching upon the liberties wherewith the Lord has made free his people. We commend that modesty which in honor prefers one another, and seeks to help forward into active service every other one in proportion as he seems to have requisite talents; and which would refuse to lead even a small group except with the expressed desire that he do so, by at least a majority of those professing faith in the ransom and full consecration to the Lord's service. And this choice should not be perpetual: an opportunity to know the mind of God's people should be sought at least yearly, and oftener if there be reason to believe that a change would be desirable to the majority. Protect the liberties of the flock, because they are not yours but the liberties of Christ's cause. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

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COLPORTEURING IN GREAT BRITAIN.

HERETOFORE this has not been successful to any considerable extent; but the friends of the truth will be glad to read the following interesting account of Brother Houston's two weeks' trip. It shows what can be done by the use of the right methods. We hope others will take courage and try it, if only for a week or two.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I was out a fortnight colporteur, just as an experiment, and I liked it well. I got on splendidly. I took a return ticket to Edinburgh, with liberty to stop at every station. I took the 8 A.M. train to Helmsdale. At the first house I got an order for Vol. I. I called at every house up one side of the street and down the other, also hailing men who might be standing in little groups. I got orders for 35 volumes. Strange to say, the first order I took was cancelled, as well as some more, but in delivering I made some further sales, and so made up for all that were cancelled.

I left Helmsdale next morning for Brora, where I sold and delivered about the same quantity. I had to stay here over the Sabbath. Was called upon by the Y.M.C.A. to take their meeting (a public one) on Sabbath night, and the Lord helped me to declare very fully the glorious gospel--with which they all seemed refreshed. A few of the leaders came with me to my lodging, to whom I declared more freely the truth of God.

On Monday morning I left for Golspie, where I sold and delivered about 60 vols. About one-fourth of those who bought took all three volumes, which helped up the sales wonderfully. Golspie is one long street, very easy to work. I took the orders the one day and delivered them the next. Here my No. I books ran out, and not having any more I passed on to Inverness, as I did not wish to canvass towns near by until I would have the books to deliver. In this work above all works, I find it is true, that "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

I started again at Buckie and thoroughly canvassed every house. Buckie is a very dead sort of place, about half of the population being Roman Catholics; hence the spiritual and mental deadness. Got about three dozen orders. Next day I went to Cullen, a very bright little town, where I got about forty orders.

I passed on to Aberdeen, where I knew a commercial gentleman to whom I had loaned Vol. I. At his house I met a few friends, one from London, a notable evolutionist. We entered into friendly debate and very soon got into the thick of all the great questions of the day. From the knowledge of the "Plan of the Ages," I was enabled not only to confute the wrong theories, but to point out the true, and introduce M.D., all of which helped to confirm my commercial friend and his wife in the truth. Left Aberdeen next morning for Edinburgh, saw the friends there. Passed on to Glasgow and saw a number of friends there.

Left Glasgow again on Monday and came back to Edinburgh. Began with Brother Montgomery to try what could be done there. For the day we got ten orders. Brother Montgomery was well pleased; he sold fully more than I did, and this gave him confidence. He is to spend one day in the week canvassing systematically over Edinburgh. Mr. Ballingall, an excellent young man, is to help him. Although large towns are stiffer, one gets over the ground easily, and you come in contact with a number of precious souls in a very short space of time; and a tract or a word of truth might get in and do good eventually.

Next day I left for Perth. Was very tired and done up, but called upon a number of booksellers to see if they had ever seen or heard of that book (pointing out No. I), but not one of them had ever heard of it. I had not much time, but got a few orders. From Perth I started for home, and found every thing getting on very well. My average during the trip was 30 volumes per day.

Yours, seeking to serve our blessed master more fully than ever,
C. N. HOUSTON.

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PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 3:14.

THESE were the words of one of the most earnest and faithful runners for the prize of the high calling of the Gospel Church. The speaker was a man of faith, a man of understanding, a man of fixed and unwavering purpose and of dauntless courage--a wise man in the Scriptural sense, though a fool in the world's estimation. His course, as well as those of the other eleven apostles, we are assured was a successful one; for the Revelator in describing the heavenly Jerusalem says, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:14.) And at the end of his course, the Apostle, in the full assurance of faith, left us this triumphant testimony: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." And then, ever mindful of the other members of the body still in the race, he added, "And not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."--2 Tim. 4:6-8.

In reviewing the course of the successful runners of the past, there is much of encouragement and helpfulness to

all those who are still endeavoring to make their calling and election sure; for even the Apostle Paul, strong and daring as he was, reminds us that he was a man of like passions with ourselves; that while still in the strife of the Christian warfare he counted not that he had already attained the mark for the prize, nor that he was already perfect. He tells us that he realized, as we all do, a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and that he found it necessary to exert his will continually to keep the body under.--Acts 14:15; Phil. 3:12; Rom. 7:23; 1 Cor. 9:27.

If Paul and all the other apostles and beloved saints of the early church were men of like passions with ourselves, and similarly compassed with infirmities and adverse influences, besetments and allurements; and if they too were frequently assailed with temptations and trials which summoned all their fortitude to enable them to overcome, then, in their overcoming, we have the assurance that we also may overcome through the grace promised to us, as well as to them, if, like them, we avail ourselves of it.

So assured was the Apostle of his own continuous faithfulness, and of that of the other apostles, and of his co-laborers, that he could say to the church, "You have us for examples."--Phil. 3:17; 2 Thes. 3:7-9; 1 Cor. 4:9.

Noble examples they were--of faithfulness, of zeal, of patience, of endurance, and of true Christian fortitude and heroism. While many of those in more obscure positions in the church were doubtless as faithful in their spheres, the Apostle Paul, as a leader and pioneer of the faith among the Gentiles, comes very prominently to view. At the very beginning of his Christian course, the Lord said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16.) Paul was not long in proving the truth of this prediction; but, instead of allowing the prospect of continual tribulation to depress him, he only rejoiced in the privilege thus afforded of testifying his love to the Lord. "And now," he says, "I go bound

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in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."--Acts 20:22-24.

Hear the Apostle's testimony of his own experience-- "In labors abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils

among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"--2 Cor. 11:23-33.

Through all these tribulations the Apostle pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. The mark to be attained was holiness--that holiness which brings

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very thought into captivity to the will of God, the mind of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5.) That was the grand ideal which Paul steadily pursued; and surely in his life he gave evidence of constant growth in grace. Under tests of great and ever-increasing severity his character developed into most graceful and beautiful proportions. The same is also manifest in the characters of the other apostles and saints, though their record has not come down to us as complete as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

But it is specially important that we should observe how our beloved Brother Paul was enabled to run so steadily in a race so difficult. How was he able to steer so clear of the temptations and besetments to which he, as a man of like passions with us, was necessarily subject? His answer is--"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark," etc.

Here are four considerations which we do well to ponder most carefully:--

First. The Apostle made a humble, sober estimate of his spiritual standing and strength. He did not feel puffed up at being a chosen vessel of the Lord to bear his name before the Gentiles. He did not consider himself the Great Apostle, nor vaunt himself in any way. And so far was he from boasting of his spiritual attainments, that he humbly reminded the church of the possibility of himself being a castaway, even after he had preached to others, unless he continued to stand fast in his integrity and to grow in grace. (1 Cor. 9:27.) And while he held up before them Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God, and the model for their imitation, he humbly declared that he, with them, was striving to follow the pattern, Christ, while trusting alone in the merit of his sacrifice to make up his own shortcomings. Thus he was relieved of that greatest hindrance to spiritual development--self-satisfaction; for if any man considers that he has attained a satisfactory spiritual state, from that very moment he may date the beginning of his spiritual decline. No present attainments can be satisfactory to a sincere follower of Christ who studiously endeavors to copy the perfect pattern. It is only when we turn our eyes away from Christ that self-complacency can be exercised; for, in full view of the pattern, our shortcomings are ever manifest. And if in

pride of heart we do lose sight of them ourselves, they only become the more manifest to others. Only in the realization of a continual growth into the likeness of Christ should the Christian find satisfaction. Like the Apostle, let him consider, not that he has already attained, neither that he is already perfect, but that he is still in the race and making progress towards the goal. And no doubt it was the considering of himself as not having attained perfection, and as still subject to frailty, that led the Apostle to seek the Lord's grace, that kept him always in a humble attitude of mind and that gave him compassion for the weaknesses and failings of others. It is those who become high-minded and self-sufficient that strain to pull out the mote from their brother's eye and forget the beam in their own.

Secondly, we observe the Apostle's singleness of purpose --"This one thing I do." He did not try to do several things: if he had, he would surely have failed. He devoted his life to the one purpose to which he was called, and to that end dropped every other aim in life. He did it, too, in view of the fact that all through the present life his chosen course would bring certain loss, privation, toil, care, persecution and continual reproach. In this singleness of purpose he was relieved of many temptations to turn aside to enjoy some of the good things of this present life, or to pursue some of its illusive bubbles.

Thirdly, we observe that he determined to forget the things behind. Had he allowed his mind to return again and again to con over the treasures of the past which he had given up; to reconsider how great the sacrifice which he had made in thus devoting himself to the cause of the despised and crucified One, he might have been tempted first to despondency, and later to return and seek to recover the things behind. On the other hand, he might have carried before him the picture of his persecutions of the Christians and his consenting to their martyrdom, wondering whether the Lord had forgiven him, and continually condemning himself for his blindness, thus forfeiting his peace of mind and interfering with his usefulness. But, having accepted forgiveness in Christ, he put that away also, though he frequently referred to the matter with contrition, and the thought seemed to influence his whole life so that he labored the more diligently to testify to his appreciation of the grace bestowed, and to be long-suffering with others as God had been with him. (1 Cor. 15:9,10; Phil. 3:6; Eph. 3:8; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:12-16.) Wise indeed was he to forget the things behind!

Fourthly, he reached forward to the things that were before,--his faith took hold of the promises of God with such tenacity that to him they were living realities, inspiring zeal and faithfulness. Upon the heavenly themes he allowed his mind to dwell, as he also advised others, saying, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any

praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) This is the way he reached forward to the things before; and thus also we must gather our inspiration to holiness and our courage to endurance and preserving faithfulness, even unto death. The Christian's habit of thought has much indeed to do with his spiritual progress or retrogression, as it is also an index of his spiritual state, and good habits of thought need to be very carefully cultivated.

By "habit of thought" we mean that normal condition to which the mind habitually returns in the moments of mental leisure. While engaged in the active duties of life we must of necessity bend our mental energies

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to the work in hand, for if we do any thing merely mechanically and without concentrating thought upon it, we cannot do it well: yet, even here, Christian principle, well established in the character, will unconsciously guide. But when the strain of labor and care are lifted for a time, the established habit of thought, like the needle to the pole, should quickly return to its rest in God. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psa. 116:7.) Let not the mind thus temporarily released grovel and revel in earthly things, but let it return to its rest and refreshment in the contemplation of "whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report" --upon that beauty of holiness which is the mark or goal or end of our high calling, the attainment of which will be rewarded with the "prize"--glory, honor and immortality. As the poet has beautifully expressed it,--

"Now let our thoughts on wings sublime
Rise from the trivial cares of time,
Draw back the parting veil, and see
The glories of eternity."

Let thoughts of God and Christ and the worthy saints of the past and present, of the heavenly inheritance, of the blessedness of our future work in cooperation with Christ, of the magnitude and benevolence of the divine plan, and of the glory and blessedness of our gathering together unto Christ when our work of the present life is finished, fill our minds and inspire our hearts. And to these contemplations let us also receive the additional comfort and blessedness of personal communion and fellowship with God through prayer and the study of the Word and the assembling of ourselves together for worship and praise.

Fifthly, we note the Apostle's energetic zeal, which not only reached forward in contemplation of and desire for the beauty of holiness and the heavenly glory, but also earnestly pressed toward the mark for the prize. It is not enough that we consider and desire these things, we must also run for them, strive to attain them, and study and endeavor

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by the grace of God to so run as to obtain. In this

connection we see a fresh beauty in the Apostle's admonition in another place--"strive [i.e., endeavor, labor] to enter into rest." The harder we work to accomplish the Lord's will in ourselves and that part of his work committed to us, the greater is our peace and true rest. Let all the faithful take courage, and also take instruction from the example and teaching of the faithful Apostle to us Gentiles, who himself ran so successfully to the end of his course; for the same grace is promised also unto us.

There is one other thought suggested by the above words of the Apostle which we would do well to consider, and that is, that as his faithful and successful course was a worthy and safe example to the Church, so likewise should each disciple of Christ in turn consider that his example will have its influence upon others. Every Christian should strive to be a pattern worthy of imitation--a pattern of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy Christ in his daily life, and of active zeal in his service. Patterns of perfection, of the ultimate moral glory and beauty of holiness, we cannot expect to be in the present life. Such a pattern we have only in Christ our Lord. In no such sense did Paul ever say, Follow me, or Follow us; but he did say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." --1 Cor. 11:1.

The Apostle was a grand example of earnest endeavor to attain perfection, but not of the ultimate perfection which was in Christ only; and it is his zeal and intense earnestness in striving to copy Christ and to accomplish his will that we should imitate. Let us mark all such worthy examples while we also "press toward the mark [of character] for [the attainment of] the prize of our high calling."

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ST. PAUL'S TEARS.

NO reader of the Acts of the Apostles can have failed to notice the strong affection with which Paul inspired those who came to know him. We find it illustrated, for example, by their grief when called upon to part with him. When he bade farewell to the elders of the Ephesian Church "they all wept sore." (Acts 20:37.) On his leaving the Christians at Caesarea some time afterwards it is evident from his words in Acts 21:13 that some of them shed tears. And Paul himself records the tears of Timothy.--2 Tim. 1:4.

On these occasions it would seem that Paul himself retained his composure. No mention is made of his weeping like the friends whom he was leaving. And yet he has told us once and again of his being moved to express his feelings in this way. Thus he reminded the Ephesian elders, on the occasion already alluded to, that during his ministry

among them he had served the Lord "with many tears." (Acts 20:19.) In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he tells them that his first epistle to them, in which he had to rebuke them sharply for their carnality and toleration of gross evil in the Church, had been written "with many tears." (2 Cor. 2:4.) And amid the joy with which he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians the mention he made of those "whose end is destruction" caused him at once to give way to weeping.--Phil. 3:18,19.

Thus we see that the tears of Paul's friends, however excusable or even laudable they may have been, were the expression of feelings far less noble than those which made him weep. Theirs were the tears of natural affection, mourning its own loss. His was the grief of an unselfish heart yearning over the salvation of others, and dreading lest they should be lost, or lamenting because the Christian profession of the Lord's people was marred and their Christian life hindered by their unholy walk. In this matter Paul resembled the Lord, whose tears were shed chiefly in sympathy on behalf of others (John 11:35; Luke 19:41), and who forbade others to weep for him. (Luke 23:28.) May he make us like himself in this also--strong to bear our own griefs and tender to feel the sorrows and sins of others.--Selected.

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SHOOT UPWARD AND ROOT DOWNWARD.

LET me remind you all, ye faithful believers in Christ, that ye are compared to trees--trees of the Lord's right-hand planting. Seek to grow as the tree grows. Pray that this year ye may grow downward; that ye may know more of your own vileness, more of your own nothingness; and so be rooted to humility. Pray that your roots may penetrate below the mere topsoil of truth, into the great rocks which underlie the uppermost stratum; that ye may get a good hold of the doctrines of eternal love, of immutable faithfulness, of complete satisfaction, of union to Christ, of the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was. This will be a growth which will not add to your fame, which will not minister to your vanity, but it will be invaluable in the hour of storm; a growth, the value of which no heart can conceive when the hurricane is tearing up the hypocrite. As ye root downward, seek to grow upward. Send out the topshoot of your love towards heaven. As the trees send out their spring shoot and their midsummer shoot, and as you see upon the top of the fir that new green child of spring, the fresh shoot which lifts its hand towards the sun, so pant to have more love and greater desires after God, a nearer approach towards him in prayer, a sweeter spirit of adoption, a more

intense and intimate fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. This mounting upward will add to your beauty and to your delight. Then pray to grow on either side. Stretch out your branches; let the shadow of your holy influence extend as far as God has given you opportunities. But see to it also that ye grow in fruitfulness, for to increase the bough without adding to the fruit is to diminish the beauty of the tree. Labor this year by God's grace to bring forth more fruit unto him than ye have ever done. We would not be as the gleanings of the vintage when there is only here and there a cluster upon the uppermost bough, we would be as the Valley of Eschol, whose presses burst with new wine.

This is to grow in grace; to root downward, to shoot upward, to extend your influences like far-reaching branches, and to bring forth fruit unto the Lord's glory.--C. H. Spurgeon.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE OUT!

Have you entered the race for the prize, brother,
For the crown of Immortal Life?
Are you pressing along the line, brother,
Amid dangers, trials and strife?

CHO.--Let your light shine out clear and bright,
For you travel 'midst error and doubt;
Of this dark world "ye are the light;"
Christ has said let your light shine out.

Does the pathway seem tedious and lone, brother,
Are you weary, discouraged or faint?
Courage! Christ is beside you to give, brother,
Grace and comfort for ev'ry complaint.

There are pilgrims who need cheering words, brother,
Like our Lord, let us comfort and bless;
Any where, any time, we may serve, brother,
In this, find our own burdens made less.

Time for winning the prize is but short, brother,
Then so run that you surely obtain.
Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus alone, brother,
He will lead you, and make your way plain.

Wondrous priv'lege is granted to us, brother,
That of suffering with Jesus, our Head;
As new creatures are we in God's sight, brother,
To the world we are reckoned as dead.

Then be vigilant, steadfast and true, brother;
For the enemy "lieth in wait;"

And put on the whole armor of God, brother,
And for your feet make your paths straight.
MRS. M. L. HERR.

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SAUL CHOSEN KING.

--NOV. 10.--1 SAM. 10:17-27.--

Golden Text--"The Lord reigneth;
let the earth rejoice."--Psa. 97:1.

WHEN Samuel was well advanced in years he appointed his two sons as assistant judges in Beersheba; but their elevation to office proved detrimental to them in placing before them opportunities for dishonest gain. Instead of resisting this temptation, they yielded to it and "turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."--Chap. 8:3.

Under these conditions, with Samuel growing old and his sons reckless, and with powerful and threatening enemies on their frontier, the outlook for the national safety and prosperity of Israel was not hopeful from a human standpoint of view. And from the human standpoint it was only prudent forethought, in view of existing circumstances, to make provision for future necessities according

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to their own best judgment. The men of Israel, the leading men of the nation, thus reasoned; and accordingly, with respect and deference, they came to Samuel, the divinely appointed judge, and laid their case before him, with the request that the form of national government be changed, and that a king be appointed over them like the other nations. Thus they seemed to think that in the eyes of the other nations they would seem more formidable and more like a well organized nation; and the appearance of a well organized and powerful central government would reflect creditably, they thought, upon them as a people, and would give them a standing among the nations of the earth.

All this would have been very commendable human prudence, and might be considered sound judgment in any other nation than the nation of Israel; but in their case it was not. They were forgetting, or rather ignoring, the fact that the Lord was their king, and that all their affairs present and future were in his hands; that so long as they were faithful to their covenant with him they should have peace and prosperity, and that no evil should befall them and no enemy could overcome them unless God permitted it as a punishment for national sins, as the Lord himself declared, saying, "Shall there be evil in a city, and I have

not done it?" "I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." (Amos 3:6; Isa. 45:7.) This was not true of any other nation. Consequently Israel would have suffered no lack of prosperity or safety had they closely adhered to the Lord's leading. They had a powerful, though invisible, king, before whom none of their enemies could stand, and their only right course was to be loyal and obedient subjects. And if they were apprehensive of trouble in the future it was their privilege to draw near God; and in putting away sin and closely following him and committing themselves to his care, they would have been safe in every condition.

Their course in requesting a king gave evidence (1) of a lack of faith in the power and love and faithfulness of God, notwithstanding the marvels of divine providence toward them in the past; (2) of weariness in well-doing--of only a slack hold upon those principles of righteousness in conformity to which alone could they enjoy the favor and blessings of God; and (3) of a desire to appear great themselves in the eyes of the other nations.

In this they incurred the divine displeasure; nevertheless the Lord granted their request, but at the same time foretold the evils that would accompany their choice (8:11-22), which evils were realized in varying measure until God removed the diadem from the head of Zedekiah, their last king.

The conduct of Samuel in this instance was most noble and unselfish. There was not a trace of selfishness or resentment in it. Grieved in spirit he took the matter to the Lord, evidently with that singleness of purpose which desired only to know and do his will. Then, with that dignity and grace which marked a high and noble nature, he humbly resigned his office in favor of the new king, and, like a tender father, kindly counselled and encouraged them to be faithful to God, closing his address with these touching words, "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."--Chap. 12.

The choice of Saul was the Lord's choice of a king for Israel, the choice being indicated by lot. (10:19-22.) He was a God-fearing man of humble mind, of good ability and of noble bearing; and all Israel was well pleased with the choice. And Samuel, forgetful of himself and rejoicing to honor another, even one who was thenceforth to be his rival in the affections of the people, said to all the people, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted and said, God save the king."--Verse 24.

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom--laying down the principles and limitations of the kingly power (Deut. 17:14-20), thus instituting a limited

monarchy.

After his anointing and acceptance by the people as king, Saul returned to his home in Gibeah accompanied by a band of godly men as his supporters and aids; and there, in retirement, he had time to make ready for the subsequent duties of his office. When he was despised and spoken against by some who neither feared God nor regarded man, Saul showed his good sense by simply maintaining a dignified silence and reserve, which was a severer rebuke than contention or threat.

The golden text for this lesson, while it has no reference to the Lord's reign over Israel, but to the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth in the dawn of the Millennial day, and hence calls upon the whole earth to rejoice, has nevertheless a fitness as applied to Israel. The Lord did graciously and righteously reign over that people; and, to the extent that they were able to appreciate his righteousness and justice and his love and care, it was a cause of rejoicing to them.

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SAUL REJECTED.

--NOV. 17.--1 Sam. 15:10-23.--

Golden Text--"To obey is better than sacrifice."--1 Sam. 15:22.

THAT the Lord expected of both the nation of Israel and the individuals of the nation strong confiding faith in him and implicit obedience to his commands is very manifest from the fact that the lack of such faith and obedience so often brought upon them severe penalties. As a nation they were punished with wars and captivities and plagues; and as individuals they were often severely chastised, as in the case before us. And God had a perfect right to require implicit faith and obedience of a people upon whom he had bestowed so many of his blessings, and to whom he had manifested himself in such wonderful ways.

The case of Saul was one of those cases where much had been given, and of whom, therefore, much was required. God had chosen him and called him out from a position of obscurity and made him king over his chosen people; he had given him favor with the people, surrounded him with good assistants and co-laborers, and the wise and faithful

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counsel of his servant and prophet Samuel; and he had established him in the kingdom and given him victory over his enemies. But notwithstanding all these manifestations of divine favor, Saul was disobedient and slow to

trust the Lord. Chap. 13:2-15 records his failure to trust God, and his presumptuous act in assuming the role of the priest and himself offering sacrifices, contrary to God's law and to his agreement with Samuel. He feared the enemy when he should have trusted in God, and he sinned presumptuously when he should have waited patiently for the deliverance which God alone could give.

For this rash, presumptuous and faithless act, which proved Saul unworthy thenceforth of the great honor which God had conferred upon him in making him king over his people, God determined to withdraw that special favor and to appoint another to reign in his stead, and so instructed Samuel. "And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."-- 13:13,14.

Yet God did not take the kingdom from Saul at once. There was time left for repentance and reformation, which might have brought some mitigation of the penalty; and a measure of the divine favor still continued for his encouragement. But the season of grace was not improved, and by and by another test further proved Saul unworthy of his trust. On the southern borders of Palestine dwelt the Amalekites, a nomadic, warlike race, who roamed through the deserts between southern Judea and Egypt. They were a continual menace to the Israelites, often joining themselves to their other enemies and doing much damage. The iniquity of these enemies of the Lord's people now being full, God sent word to Saul by Samuel to destroy them utterly, to leave none of them alive, and also to destroy all their goods.

This last feature of the command was hard for the acquisitive Israelites to obey, and, with Saul's permission,

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the best of the spoils were preserved, and Agag (their king) he saved alive. Then Saul sought to cover his sin with a lie; but the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen disclosed the truth, and the faithful prophet did not hesitate to inquire of the king, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

They meant that the king had disobeyed the command of the Lord, and the flimsy excuse that they were preserved for sacrifices unto the Lord was rejected as worthless. "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

(Verses 22,23.) This is God's estimate of human wilfulness. It is like witchcraft in that it trusts to erring human judgment in preference to the infallible divine judgment; and it is like idolatry in that it adores and seeks to please self rather than God, who alone is worthy of supreme reverence, respect and obedience.

Then Samuel delivered the Lord's message to the erring king, saying, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night." "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" and now, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (Verses 16,17,23.) A few years previous to this a similar warning had been given, but Saul did not heed it nor repent, though the Lord was very slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. (Chap. 13:13,14.) And Samuel mourned for Saul: the young man that seemed so promising on the day of his inauguration had now departed from the right ways of the Lord; and Samuel grieved as a father over a wayward son.--Verse 35.

But the Lord bade him arise and cease to mourn over Saul, seeing that he, the all-wise and holy One, who could not err, had rejected him from reigning over Israel. Then he directed him to David and told him to anoint him to reign in his stead.--Chap. 16:1.

In the selection of both Saul and David we see that the Lord specially sought a meek and quiet spirit. Saul was at first little in his own eyes, and when the proposition was made to make him king, Saul answered, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"--Chap. 9:21.

That was just the spirit the Lord wanted to exalt, just the spirit that was fitted for his use; and had Saul maintained it throughout his course his reign would have been one of great prosperity; for behind his weakness was the might of Jehovah. The exaltation of Saul, alas! proved too great a temptation for him to pride, self-will and selfishness. He should have remembered ever to keep little in his own sight; for it is only the humble that God can exalt and use.

The lessons of this narrative are important also to us. If much every way--of favor, of divine precept and promise and leading and instruction, and of special providences manifesting the divine favor and presence and blessing--was given to fleshly Israel, how much more is given to the Gospel church--the exceeding great and precious promises, the witness of the holy spirit with our spirits that we are sons and heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with him, the leading of the holy spirit, the instructions of the inspired Apostles, and the wonderful manifestations of divine favor and providence to the Church both collectively and individually!

And if implicit faith and reliance upon God were expected of fleshly Israel in view of their knowledge of

God, how much stronger is the ground for such expectation on the part of the Gospel Church! The Lord does, and has a right to, expect much--a large return of faith and confidence and love and obedience--from those to whom he has given so much of the wealth of his favor; and if we are doubting and disobedient and wayward still, notwithstanding all his grace, we surely will not be counted worthy to be entrusted with the crown and the Kingdom which the Lord has prepared for them that love him. But as the Lord appointed another to take the place of Saul, so he will appoint others to take the crown and the Kingdom from those of the Gospel Church who prove themselves unworthy of it.

Beloved, "Be not faithless, but believing," and "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The lesson of meekness is also an important one. "When thou wast little in thine own sight," God could exalt thee and use thee. But beware that his goodness to thee harden not thy heart and incline thee to pride, ambition, self-righteousness or presumption. Mark the effects of these upon Saul, and beware; and by watchfulness and

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prayer strive to maintain a lowly mind, to think soberly, and to act wisely and prudently. Mark also the contrast of the effects of God's favor upon Samuel--the meek and quiet spirit, the beautiful self-forgetfulness and self-abandonment to the will of God, the noble heart that could even rejoice in the prosperity of a prominent rival, and that could lovingly and tenderly minister to the ungrateful and unappreciative. Such a character is one of the choicest flowers of earth. Such God appreciates and loves and seeks to cultivate by all the testings and trials of the present time (1 Pet. 5:10); and such he will exalt in due time ("after that ye have suffered a while"). "Humble yourselves, therefore," beloved, "under the mighty hand of God."

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ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:--I have been closely studying all the points you make in the three volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN and in ZION'S WATCH TOWER.

Churchianity has been an abomination to me from childhood, and the Church of Rome a system I feared and hated. Fox's Book of Martyrs, with its illustrations of torture and persecution of the saints, roused all the indignation of my boy's heart. All my life my heart's best sympathies have been on the side of oppressed humanity,

and I have turned neither to the right hand nor to the left for frowns or favors. In the abolition of slavery I took my part in Massachusetts, where I was born in 1835, and fought for it in the army. I was actively engaged with my dear old father in the temperance cause, and we struck hard blows, so much so that hanging in effigy and threats of all sorts, even to life, were common to us.

Some prejudice against the church and professed Christians was early engrafted into my mind by certain events of my youth. For instance, I saw a good man, who protested against fellowshiping men as brethren in Christ who held their fellow men in bondage, knocked down by the deacons and dragged by the hair of his head out of church. My mother had hard work keeping me from throwing the hymn-book at the deacons. I asked her why he did not stand up and fight. She replied that he was a true Christian, and believed in non-resistance. To my active, belligerent mind this was a strange principle. Senator Sumner of Massachusetts was another professor of this principle; and I remember well, when he was struck down in the Senate Chamber, how ready I was to avenge the blow if opportunity had permitted.

But life has brought its lessons, and I too have had to learn that physical force is not the most powerful weapon. In the Labor reforms energy, talent and money have all been spent for twenty-five years with no expectation of reward of any sort; for, unlike many others, place nor profit was not in it for me. However, as I see things now, I hold no vain regrets as to this matter; for I recognize in this whole matter God's own good pleasure to me personally, and world wide. No blow could have been struck, not even war, that would have caused such general worldwide distress and trouble as this act of all the kingdoms of demonetizing silver and thus taking away from the people the use of half their money. Money, the blood of commerce and the power of civilization, is thus made the instrument of helping on the day of trouble.

Excuse so much of personal history this time. I have written it as an introduction so you may the better judge what you think will be for my betterment.

Yes, I see much of God's more excellent way of blessing the world through Christ, and I have been talking it at the firesides of my neighbors and have been writing it to my old co-laborers and urging them to send for the DAWN, and some have written me they have done so. I only regret that I have not the means to purchase a lot to send to friends. I recognize how hard the change of base will be; for I am well known to all the labor leaders and was active in the last campaign, speaking in school houses and elsewhere, free and without price. I see no way to prevent my falling into the temptation except to give the same zeal and effort to the instruction of others in the signs of the times and telling the story of the Resurrection and the Life, the overthrow of all earthly systems of government and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace.

I have received the envelopes and am pleased with them, also tract No. 21 and the bound volumes of DAWN

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for my wife, who is talking as she visits of the old light in its new form.

I notice in a late TOWER your excellent wife is having parlor meetings. They are the very best kind of meetings. I find fireside talks with my neighbors very useful in pointing out the truth.

Wishing you and the cause success, I remain,

Yours truly, BENJ. W. GOODHUE.

[We sympathize greatly with the noble souls who, in one way and another, are striving and spending time, talent and means in the various reform movements of our day. They have the right spirit and we should not be surprised to find God granting them knowledge proportionate to their zeal.

To turn your zeal into the Lord's work and help to prepare yourself and others for a place in the Bride company which by and by, as God's Kingdom, will institute all the gracious reforms promised, is certainly the only proper course, as well as a great privilege. We are always glad to cooperate with all such soldiers of Christ.--EDITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER:--I have several things to write about. First: We are getting along nicely and harmoniously in our Circle gatherings. We have two a week, one Friday evening for the study of the Word in the light of the DAWN, and one Sunday P.M. for prayer and praise, taking some phase of the Christian life as part of the exercises. I have never attended any other meetings where there was such a unity of desire and purpose on the part of all to know the truth.

Second. It would seem as though when a little company comes out from the nominal church on account of the truth, they have to meet and reject all the errors going as never before. We have just passed through a trial of an error which most of us had never met before....[This is usually Satan's method. Those who sleep in Zion need not be disturbed, but as soon as they awake and come out into the liberty of the truth he is after them with "signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

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The only safety is in obeying 1 John 5:18 and Jude 21.--EDITOR.]

Third. The Wisconsin M.E. Conference has just closed its session here. I will send you some notes showing the drift of that Church. Dr. Payne, of New York, the General Secretary of the Board of Education of the M.E. Church, among other things said, "I am not an Adventist, and do not believe in a second advent. We

have had one advent, and that is enough." This was loudly applauded. He held up Dr. Parkhurst's doings as the only kind of work necessary in connection with education, education being the prime factor. I have condensed Bishop Foster's sermon, using his words principally. Text: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." He said:

"God is moving things along an ideal line and doing the best he can under the circumstances, has not reached the end and never can. He is trying to produce a race of beings which if they could be finished would be wonderful. In the first place he has created the great Universe, which includes our earth, and all of this is but a temporary affair, although it has taken millions and millions of years to do it, and it will be millions and millions of years before he can finish what is possible of his idea, for it is going to pass away as a scroll. The reason: After these millions of years of creation the earth had come into a condition in which he could use it for his idea; so he created man, and put him in a physical body on the earth for a time for a special purpose; i.e., that he might suffer a while in order to fit him for the next step in the process after he has left the body; that is, to go on from glory to glory forever in a constant upward progression." As the Bible says that at the resurrection we are to be like the Savior, what must we be at the end of millions of years!!

He said that no man has seen God at any time, neither can see him, neither can the angels; for God hath no body nor parts, and therefore cannot be seen; but the angels, living where he manifests his glory, can see that; and that we cannot see man: as he is a spirit we can see only the house he lives in while on the earth, and which he leaves when he dies; for man was not made to live on the earth. Consequently when he is through with the earth as a starting place for the race he is trying to produce, he will roll it up as a scroll. In closing he said we must have literary education, in order to form character; for our destinies are in our own hands and the place we shall occupy after death, whether in hell or heaven, depends on what characters we form here. We are all babes while on the earth, although some of us (Bishop Foster and the like) are a little precocious.

I cannot see what use such men have for the Bible. He read 1 Cor. 15 for his morning lesson, though he has no use for the resurrection. He takes an indefinite number of millions of years for the creation, the Bible six definite periods of time; he says God is not a person, consequently no one can ever see him, the Bible says the Bride will; he says man is not a human but a spirit being, the Bible says the Word [our Lord] was made flesh and dwelt among us; he says we never will reach perfection, the Word says we are to be complete in Him; he says that he is working out an idea, while the Bible says God is working according to a definite and well arranged plan.

Yours in the faith,

A. A. GRAVES.

DEAR BROTHER:--After so long a time, out of the abundance of my weakness and inability, I write of my success in the Master's vineyard. During ten month's work I have placed nearly fifteen hundred DAWNS to the Master's glory. I feel that I have done the best I knew.

On beginning work in every town, I have prayed the Lord that I might be used of him to carry the glad tidings to those of his servants who are hungry for the truth. I have asked him that I might be able to find his true servants, and while talking that I might speak my words aright and in season, that I might show the spirit of the truth, giving none offence by my words. I am determined to lay aside every weight and besetting sin, and to labor with patience for the Master, until he in his own good time may remove all difficulties. In the meanwhile I trust that the fruit of my labor may continue in his favor, that it may be watered and nourished until the crown be won. The Lord's work is my all-absorbing theme, and I humbly ask a continuance of the favor until I may have laid down my life in his service.

I can now more fully realize the blessing with which the Lord blesses those who enter his service. He has blessed me with a much plainer understanding of his Word and plan, and has shown me how to act my part, and given me a fuller appreciation of the joyful reward at the end.

With gratitude and love, I remain, yours truly in the service of the Lord, E. L. BOOTH [Colporteur].

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER RUSSELL:--What a privilege it is to work for our God! As we study his character and the character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we cannot but worship and adore them, and seek daily to conform our characters more to theirs. We also want to express to you with the enclosed for the Tract Fund our love for the work and also for yourselves as humble servants in it. May the Lord daily guide and keep you in that attitude of meekness (toward Him) which shall be to the best interests of yourselves and the Church which you serve.

The Lord has been very good to us ever since we consecrated, by his wonderful providences leading us in a way we did not know. Until this year we have come out a little behind in our finances; but now, though times are harder than ever, he seems to be willing, without our seeking, to trust us with a little more of "this world's goods;" so after paying our debts we are gladly putting the surplus into the work.

Enclosed please find a letter from Miss Steel who is in the Sandwich Islands. It shows that she is reaping: even over there the sickle is being thrust in. We sent her the books requested and hope they are now doing their work.

Yours in the love of Christ, C. C. & C. P. BELL.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--It is with praise and gratitude to our dear Lord that I am enabled to give you an account of the Lord's dealing with us here.

Some fifteen months ago, while praying and waiting that the Lord would open a door for me to give out the joyful news contained in the Plan of the Ages, He opened a door through a Church of England service on the subject of Immortality. Two dear brethren were very much upset over it. But when I asked them to meet at my house, and we would see what said the Word of God, they came and we had a most interesting meeting. More came the next week, and the Lord opened their minds to the truth as it is in Jesus. My heart is full of joy that he is using me to give out the truth.

We are scattering "hail" where we think it will be received by thoughtful people. We always remember you and the brethren at the throne of grace.

Your brother in service for the King, H. ASHTON.

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THE WITHDRAWAL LETTERS.

THE "Withdrawal Letters," described in our issue of Oct. 15, we afterward concluded to issue as a number of the Old Theology Quarterly. Copies have been sent to all of you, and they can now be had upon the same terms as our other tracts. Money received for these letters, above the price of the envelopes, has been turned over to the Tract Fund.

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THE TYPICAL RED HEIFER.

In our issue of Oct. 1, we examined this subject; but some of our readers will do well to give it a second or a third careful reading. When so doing keep the following points clearly in mind:

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(1) Only those sacrifices made by the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, and killed inside the court, represented the "better sacrifices" for sins offered by Christ our great High Priest during this Gospel age--beginning with his sacrifice typified in "the bullock," and concluding with that of the Church which is his body, and which through his grace has fellowship in his sufferings--typified by "the Lord's goat." See Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.

(2) The other Sin Offerings, which, under the Law, followed the Day of Atonement, would properly represent the repentance and sorrow for sin by which, during the Millennium, the world of mankind will acknowledge and avail themselves of the merits of the Day of Atonement sacrifices.

(3) Such "sacrifices" as were offered by Samuel and Elijah and Elisha and Abraham and David and Abel were of a different kind, not represented in the Law, and hence not typical. These offerers were not priests, and their offerings were not related to the typical "offerings for sin," which were "according to the Law," and offered "year by year continually."

(4) The Red Heifer was not killed by the High Priest, who did all the offering of the Day of Atonement; nor did Eleazer the under priest kill it;--another, not of the priesthood, killed it. Hence this heifer does not represent or typify either the High Priest or the under priest, or any sacrifice of this Day of Atonement. In the article referred to we give our reasons for considering it a type of the sufferings of the ancient worthies of Heb. 11. Very few of those ancient worthies in their personal experiences typified anything. Yet, since as a class, we find that they are to have a share in the work of restitution in the future, it is but reasonable to find that work typified in connection with the cleansings which typify the work of the Millennium.

(5) The priest first sprinkled its blood toward the tabernacle; teaching thus that its death pointed to and was in accord with the sin-sacrifices of God's altar. He then cast into the burning of the heifer's carcass a sprig of hyssop, representing purging, cleansing; a sprig of cedar (evergreen), representing everlasting life; and a scarlet string, representing the blood of Christ, the price of our sins; thus teaching that the ignominy heaped upon those ancient worthies who were stoned, sawn asunder, etc., and of whom the world was not worthy, permitted the merit of the precious blood, the cleansing of the truth, and the gift of everlasting life to be accounted to them.

(6) Possibly the Apostle Paul, one of the under priests of "the royal priesthood," was typified by Eleazer; for he it is that, by his testimony in Heb. 11, points out the harmony of their faith and sufferings (burning) with ours, and casts into it the hyssop, scarlet and cedar, by assuring us that they were purged, that Christ's blood made them acceptable and that they are sharers of the gift of everlasting life, although "they without us should not be made perfect."--Heb. 11:40.

(7) The Apostle Paul, in Heb. 9:13, speaking of the typical cleansing, mentions the blood of both the bulls and goats (the Atonement Day sacrifices) and the sprinkling of the ashes of the red heifer with water, etc.; but, when applying the antitype, he stops with the blood of Christ, and makes no mention of the antitype of the ashes of the red heifer,--because it has nothing to do with our cleansing, but relates to the world's cleansing in the Millennium, as we have shown. Had the red heifer and its ashes been connected with the Gospel age cleansings, the Apostle surely would have shown the fact here; for he did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God then "meat in due season." Praise be to our Lord, who continues to provide "meat in due season" for the table of his household!--Luke 12:37.

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DECENTLY AND IN ORDER.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."--1 Corinthians 14:40.

RECENTLY, by various circumstances among the companies of the saints, our attention has been drawn to the subject of order in the Church. As the numbers of those separated from "Babylon" by the sickle of harvest truth increase, and in small or larger groups assemble themselves together as the Lord directed (Heb. 10:25), we find new difficulties and see new dangers arising, particularly on account of the great activity of our ever-vigilant adversary. These have led us again to a very careful consideration of the subject in the light of the Scriptures.

The apostles had much to say to the early Church concerning order in the assemblies of the saints; and apparently

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we have been rather negligent of this wise counsel, feeling it to be of rather minor importance, because the Church is so near the end of her course and the harvest is a time of separating. But it is safe to continue to heed very carefully "the things written aforetime for our admonition." Though the time is short to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, the issues in the battle with the principalities and powers of darkness become more and more critical, and the contest in every individual case is becoming more sharp and decisive.

While it is true that harvest is a time for separating, it is also a time for gathering. Should the farmer be content to thresh out his grain and leave it scattered on the ground? No; he knows that unless he afterward gathers and stores it his labor will be lost: it will decay on the ground, or the birds will come and devour it. Now the Lord is a wise husbandman, and he indicates that both the separating and the gathering are parts of the harvest work, saying, "Come out of her, my people [separate yourselves from Babylon];" and again, "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

We, therefore, that are separated from Babylon are not to stand alone and separate from each other; but we are to gather together in Christian fellowship and communion around the table of the Lord--the harvest table, so richly and bountifully spread for us. "Wheresoever the carcass [the food] is, there will the eagles [the hungry and farsighted eagle class, who discern the food from afar off] be gathered together." (Matt. 24:27,28.) We are to assemble ourselves together and to strengthen the bonds of love and fellowship, and "so much the more as we see the day approaching." And in so doing it is a matter of special importance that we carefully consider what the Scriptures present as profitable for the various companies of the saints thus assembled.

ORDER IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

In the days of the early Church the printing press was not yet at the service of the truth, and even the manuscript copies of the Word of God were not in the hands of the people; nor had the masses the ability to read for themselves. The New Testament Scriptures, too, were only in process of construction. In course of time the Apostles' letters were exchanged among the congregations and copied for reconsideration and instruction.

Their lack, however, of the things we now possess, was, according to their necessities, made up to them by the great Head of the Church in the various gifts--of tongues, of interpretation, of prophecy, etc., many of which have now passed away, as Paul declared they would (1 Cor. 13:8), being superseded by the richer blessings of later

times--the complete and compact Word of God in the hands of the people, among whom education has become general; and all the wonderful helps to its understanding afforded by Concordances, Bible Dictionaries, etc., etc.

In order that the meetings of the Church should be profitable in those early days an orderly arrangement of their affairs was enjoined by the apostles, and acted upon by the various companies of believers. Those who had the gifts of tongues, or interpretation of tongues, or prophecy, were not all to speak at once; the unlearned and illiterate women of those days (especially in Corinth--see our issue of July, '93, page 201) were not to interrupt and confuse the meetings, etc., etc. And the whole service

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was to be characterized becoming dignity, sobriety and solemnity; yet with the greatest simplicity, all, in an orderly way, from time to time, according to their several ability, taking part in the work of edifying and building up the body of Christ. Some had the ability to instruct the Church in sound doctrine; some had the gifts of tongues or of interpretation; some were able to exhort and encourage; and all were able to unite their hearts in prayer and to lift their voices in praise, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) And thus becoming acquainted with each other, they were able to bear one another's burdens, and together to advance in Christian growth and development, their means of edification being supplied by the Lord, and their orderly methods through the advice of the apostles.

While this order in the exercises of their meetings was thus indicated, and was acted upon by the Church, there was also an order in the leadership and various duties of the Church. Thus, for instance, Paul and Barnabas, when they had gathered companies of believers in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, "ordained them elders in every church;" and then, commending them to the Lord, they took their departure. (Acts 14:21-23.) Paul also commissioned Titus to go from city to city, and in every place to ordain (appoint) elders, whose duty it was to take the oversight of the Lord's flock in their vicinity, to feed them with the truth, to guard them against the wolves in sheep's clothing, and, in a general way, to act as their representatives. (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1,2; Acts 15:6,23-28.) The qualifications of these elders were also clearly set forth by the Apostle.--1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11.

ORDER NECESSARY TO-DAY.

If this order was necessary to the spiritual prosperity of the early Church, and, because necessary, was so authoritatively enjoined and so universally adopted, so that there were no exceptions to the rule in any place, it is certainly a

question worthy of consideration whether the same necessity does not exist among the companies of believers to-day.

We believe that the same necessity for order and for the appointment of elders does exist to-day, and for the same good reasons that it existed then, which reasons are as follows:--

(1) Because in the Church, as in a family, there are various degrees of spiritual development. Some are babes, and need the sincere milk of the Word, while others require the strong meat; and it is necessary therefore that some one "apt to teach" should be in a position to do so. There are also various temptations, trials, difficulties and dangers which all are not equally prepared to meet. Hence the necessity of wise and discreet overseers, men of some experience and ability, deeply interested in looking out for the spiritual welfare of all, and capable of instructing them in the truth.

(2) Because now, as then amongst the early Church, there are wolves in sheep's clothing who would "privily bring in damnable heresies," against which the chosen elders should be able to defend the flock; and against which they should be able to arm them by leading them to a very thorough knowledge of the truth. Then, too, as the Apostle forewarned us, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and the faithful elders will be quick to discern and prompt to warn and defend the flock against all such influences. --Acts 20:28-30; Titus 1:10,11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

(3) Because if no such arrangements and appointments had been made in the legitimate way indicated by the Apostles, some one will take the leadership and hold it indefinitely; and almost imperceptibly a whole company will find itself more or less in bondage to that one. Such cases have frequently arisen, and brethren have written to us for some suggestions as to how they might be released without offending or hurting the brother who had taken the leading position.

This taking the leadership has really been a necessity in many cases, and has been undertaken generally with the purest of motives, and with good results up to a certain point; for instance, it sometimes happens on this wise: A brother full of love for the truth and of zeal for the Lord's cause gathers about him a few who receive the truth with gladness, and who desire and need further instruction, which he, being more advanced, is able to give; and together they grow in the knowledge of the truth, and through their united zeal the company increases, until finally it is deemed advisable to remove the meetings from private parlors to a hall. By this time some other brother in the company proves more capable for the larger and more public work, but all fear to suggest that the more capable brother take the lead, for fear of offending the one of less ability, though long recognized and still beloved. In some cases even a hint of such a thing manifests a little feeling of resentment, and it is plain that the brother has come to feel a sort of proprietorship in the company, and he feels

and speaks of them as his people, etc., etc., instead of as the Lord's people. But this is not always the case, we are happy to say; for sometimes the grace of meekness continues to grow, and self is lost sight of in zeal for the Lord's work.

Again it sometimes happens that some one who is the most lacking in the grace of humility, and therefore the least adapted to the situation, is forward to take it and anxious to hold it; and if he be not sound in the faith, the company is soon afflicted with speculations or false doctrine whereby many may be stumbled.

(4) If no orderly arrangement exist in the Church, those who are most solicitous for her welfare, and anxious to spend and be spent in her service, may sometimes find themselves in a most embarrassing situation. Faithfulness to the truth often causes division. And some who dislike that faithfulness may strongly intimate that the services of the faithful are not desired, though such might not be the sentiment of all, nor even of the majority of the company. Such a one would therefore lack the support which a full expression would give, and must therefore fight the battle in defence of the flock almost single-handed and alone, or else leave them to the mercy of the adversary.

The fact that things are running smoothly in any locality without any systematic order having been agreed

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upon, or the duties, rights and liberties of the congregation thought of, is no guarantee that they will always run so. Our ever vigilant adversary will be sure at some time to take advantage of every unguarded place or principle in the Church collectively, as well as in the individual members of it. Therefore as a Church, as well as in individual cases, we should

"Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul, [but] Take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole."

The seasons of peace and rest are the times for preparing for the emergencies of storm and tempest, which, both collectively and individually, we must meet. That would be a very short-sighted captain and crew that would put out to sea in a vessel prepared only for fair weather.

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Wisdom counsels that no matter how fair the weather, how calm the sea and how balmy the breezes on starting, the arrangements for battling with the storms must all be on board--the provisions for life-boats, life-preservers, for battening down the hatches, etc., must all be on board. In these testing times especially, when Satan is most active and subtle in his opposition, we need to look well to all the precautionary provisions that the Lord, through the apostles, has counselled for our protection.

THE APOSTOLIC COUNSEL COMMENDED.

In view of all these contingencies we have no hesitation in commending to the Churches in every place, whether their numbers be large or small, the Apostolic counsel, that, in every company, elders be chosen from among their number to "feed" and "take the oversight" of the flock. And in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle (1 Cor. 12:28,29), that God hath set some in the Church to be special helpers, teachers, etc., and that all are not so qualified, we should expect that the Lord will provide some such in every company, and should therefore seek to find them there as in the early Churches. While brethren from outside congregations may help to start the work, and, by their occasional visits, be a fresh stimulant to them, each company should furnish its own elders and carry forward its own share of the Lord's work as the way may open before them. The special field of labor for each company is their own locality, as far as they can extend their influence; and fervent piety and burning zeal among them will not be fruitless. If but little wheat can be garnered, abundant testimony to the truth can at least be borne. This Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached "for a witness," as well as for the gathering out of "a people for his name." Tract distribution, personal visits, personal letters and personal conversation (wise and discreet) --in the workshops and stores, on the streets, and by the firesides--and backed by noble and consistent Christian characters and kindly neighborly ministries, are all effective means in the interests of the truth, which fervent zeal will not overlook. In these various ways all can preach the gospel; for all the consecrated are anointed to preach, and they need no other authority to do so than that which the Lord gives in their anointing with his holy spirit. For this purpose our Lord and Head was anointed; and this same anointing extends to all the members of his body, the Church.--Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21; 1 John 2:27.

THE OCCASION OF CHOOSING ELDERS.

We suggest that in the matter of choosing elders the mind of the Lord may best be determined through the agency of his consecrated people. Let the Church (i.e., those only who trust for salvation in the precious blood of the Redeemer, and who are fully consecrated to him) express their judgment of the Lord's will by vote; and if this be done periodically--say yearly--the liberties of the congregations will be conserved, and the elders will be spared much unnecessary embarrassment. If it still be deemed expedient, and so manifestly the Lord's will, there would be no barrier to the reelection of the same elders year by year; and if a change be deemed expedient, the change could then be made without any friction or unpleasant

feelings on the part of any.

A vote of the Church merely affords the opportunity to every justified and fully consecrated believer to express his convictions of the Lord's will in the matter--not his own will; for if he be fully the Lord's, he reckons his own will dead, and he realizes that he must act and speak as the Lord would have him do. This method secures to all equal rights and privileges. It was probably the method of Titus and others who looked after the matter in the early Church; for we cannot think they arbitrarily appointed the elders without any consultation with the people, who were of necessity better acquainted than they, comparative strangers, could be. This is also the method mentioned in Acts 6:3-5. Remember too that you are choosing servants (ministers) and not rulers or masters. This is very different from the methods in vogue in the various sects, many of which limit most of the privileges to a "clerical" class, who lord it over the people; and even in those things in which the congregations have a voice, the matter is not in the hands of God's fully consecrated, unfettered and spirit-led children, but in the hands of such only as have submitted to a sectarian bondage, respecting doctrines as well as order, not one-third of whom would claim to be fully consecrated to God. But in order to be sure that we have the mind of the Lord we should make sure that we recognize in the vote only such as profess to be justified through faith in the vicarious (substitutionary) sacrifice of Christ, and to be fully consecrated to him. It might be well, therefore, to identify this class before the vote is taken, either by asking such to raise their hands or to occupy seats in another part of the room. This would help some, too, by keeping prominently before the minds of all that faith and consecration without which none can hope to be of the Church triumphant; and the witnessing of this good confession always brings a blessing to the consecrated.

True, one or a few might not be consistent with their profession, but the majority vote would undoubtedly be under the Lord's direction, and the expression of his will; and, in full faith, it should be so regarded. But it might still be urged by some that, notwithstanding their carefulness to have the vote of the Church only, the majority vote of the Church might still be in error, not expressing the mind of the Lord; and the case of the selection of Matthias by the eleven apostles to fill the place of Judas might be cited as an instance of such failure, together with the fact that the Lord simply ignored their choice and subsequently made his own choice of Paul.

This, however, was not a selection by the Church under the direction of the holy spirit; for this was before Pentecost, the holy spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39), and the disciples were not yet recognized of God as the Church. Besides, none of the apostles were chosen in the same way as the elders of the various congregations, nor could they be: the Church, the body of Christ, was not yet in existence. Only the Head of the Church had yet been recognized, and he had not yet been

glorified. All of the twelve were chosen directly by the Lord, and in due time qualified for their special service to the whole body. The appointing of "elders in every place" enjoined by the apostles is entirely separate and distinct from the appointment of the twelve apostles directly by the Lord, in which matter the Church had no voice whatever, and could have none.

As to the number of elders to be chosen in each congregation: that might depend on the number of brethren in the company qualified for the service. If two or three seem capable, the service of the company alternating among them would serve to develop the talents of each, which might, as opportunity offers, be extended beyond the limits of your local group; and the company would also

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in this way be favored with the varied talents of all. Or there might be one or two whose qualifications might be recognized as preeminent, and such parts of the service might be accorded to them as they would be deemed best qualified for.

The occasion of choosing elders should always be a solemn one. It is the Lord's business, and should be done with thoughtful consideration, as in his sight. The brother who acts as chairman of the meeting should endeavor to impress this upon all. If each one in the company seeks to know and do the will of God only, and, in harmony with his consecration, expresses what he believes to be the will of the Lord in the matter, then, on the strength of the promise, "The meek will he guide in judgment" (Psa. 25:9), the result of such deliberations should be accepted by all as the mind of the Lord, the holy spirit thus speaking through his consecrated people. Generally the result of such deliberations will be a unanimous agreement.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

In 1 Tim. 3:1-7 [See Diaglott] the Apostle describes the qualifications of an elder or overseer, and in verses 8 to 13 the qualifications of an assistant elder are described. These verses should be read before the vote is taken, and the elder or elders for the chief service should be selected first, and then, if assistants are needed, they should be chosen later. Among these assistants might properly be some sisters; for some of the services can best be performed by females, especially visiting of the female sick. Many suppose that verse 11 above refers to these female assistants, as also Rom. 16:1; and it seems very evident that in the early Church many sisters did service. The choice or vote should be in full view of the qualifications mentioned according to the judgment by each of the will of the Lord. We quote,--

"If a man desires an overseer's office [service], he desires a good work. [Any service we can render to the

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body of Christ is a blessed service.] An overseer, then, must be irreproachable [of good character], the husband of one wife [not necessarily a married man; for both the Lord and the Apostle recommend the celibate state as preferable (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:32,33), but he must not have more than one wife, an injunction more pertinent in those days than at the present time], vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not a wine drinker, no striker, but gentle; not quarrelsome, not a lover of money; presiding well over his own family, having his children in subjection with all dignity; (for if a man know not how to preside over his own family, how shall he take care of a congregation of God?"

The idea is not, as the common version seems to suggest, that these servants of the Church are to rule the Church,--to legislate for it and hold it in subjection to their will,--but that, with loving interest, they should preside over it, looking out for its interests and affairs and counseling and assisting as faithful stewards of God. (See Emphatic Diaglott.) The Lord Jesus is the only Lord the Church needs; and no synods, or councils, or clergy, or elders are authorized to assume the prerogatives of the only Lord and Head. Brethren in the Church may advise and counsel; but in so doing they should endeavor always to speak, not their own opinions, but as the oracles of God. --"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 4:10,11.) Their counsel should be of weight with the Church only as it is backed by the Word and spirit of the Lord, of which all are to judge individually. But when such counsel is founded on the Word of God, calling attention to its precepts and commandments, it should have the careful consideration of all, in the spirit of meekness. And if, in pride of heart, any despise such instruction, through disrespecting or lightly esteeming the human instrumentality which God has chosen for calling attention to it, the opposition is against the Lord and his way.

It is for this reason that the Apostle urges that we "look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15); for the grace of God, the favor of God, in manifesting his will by making it plain from his Word, comes to the Church mainly through his chosen human instruments. And if any man, through strife or vain glory or from any other motive, seeks to unsettle the confidence of the Lord's flock, and to plant a root of bitterness in their hearts against such servants as the Lord has

set for the presentation and defense of the truth, he thereby hinders the grace of God to them, and the result is almost certain to be the defiling of many. Any who pursue such a course are in the Lord's hands for judgment; and, whatever their professions, they will sooner or later be brought to naught, with all who follow their pernicious way. If brethren who are true to the Lord and to each other and the interests of the flock differ in their judgment of the Lord's will, they should differ in love, and should endeavor by prayer and careful study and by earnest endeavor to so purify their hearts from every disposition that would render them unworthy of the truth, to come speedily to the unity of the faith.--"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [in heart, will], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."--Phil. 3:15,16.

"Not a novice [an inexperienced or untried person], lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil [i.e., lest like Satan--Isa. 14:13,14; Phil. 2:5-9 Diaglott--he become ambitious to be some great one, thereby necessitating his abasement; for 'pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall']."

"Moreover, he must have a good report [for honesty and general uprightness of character] of them which are without [the world], lest he fall into reproach [the reproach of hypocrisy] and the snare of the devil."

"Assistants in like manner ought to be serious, not deceitful in speech, not being addicted to much wine, not eager for base gain, holding the secret of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also be proved first; then serve, being unblameable. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let assistants be husbands of one wife, presiding well over their own families."

In his letter to Titus Paul adds to these qualifications the following,--"Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers,... whose mouths must be stopped." How necessary to the

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prosperity of the flock are these qualifications in their chosen elders! Above all things they should choose those "sound in the faith," "holding fast the faithful Word," and avoid most carefully those who deal in human speculations and vain philosophies. This caution indicates also that the Church should know positively what its faith is, and be able to judge of the soundness of the faith of its elders. The faith once delivered to the saints ("That Christ died for our sins") must test every item of subsequent, advanced truth. And all fanciful speculations and

philosophies should be disesteemed and discouraged as saith the Apostle.--1 Tim. 6:20.

APOSTOLIC CHARGES TO THE ELDERS.

Then, when the elders have been chosen and have accepted the service, the charges of Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 4:1-5) and to Titus (2:1,7,8,11-15), and of Peter in his general epistle (1 Pet. 5:1-11), might be read to them in presence of the company, followed by prayer that God would add his blessing upon the chosen elders, and upon all the company as they shall cooperate together in the service of the Lord.

These words of the Apostles are most solemnly impressive. Hear Paul:--"All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work."

"I charge thee therefore [Timothy], before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [when it suits your own convenience, and when it does not]; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears [for something new and strange--for human speculations and vain philosophies]. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things [against these evil influences and tendencies], endure afflictions [for they are sure to come to all who are faithful in the service: such are sure to incur the wrath of the adversary who will actively oppose them]; do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

To Titus he says, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine,...in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that he who is of the opposition may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you....For the grace of God that bringeth salvation is manifested for all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ....These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority [the authority of God's Word, not his own]."

Hear Peter also:--"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint [requiring

urging], but willingly [willing to assume the labors and responsibilities of the service]; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind [which loves to serve the Lord, the sheep and the truth]. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith....The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever. Amen."

THE EXERCISE OF LIBERTY A SAFEGUARD AGAINST BONDAGE.

Some are so glad to be free from Babylon's bondage that they need caution against an opposite extreme--lack of order. Some so fear the enslavement of sectarian earthly

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organizations that they fear to use their individual liberty to designate which of their number they believe would be the Lord's choice for particular services. They thus risk the very bondage they wish to avoid. The tendency in all is like a pendulum to go to extremes; but the tendency of the Word and spirit of the truth is to "establish, strengthen, settle you." The spiritual interests of the Lord's flock in any place are matters too serious and important to be left to hap-hazard conditions which Satan is very sure to take advantage of some time.

The fact that we have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, is no reason why we should discard all order and system in our affairs: the early Church might have had similar fears; for they had just escaped from the bondage of Judaism, and they were also instructed not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal. 5:1.)

The yoke of bondage, however, was not the idea of system and order, but the bondage of the old Jewish faith--the Law-Covenant. From that they were to remain free; for Christ, by his sacrifice, had made them free. Evidently the systematic order enjoined upon the Churches and adopted by all was not considered a bondage; order was established and elders were appointed in every place; and the work of the Lord accordingly prospered.

The principle of order and of recognizing elders duly appointed and qualified by the spirit of the Lord--not in so-called theological seminaries--and sustaining them in their work by the approval and cooperation of the company they serve is right, otherwise the Apostles were wrong in enjoining it upon the early Church; and the early Christians were wrong in not resisting the arrangement. But evidently the Apostles and the early Church were not wrong. The simple order and arrangement of their affairs proved a blessing; and the Lord himself established a precedent in acknowledging the arrangement, when, in his revelation to the seven churches of Asia, he addressed his messages through their representative elders, "angels," messengers or servants.--Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14.

We have no controversy with the nominal churches on the subject of order, excepting in so far as they have over-reached the simplicity that is in Christ, and the order which he enjoined through his holy apostles, and have multiplied the forms of godliness to the extent that they have

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lost its power. We should not reject anything merely because the nominal churches have it, but we should reject all that is wrong, all that is out of harmony with the Word and spirit of God. Had we been guided by a mere blind antagonism to the various sects, we might have gone to the extreme of discarding some old and valuable truths which the nominal Christian systems still hold in a way, tho now with less and less tenacity. We might, for instance, have discarded the doctrines of the vicarious atonement, or of baptism, or the Lord's supper, merely because they hold them. But, taught by the Word of God, we have learned to hold fast that which is good; and among the good things is that of doing all that we do in the Lord's cause, as in everything else, "decently and in order;" but let it be the Scriptural order, and not the order of Babylon, which exalts a class of lords over God's heritage and ignores the true Head of the Church, which is the only rightful authority over it. Forget not that "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; but he that would be greatest among you shall be your servant." "Let all things be done decently and in order," and with a view to the building up of the body of Christ.-- 1 Cor. 14:40,26.

THE PREROGATIVES OF THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

It is a mistake to presume that the true Church has no bounden responsibilities, that we are all free to do as we please --to forsake the assembling of the saints if we please, or to associate ourselves with others if we please, or to go here and there and gather a morsel of food from all tables, good, bad and indifferent. If we truly belong to Christ,

the only liberty we enjoy is liberty from the bondage of sin and death and all the yokes that Satan would impose upon us. Our freedom consists in the fact that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; we have passed from death unto life, and are no more the servants of the taskmaster Sin. The old things that pertained to that bondage have passed away, and all things have become new. This is the blessed liberty of the sons of God. It is realized now by faith, and in a measure actually; but by and by it will be fully realized when this mortal (blemished and imperfect through the fall) shall have put on immortality.

But having been thus emancipated by Christ from the bondage of Sin, we have since come into covenant relations with him to do his will, which is also the will of our Heavenly Father, even as he also covenanted with God, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God;" "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." So, as our Lord expressed it, we whom he made free from Satan's grievous yoke have taken upon us the yoke and burden of Christ--which is a joyous service. (Matt. 11:29,30.) This, then, is the extent of our liberty if we are true to our covenant; and also the extent of our bondage. Praise his dear name! we find the yoke of our Lord and Redeemer easy, and his burden light, because of his love to us and our love to him.

The true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," is undoubtedly an organization, even in the present time, while it is subject to many vicissitudes--its membership constantly changing, etc; but it is a heavenly organization, not an earthly one. There are two senses in which the true Church of Christ may be considered: (1) The whole company of consecrated believers from the beginning of the Gospel age to its close constitute one body, one Church, not many; for the Lord established but one Church. And over that one Church he himself is the only "Lord" and "Head," the great "Chief Shepherd," and "Teacher," and the only authority. This is "the Church of the firstborn," whose names are "written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23); and those whose names continue there to the end of their course, and are not blotted out because of unfaithfulness (Rev. 3:5), will be admitted to full membership in the Church triumphant at the appearing and kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.--2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:7; 5:4.

The Lord himself keeps the Church books--the records of our names, and the individual accounts of each member: we have nothing to do with that. He enrolls all the truly consecrated believers, and no power on earth can pluck them out of his hand, or blot their names from the records in heaven. (John 10:28,29; Rom. 8:35-39; Rev. 3:5.) His unerring wisdom alone is sufficient for that, and for all the duties of the office of the Head. It is therefore most unbecoming and reprehensible in any member of the body of Christ to become heady--to assume the authority of the Head of the Church. And such a one, if not speedily recovered by the discipline of the Lord,

he will eventually cut off and cast out as unworthy of any place in his body.--2 Thes. 2:11.

(2) Another sense in which the Church may be considered --which also is a Scriptural sense (Philemon 2; Rev. 2:1, etc.)--is that of counting a part as though it were the whole. Thus all the living saints may be spoken of as the Church of to-day. Or again, any number of the living Church assembled together in any place may properly be called the Church of that place (e.g., Philemon 2; Rev. 1:4; 2:1; 2 Cor. 11:28); for wherever even two or three are assembled, the Lord, the Head, has promised to be in their midst. (Matt. 18:20.) The general assembly will be when all the members are glorified with and united to the Head.

If any inquire how we know the members of the true Church, we answer, We know them by their profession of faith in Christ, and by the spirit of Christ manifested in them. It is his truth, and his spirit, and his presence manifested among them, that impels them to assemble together, that unites their hearts in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship, that inspires them with the same hope, animates them with the same joy, and leads them to cooperate together in the work of the Lord. If it be asked, How shall we deal with one who walks disorderly in our midst since we cannot drop his name from a list of membership? we answer, We have very explicit directions on this point. Now, as in the early Church, there are various degrees of advancement among the members, and Paul says (1 Thes. 5:14), Some are feeble-minded, comfort them; some are weak, support them; but while patient toward all, warn the disorderly. Do not mistake the disorderly for the weak, and comfort them; but patiently, lovingly, warn the disorderly. But after you have faithfully warned such a one, if still he obeys not the truth, "note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Not until it becomes manifest that the Lord has cut him off, may we cease to feel a brother's interest in him.

The Lord also gives explicit directions in cases where difficulties arise between brethren.--Matt. 18:15,17.

The great Head of the Church also furnishes abundant means for the edification of his people--for their building up in the most holy faith and their development in Christian character. Then we have his constant supervision and leading throughout our earthly pilgrimage. He is our

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Head, we are his body; he is our Shepherd, we are his sheep; he is our Captain, we are his soldiers. Now we are the Church on probation, on trial; now we are the Church militant, in the midst of our warfare, hoping by and by to be approved as faithful soldiers and worthy to be admitted into full membership in the Church triumphant, in power and great glory.

Thus we see how thoroughly the true Church of Christ is organized, under Christ, its Head, even in this probationary state, as we journey through the wilderness to our promised Canaan. We are all under the orders of our great Commander whom all must obey and follow who would reach the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Oh, no, we are not our own, and have absolutely no liberty to do our own will in any matter. All is subjected, even our very thoughts, to the will of God in Christ; and our membership in his Church is made dependent upon our faithfulness in recognizing this and in rendering cheerful, loving obedience. We cannot do as we please in any matter: we are strictly under law to Christ, whose holy spirit must rule our every deed and word and thought; and our constant effort must be thus to bring our every power and talent into subjection to him.

In this blessed bondage to Christ, a bondage of love, there is the highest sense of liberty, as, one after another, the shackles of sin drop from us. The world and its ideas and vain ambitions, and follies, and pride, and its superstitions and fears cease longer to fetter us, and the windows of our minds and hearts are thrown wide open that the glorious light of divine grace may stream in, and our hearts rejoice and sing.

THE APOSTOLIC ORDER THE LORD'S ORDER.

Thus the great Head of the Church has marked out our course for us. He has said, "This is the way; walk ye in it." He has prescribed all the conditions and arrangements, etc., and it is our part to faithfully follow his directions.

It is to him that the Apostle Paul ascribes the orderly arrangement of the affairs of the Church, saying:--

"And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-16.) Here, as in 1 Cor. 12:12-20 the Apostle illustrates the relationship of the Church to each other and to the Lord by the parts of a human body: and he intimates that every member is to be nourished and exercised, that the body may be symmetrical, perfect. Again the same apostle tells us, "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him. [Each should seek to recognize the Lord's appointments in his own case, as well as in that of others: and each should endeavor to serve according to the Lord's recognized arrangement, only.]...For the body is not one member, but many....And God hath

set some in the Church; first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, etc., etc." We believe that the Lord has faithfully performed his part, all along during the age providing servants in his Church; but evidently his people have not always looked for those of his qualifying and appointing; and undoubtedly they have missed considerable by this failure, and by accepting instead a self-appointed, self-exalted, self-instructed and self-perpetuated "clergy."

There were but twelve apostles, and their inspired ministry has been to the whole Church, even to the end of the age. They had no successors, but the Lord has from time to time raised up teachers and pastors with varying degrees of ability, able in measure to instruct and care for the interests of the flock.

The term "elder" seems to be applicable to any or all of these servants whom the Lord sets in his Church for its edification, some of them having a principal service while others are assistants. Thus the Apostles classed themselves as elders. (1 Pet. 5:1.) The term "elder" would signify an elder brother, not necessarily an elder in years, but matured in Christian character. Timothy and probably Titus were young.--1 Tim. 4:11,12; Titus 1:4; 2:15.

If in any company one or more seem to have marked talent for the public presentation of the truth, such ability should be recognized by all, and all should cooperate in making use of it; and special meetings ought to be appointed to this end. Such meetings seem to have been rare in the early Church, as there were not many gifted speakers like Paul or Apollos or Peter. But such talents, when found, were used, and were of good service. So it should be among us. The talent for public speaking may be ordinary or extraordinary, and in either case edifying. The congregations should be the judges of that; and if no such talent be found public preaching services would best not be held, but instead, such other services as would edify more, and for which suitable talent is found in the company.

THE OBJECTS TO BE SOUGHT IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE SAINTS.

Note also the objects to be sought in the assemblies of the saints and the ministry of elders, etc. It was not merely social enjoyment, nor to go through a formal routine of service; but it was (1) "For the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry." These assemblies were to be training-schools, in which all the saints might become the more fully equipped for the service ["ministry"] of the Lord--not only the glorious service of the future, but also the essential service of the Church in the present age, by which the bride is to make "herself ready" for the future service. To this end all the saints should be diligent students, and the instruction should be as systematic and orderly as possible, and with a view to thoroughness of development, rather than entertainment.

We remember that Paul upbraided some who were not sufficiently advanced and established for their opportunities, saying, "When for the time [in which you have had these privileges] ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God [the doctrine of Christ], and...have need of milk, and not of strong meat."--Heb. 5:12.

(2) It was for the edifying of the body of Christ,-- for the knitting of all together in the unity of the faith and of the spirit and in love and devotion to God, that as one body they might advance in the development of Christian character and grace and knowledge toward the stature of the fulness of Christ.

In this view of the object of our assembling together we see that we have a most important work to accomplish. Let us therefore study to show ourselves workmen approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. It is also in this view of the subject that we have commended the plan of the "Dawn Circles for Bible Study" mentioned in our issue of Sept. 15, as an aid to thoroughness and system in our preparation for service, and as one of the means of grace; tho not the only one.

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We advise that one meeting each week be held for such purpose, either on the Lord's day, or on some evening during the week. If we really believe that the plan of the ages is the divine plan, the meat in season in this harvest time, and that its times and seasons are of divine appointment, then the value of thoroughness in the study of it, that we may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us, cannot be overestimated. It is just what all need to arm them for the conflicts of this "evil day"-- these "perilous times;" and for this purpose undoubtedly it was given us of God. In such meetings as these the stronger can be of great service to the weaker in assisting them to put on the whole armor of God and in showing how every scripture that may be brought forward fits into its proper niche in the divine plan, which is one grand, harmonious whole. These and all meetings should always be introduced and closed with worship and praise.

We recommend also a mid-week meeting (devotional and social in character, not doctrinal), consisting of prayer, praise and testimony; the special object of these being the cultivation of the devotional spirit and of Christian fellowship, love and communion. Thus we may exhort one another and provoke one another to good works. A good feature in both of these meetings is the opportunities they offer for all to participate freely and to edify one another.

ORDER IN THE ALLEGHENY CHURCH.

It may be a matter of interest and profit to many to

know of the order of the Church here in Allegheny. Of course, we have no list of membership, for we leave the keeping of the books entirely to the Lord: He knoweth all them that are his; and we recognize them by his spirit manifested in them. We have preaching, prayer and praise in the German language from 1.30 to 2.30 o'clock P.M., and in English at 3 P.M. every Lord's day, and a general Bible Study in the evening, beginning at 7.30 and preceded by a half hour's praise service.

As we are too widely scattered for a general mid-week meeting, we have seven cottage meetings, in different parts of the two cities, on Wednesday evenings; and several "Dawn circles" are being started on Friday evenings. A number of competent brethren have been chosen by vote of the congregation to take charge of these meetings, and at the end of each quarter they exchange so as to give variety to the companies, and the better to acquaint the leaders with the spiritual condition of the whole church of this place. A few also go out occasionally to adjacent towns to extend a helping hand to other little groups. Our effort being to draw out and develop as much talent as possible in the Church, sometimes one or two names are dropped from the list at the end of the quarter and new ones supplied, and afterwards those names may be picked up again and voted into service.

In addition to these leaders the company has appointed a number of sisters (ten in all), who cooperate with the brethren in visiting and general pastoral service. These sisters are specially chosen with a view to fitness and

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to opportunities of time, etc., for the service. Their work is chiefly among the sisters, while the brethren who lead the evening meetings look chiefly after the brethren.

This, of course, does not interfere with the duty and privilege of all in caring one for another, but it insures a systematic care over all, which might otherwise be to some extent neglected, as all are not so situated as to have time, etc., at their command, and as our time is occupied in a variety of ways which make it impossible to properly attend to these pastoral duties without such aids.

At the end of each quarter we meet together with these representative brethren and sisters and consult concerning the spiritual conditions and needs of the Church here. We are happy to say, also, that no note of discord or manifestation of strife or vain glory has ever been observed among these co-laborers. The work is undertaken and accomplished in the spirit of love and meekness, and the desire to do good, and is greatly blessed to the edification of the dear flock of this place.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS AND ELDERS.

To those in position as elders in the Church the Lord says, "Be not ye called Rabbi [a great man, a master]; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;" while to the congregation of his people he also says, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye [any of you] called masters [i.e., neither give nor receive titles of any kind], for one is your Master, even Christ."--Matt. 23:9,10.

No marks or badges of distinction or flattering homage of any kind may be tolerated in the body of Christ. No brother, however efficient or useful, should desire it or receive it from the church without protest and rebuke; and none should so far forget the admonition of the Lord as to bestow it. All ye are brethren--brethren of like passions and all subject to infirmities; and let each take heed that "no man put a stumbling block [to pride or vanity or any other evil thing], or any occasion to fall, in his brother's way." (Rom. 14:13) Many indeed have been the prominent ones in the Church who have been overcome by flatteries--undue praise, worshipful reverence--arising mainly from the unwarranted presumption on the part of the flock that the elder brethren who minister to them in spiritual things are beyond the reach of temptation or the possibility of stumbling. It is this lack of consideration of the Lord's command that often makes the position of a leading brother one of peculiar peril. It was flattery of the leaders of the Great Reformation that stayed the progress of that good work and caused many of them of understanding to fall from their steadfastness. (Dan. 11:34,35.) But let it not be so among us: let each strive to shield the other from temptation, and to edify and build up in every principle of righteousness and truth, and in soberness of mind and watchfulness against all the intoxicating influences of the spirit of the world.

There is a vast difference, however, between a healthful, cordial brotherly love and sympathy and warm and grateful appreciation of faithful service, and that unwholesome sentimentalism which savors of the spirit of the world, and which is always as fickle as it is false. The manly Christian will always discountenance everything that savors of worshipful reverence and flattery; and when offered, will say, in manner if not in word, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant...Worship God" (Rev. 22:9); but the less mature will often court and receive flattery to their own injury. It is for this reason that the Apostle counsels the choosing of elder brethren of established character for leadership, rather than a "novice." While the Lord arranged that the Church should have some apostles, elders, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc., he would not have us use any of these names as titles of honor; and therefore, while recognizing these positions of service in the Church, we should always continue to address and

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to speak of these brethren merely as brethren--brethren

beloved in the Lord.

While the Church is thus guarded on the one hand against the worldly spirit of vain glory, she is equally guarded on the other hand against that cold, unappreciative, cynical disposition which in that envious, pharisaical spirit plainly says, "Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner." "We beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle, "to acknowledge them which labor among you, presiding over you in the Lord, and admonishing you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."--1 Thes. 5:12,13.

Again he says, "Have confidence in your leaders, and submit yourselves [i.e., if you, according to the Lord's methods, have chosen the right kind, or rather if you have permitted the Lord to choose them for you in the way he has indicated, as shown above]; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."--Heb. 13:17.

Thus, while the elders are cautioned against assuming to be lords over God's heritage, the flock is also cautioned not to defy the elders, nor to blindly and worshipfully follow them without proving their teachings by the Word of God, but all, in humility and meekness, are to harmoniously cooperate together as one body for the upbuilding of itself in love and in all the Christian graces, and for the general advancement of the work of the Lord.--1 Pet. 5:1-11.

THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Before leaving this many-sided subject of order in the Church, we would also briefly call attention to the Lord's design that the whole (living) Church, however widely scattered over the world, should be knit together as one. It was so in the Apostle's days, and it should be so still. It is a pleasant observation that, even with their limited means of communication, whenever there was opportunity the churches in one place were prompt to send Christian greetings and benedictions to those in other places (Acts 15:23; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 4:21-23; Col. 4:14,15; 1 Pet. 5:13; Titus 3:15; 3 John 14); and all were subject to the same regulations instituted by the apostles, having the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Their earnest endeavor was to keep "the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace," and to avoid any schism in the body of Christ.--Eph. 4:3-13; 1 Cor. 12:25.

It is noticeable, too, what a beautiful unity of spirit and of faith, and what steady cooperation, there was among the apostles and elders of the early Church. They were all zealously endeavoring to preach "the same things," the "sound doctrine," of the truth of which they were fully persuaded. One was not endeavoring to eclipse another by getting up some brand new patented theories of his own. Apollos was not endeavoring to discount the

teachings of Paul; nor were the elders of the various little companies endeavoring to lead the sheep under their care into by-paths of speculation and vain philosophies. No, it was not so, though from time to time false teachers came among them with the evil spirit of vain glory attempting these things, to draw away disciples after them; but the true ones, on the contrary, were faithful to one another, as they were also to the Lord. Paul planted, and Apollos watered, and God gave the increase.

We are glad to say that to a large extent this spirit prevails to-day, and we trust it will more and more prevail, till we all come in the unity of the faith to the stature of the fulness of Christ, as one body under the one Head, Christ Jesus, harmoniously cooperating together in the doing of his will under the direction of his Word, being knit together in love and full of zeal in the Lord's service --the great harvest work.

THE HEAVENLY VS. THE EARTHLY CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

Foregoing we have seen the beauty, simplicity and completeness of the organization of the Church whose names are "written in heaven." Its only ruler and Head, the Lord Jesus, is infallible; God has centralized the authority in his hands, and every one of its members is required to render loving, loyal and prompt obedience to him, not only in their words and conduct, but even in their very thoughts. He admits to membership, and, when needful, he excommunicates the disloyal, and "blots out" their names.

Its members, firmly united to its Head, and thus to each other, according to their degree of development in the Master's spirit of love, are required to recognize as "brethren" all who have this spirit of love and consecration, with "the faith once delivered unto the saints"--that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. They are required to meet together and to edify one another, and to conduct their meetings with decorum and order and to look out among themselves such as the Lord's Word and providence seem to indicate as suitable elders and to give to them their public recognition (as by vote for instance) and their cooperation in the service. This Church does not need to organize; for it has been organized since Pentecost; and if a new meeting is started it is only necessary for such to recognize the organization and its Head and his laws, and to obey them.

But how great the contrast between this and an earthly church, organized according to various human traditions! with a self-constituted "clergy" who lord it over the "laity" and divide amongst themselves the spoils taken from the laity--the filthy lucre, honors, reverence, titles, etc.,--from those of the claimed infallible pope down to

the "inferior orders of ministers;" only exceptional ones being ministers indeed (servants of God's flock); the majority lording it over God's heritage to the extent that their

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flocks will permit. Read carefully Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:1-16.

The bond of love in the heavenly Church is, in the earthly organization, replaced by a selfish bond of sectarian pride and a fear that to die outside an earthly church would incur eternal woe. For the simple but forcible confession of faith in the heavenly Church, they substitute elaborate schism-making confessions and tests. Verily the strength of the earthly churches is in their carnality, and their "laity's" ignorance of the Lord's Word and their individual liberties. The individual faith, judgment and liberty of their members are surrendered to the congregation when they bind themselves with sectarian names, obligations and confessions of faith; and the faith, judgment and liberties of the congregation are in turn surrendered to ruling Presbyteries and Conferences, or to an earthly pope. In the heavenly organization anyone may advise and point out the Word of the Lord; but none can do more without violating the rules and risking his own excommunication by the great and infallible Head of this Church.

The individual liberty of each member of the heavenly Church toward each other member, and the complete subserviency of each to the Lord only are characteristics of the Lord's organization which contrast sharply with those of human organizations.

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THE WOES OF INTEMPERANCE.

--NOV. 24.--Isa. 5:11-23.--

Golden Text--"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink."--Isa. 5:11.

THE text of this chapter is highly figurative and will not bear a literal interpretation. It is a symbolic prophecy concerning both the houses of Israel--Israel after the flesh, and spiritual Israel, the Gospel church. In both cases it applies to the whole nominal Israel, and takes no cognizance of the distinctions in each of wheat and chaff, or wheat and tares, or "Israelites indeed" and Israelites in name only. The prophecy is addressed to the Jewish and Christian systems respectively under the figure of a vineyard.

But when the Lord looked for grapes, the fruit of the vine, "behold, it brought forth wild grapes." Then he inquires what more could he have done to make his vineyard produce better fruit, and shows that it was not for any

lack of attention on his part, but rather because of the perversity of the vine, which, even under these favorable conditions had greatly degenerated and become "a strange vine" unto him. (Jer. 2:21,22.) Our Lord Jesus in his parable of the vineyard (Matt. 21:33-43) uses the same illustration and applies it to Israel.

Seeing the double application of the prophecy,* and recognizing the fact that its fulfilment upon fleshly Israel is in the past, we proceed to note its significance as applied to this age in which our interest centers:--

"He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." (Verse 7.) So it is throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. They join house to house and field to field. (Verse 8.) The nations of Christendom, the religious organizations, the corporations and the individuals are all engaged in this business of acquiring wealth and property, while the cry of the oppressed comes up into the ears of the Lord of armies, who by the mouth of the prophet declares woe against this evil order of things and against all that participate in it.--Verses 9,10. See also James 5:1-6.

The intoxication here referred to by the prophet is not that produced by alcoholic beverages, but that which is aptly symbolized by such intoxication; viz., the intoxication produced by imbibing the spirit of the world, the wine of Babylon.--Rev. 17:2; 18:3.

"Woe," says the prophet, "unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them!"--that is, to those who all day long give themselves up to the intoxicating spirit of the world.--Verse 11.

"And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts."--They are given up to pleasure-seeking, --"but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." They have no interest in the great plan of God, and in his methods of working it out: they give themselves up to selfish worldly pursuits of business and pleasure.--Verse 12.

"Therefore my people [those professing to be God's people--Christians] are gone into captivity [to ambitious leaders who have usurped authority over them, and who by their unwise counsel have darkened knowledge, made void the word of God and buried deep the precious truth of his Word], because they have no knowledge [not being in that attitude of heart and mind in which God could teach and lead them]. And their honorable men [their clergy and bishops and popes] are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst." Yes, there is a famine in the land not for bread nor for water, but for the word of the Lord --Verse 13; Amos 8:11.

"Therefore sheol [the grave] hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it." (Verse 14.) Thus is symbolized the fact that the great systems, religious, social and civil, that now, unitedly constitute Christendom, shall go into

oblivion, destruction.--Rev. 16:19; 18:2,3,5,10,16-19.

"And the mean man [the selfish man who exalted himself regardless of others] shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled"--in the great leveling processes of the day of the Lord."--Verse 15.

"But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." (Verse 16.) Such will be the outcome of this great day of trouble upon the nations of Christendom.

"Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones [of the rich] shall strangers eat." (Verse 17.) Thus shall the whole present order of things be reversed; for the Lord will espouse the cause of the poor and needy, and especially of those who are of a humble and contrite heart.--Psa. 12:5; 34:16-22.

"Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope [who scheme largely with iniquity and who deal in lying and hypocrisy]: That say [by their conduct], Let him [the Lord] make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it." (Verse 19.) Thus in unbelief they scoff at the truth now due which disproves the long cherished doctrines upon which all of the systems of error are built. But the Lord says, "Woe unto them;" for their hour of tribulation cometh, and that speedily.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"--that commend the errors of human tradition and scorn the divine truth.

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" for "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."--Verses 20,21; 1 Cor. 3:19.

"Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine [those who, while professing to be the Lord's people, nevertheless greedily imbibe the spirit of the world], and men of strength [of intellect and influence] to mingle strong drink [to mingle the world's ideas and doctrines and customs with a little of the truth perverted and misused and so associated with the error as not to be understood, that so its power might be lost]: which justify the wicked [who thus pervert the truth] for reward [generally for the mean reward of popular approval or business or social interest], and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him [misrepresent those who hold the truth]!"--causing many to stumble.--Verses 22,23.

The remainder of the chapter sets forth in strong and forceful symbols the nature of the woe or penalty which is to come upon the class described, which corresponds in every particular with other prophetic delineations of the great time of trouble which is to wind up the affairs of this Gospel age and sweep the social and religious world as with the besom of destruction, preparatory to the establishment of the Redeemer's Kingdom. "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

"The wise shall understand, but the wicked [perverters and scornors of the truth above referred to] shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand"--until the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, and the Lord speaks unto them in his hot displeasure.

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., p. 209.

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