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WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS. NO. 1.

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true
 worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and
 in truth; for the Father seeketh
 such to worship him."--John 4:23.

THESE words of our Lord, it will be remembered,
 were addressed to the woman of Samaria. She had
 found him sitting upon the well, and he had improved
 the opportunity by preaching her a discourse on the
 "water of life." Finally convinced that her teacher
 was no ordinary person, but a "prophet" of extraordinary
 wisdom, she improved the opportunity by asking

a question which had long been in dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were a mixed people, not of pure Israelitish stock, nor fully conformed to all the laws and customs of the Jews. Hence the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans,"--considering them Gentiles. Indeed, our Lord indicated that he also esteemed them as Gentiles, outside the covenants and promises made to Israel; for we recall that when sending forth the disciples to preach the Kingdom of heaven at hand, he charged them straightly, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;" "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." --Matt. 10:5; 15:24.

The disputed question the woman thought she could now have answered for her by a truly good prophet, who, although a stranger to her, could tell her more of her own affairs than she supposed any one knew. She would now ask this prophet whether the Jews were right or the Samaritans. The Jews claimed to be in the Lord's hand, under divine guidance, as the seed of Abraham, in preparation as God's instruments for the blessing of all the families of the earth; and following the divine leading they had at first prepared the tabernacle, or the Lord's tent, and afterward the temple, or the Lord's house, which they recognized as the most appropriate place for worship, and hence, wherever they were, they worshiped facing toward the temple in Jerusalem, the city of the great King. And the pious ones sought to come at least once every year to the temple there to present themselves before the Lord for his blessing. The Samaritans, on the contrary, held that the simplicity of worship observed by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob without tabernacle or temple, but in the mountain was the proper method of approach to God; and they apparently thought that Israel had drifted into a mere formalism of worship, and that they, the Samaritans, worshiped the Lord with greater acceptance than the Jews. This, then, was the important question as between Jews and Samaritans, and now apparently a most favorable opportunity had come to have an authoritative expression upon the subject from one whose wisdom in holy things had been demonstrated. And so she put the question, Which is the proper place to worship, in this mountain where we Samaritans worship, or in Jerusalem in the temple where the Jews worship?

Our Lord's answer makes clear two things: (1) that up to that time the Jews were right in their place and manner of worship--they were in harmony with the divine arrangement; their worship was according to a knowledge of the divine law. You Samaritans know not what you worship, you are guided not by the divine

Word, but by your own impressions, while we Jews do know what we worship, we are following the divine injunctions; for God has ordained that salvation (the blessing of mankind through an opportunity of a deliverance from the curse, by the promised "seed" of Abraham) is to come through the Jews. God prepared that nation, its laws and arrangements for the development of the Savior.

Our Lord did not tell the woman that he himself was the great Jew, "born under the law" and justified by the law, the forepromised and foreshadowed "seed" of Abraham through whom the blessings were to come to mankind. Nor did he tell her that when he should finish his testing and prove himself worthy by obedience in the things which he suffered as man's redemption

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price, he would be the God-seed and Heir of the Abrahamic promises, and qualified and empowered to bless the world. Neither did he tell her that when glorified he would seek a Church as his bride or members of his body, to be joint-heirs with him in this work of blessing the world, and that to the Jews first would come this honor and privilege of sharing his sufferings and afterward his glory. Nor did he tell her that only a remnant of Israel would esteem the privilege, and that the remainder, the great mass, would be blinded for a time to spiritual things and rejected from divine favor, while that favor would be turned to the Gentiles, including the Samaritans, to complete the elect Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife. These truths, so forcibly set forth by the apostles, were not yet due to be preached nor to be understood; nor would they be until our Lord had finished his sacrifice and ascended up into glory, and presented that sacrifice before the Father as the ransom price for the sins of the whole world, and until the Father had accepted it, and as a consequence shed forth the holy spirit upon the consecrated believers in Jesus on the day of Pentecost. Then would be the proper time for the riches of divine grace to be revealed and for the call to joint-heirship with Christ ("the mystery which hath been hid from ages"--Col. 1:26,27) to be made clearly known.

But although it was not due time and hence not proper to declare that "mystery," it was due time and a proper occasion to answer to some extent the honest inquiry of the woman respecting the proprieties of worship. Hence, while telling her that the Jews had done right in the matter of temple worship, he does not advise her to become a Jew, but tells her that a change of dispensation is at hand and points her to it as the proper thing henceforth: The hour is coming, and now is (at hand), when neither this mountain nor Jerusalem will be favored for worshiping the Father. The new dispensation will be a spirit dispensation, and those who

in that dispensation will draw near to God and be accepted of him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The Lord does not say that there never had been previously true worshipers; quite to the contrary, the Scriptures teach that there were holy men of old whose prayers were acceptable before God and answered, yet they did not "worship in spirit" (for "the holy spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified," --John 7:39); neither had they worshiped in the truth, for the truth would only be revealed by the spirit's guiding them into it.--John 14:16,17.

The fact that we now are granted the "sealing" or "adoption" as sons of God, by the holy spirit, and a clearer knowledge of the truth as a result, and consequently possibilities of a more spiritual and intelligent worship, in no sense implies that we are more worthy of the favors than were some of the ancient worthies. Neither did the giving of the Law to all Israel prove that all of that people were more worthy of God's favors than some amongst the heathen who were left with less advantage every way. (Rom. 3:2.) When the due time came to send types of coming favors, God chose the nation of Israel as his agent in fore-shadowing Gospel blessings which would follow. But as it is not the hearer but the doer of a law that is justified by it, so it is not the one who has the greater opportunities as a worshiper that is blest most, but the one who uses his greater privileges and renders worship in accord with the spirit and the truth received.

Indeed, special honor is due to the ancient worthies, mentioned by the Apostle in Hebrews 11, who, living before the Spirit dispensation commenced, saw not the truth, but merely its shadows and types, and who nevertheless laid hold upon what they did see with such zeal that they were enabled thereby to be faithful, even unto death; and who not only thus win our admiration, but God's approval;--although "they without us [the Christ] should not be made perfect," God having provided a "better thing," higher privileges, for us.--Heb. 11:40.

The holy spirit, as heretofore shown,* is the name for any divine energy, whatever its manifestation. Operating upon the prophets of old, it caused them to speak and write the divine Word without comprehending the meaning of their own utterances in full, and sometimes not even in part. (1 Pet. 1:12.) Nevertheless, in obedience they had a blessing, and the people who heard with respect and endeavored to render obedience, so far as they understood, had a blessing from contact with the holy Word and holy power of God thus manifested amongst them. Yet the testimony is that very generally the people resisted what of the holy spirit they did appreciate and come in contact with, as the majority do to-day.--Acts 7:51.

*See our issue of June, '92.

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Since the great antitypical sacrifice of the Atonement has made actual reconciliation for iniquity, it made possible the acceptance of consecrated believers as sons of God (See John 1:12), and accordingly made possible for sons the highest manifestation of the holy spirit, as a spirit of adoption, which in due time, the Millennial age, shall be poured upon all reconciled to God (of all flesh, regardless of national lines), under the New Covenant. (Joel 2:28.) During this Gospel age, this spirit of adoption is restricted to the class of sons, the "brethren" and "joint-heirs" with Christ, now being selected, "partakers of the divine nature," begotten of the holy spirit as "new creatures." The disciples came in contact with the holy spirit in our Lord (who had it in fullest measure), and they were greatly blessed, because they (except Judas) did not resist its influence. Yet our Lord assured them that, with all their spiritual advantages, a still greater blessing would come to them as the result of his sacrifice and its presentation to the Father. He assured them that in his name the Father would send them the Comforter, the holy spirit, and that they should then have more than a contact with it; for it would abide in them. Through them it would exert an influence upon others (Acts 24:25), but none others than the "sons" could receive it, as an indwelling power, nor even become acquainted with it, for it is a seal or mark of sonship.-- John 14:16,17.

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Those who receive this spirit are to grow, by the truth which it enables them to appreciate, to the full stature of spiritual development; and to be "filled with the spirit" of the truth. From the very first these spirit-begotten and instructed ones may come with faith and confidence to the throne of grace as worshipers, "accepted in the Beloved;" and they may continue to grow in divine favor, as with increasing knowledge, faith and devotion they follow the footsteps of their Lord as worshipers in spirit and in truth, whose every act and sentiment is obedience to the divine will.--Heb. 4:16.

The Gentiles up to the beginning of this Gospel age had been "without God" and "having no hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12), while the Jews, God's favored people, to whom he had given the law, and to whom "were committed the oracles of God," and who had advantages "much every way" (Rom. 3:2), had not received the spirit of the truth, the spirit of adoption, but had merely in their law and through their prophets the shadows of good things coming after. Their temple was a typical temple only;

their priesthood a typical priesthood only; and their high priest a typical high priest; their sacrifices were but types of the better sacrifices to follow them. Their promises were only earthly promises, and they at very most merely foreshadowed the heavenly promises to the spiritual Israel not yet called. What they knew of God outside of these shadows of coming mercy and blessing was chiefly his justice and his power. They knew little of the love of God, for it had not yet been fully revealed; as it is written, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."--1 John 4:9.

No wonder then that with the love of God, the great and all important key to the divine character and plan, not yet clearly revealed, and the plan of God for human salvation still a "mystery hid," and the sacrifice of Christ not yet completed, and the new covenant not yet sealed, and the holy spirit not yet given;--no wonder that none up to that time except our Lord himself had ever worshiped the Father in the full degree since made possible to those granted the spirit of adoption and a knowledge of the truth. But our Lord declares that the Father seeketh no longer the worship of blind faith and reverence, nor the worship of forms and ceremony however reverential; nor the rent garments and prostrate bodies; but he seeks for and will now qualify true worshipers with knowledge and the spirit, that they may worship him with intelligent appreciation and not merely with reverence for his greatness and humble appreciation of their own insignificance; with bowed knee, but also with bowed heart. And more than all this, he seeks those whose worship will be not merely because of his power and favor, but because of an appreciation, to some extent, of the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of the love of God which passeth (human) understanding. To this end he has not only provided the ransom whereby all the true-hearted may by faith approach him under the justification of Christ's imputed righteousness, but for such he has also provided the seal of sonship, the spirit of adoption, whereby they may recognize him, and whereby they may cry to him as a Father. And in addition to this, and through this agency of the spirit, he has provided that they may "know the truth," so that although it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered

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into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," yet "God hath revealed them [these hidden things] unto us by his spirit;" for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep (hidden) things of God.--1 Cor. 2:9,10.

It thus appears that it is by reason of the spirit of

adoption, and through the spirit of adoption, and our knowledge of the divine character and plan, that the Church during this Gospel age, the real members of the body of Christ, are enabled to worship God still more

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pleasingly than could the ancient worthies. The hour came with Pentecost, and the time has continued for the past eighteen centuries, in which these sons of God (John 1:12) have thus been permitted to worship God in spirit and in truth. But, alas! how few even of those who have heard the Gospel, how few even of those who have named the name of Christ, have by full consecration become partakers of the spirit of adoption, and then as adopted sons, through intimate fellowship of spirit with the Redeemer and with the Father, and through the study of the Word of God, have come to that degree of development which enables them to worship him in harmony with his truth and in the very spirit of it.

That a worshipful attitude of heart is necessary before being introduced to a knowledge of the divine plan, and before being begotten by the spirit as sons of God, is made very evident by the Lord's dealings at the time of the introduction of the new worship in spirit and in truth in contrast with the former worship in faith, reverence, ceremony and dim knowledge.

Take, for instance, Nathanael. Notice how our Lord addressed him as an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile. He was sincere, a true worshiper according to the limited light and opportunities of his time; hence he was one of the very kind that the Lord sought as worshipers in spirit and in truth in the new dispensation. Hence, instead of addressing him in parables and dark sayings, that hearing he might hear and not understand, and seeing he might see and not believe, as when he taught the masses, who were not Israelites indeed, our Lord on the contrary made very plain to Nathanael his supernatural knowledge. And so when Nathanael inquired, Why do you, a stranger, speak so confidently with reference to my character as an Israelite indeed, our Lord answered, "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." We are not informed that Nathanael had prayed under the fig tree, but we think it not an unreasonable surmise that, having heard of Jesus as the Messiah, Nathanael had sought heavenly grace and wisdom on that very day just before coming to see the Lord. He may indeed have asked for some divine instruction and guidance whereby he might be kept from deception and might know whether this were the very Christ or not. If so, our Lord's words would have a hundred fold more significance as the answer to his prayer, as a proof that Jesus was to such an extent the Father's representative, that even the sacred thoughts of his heart were known to him, and that he was approved and acceptable as an earnest seeker for

the truth, and Israelite indeed. Nothing further of Nathanael's life is furnished us in the history but our Lord's testimony to his real heart character. We may safely assume that he was one of the "five hundred brethren" privileged to see the Lord after his resurrection, that he was one of those who waited in the upper room for the Pentecostal blessing; that thus from being a member of the house of servants under Moses he became a member of the house of sons under Christ (Heb. 3:5,6); that having been begotten of the spirit he might progress in the knowledge of the truth, growing from a "babe in Christ" to the "stature of a man" in grace and knowledge; that meanwhile from the beginning of his experience as a new creature in Christ Jesus (as a babe in Christ) he was privileged to worship God in spirit and in truth, and that this worship grew and became more and more complete as he neared the "stature of a man in Christ."

Another illustration about that same time was Cornelius. As the Centurion whose servant was sick, he had already manifested faith in the Lord Jesus to such an extent that our Lord said of him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." The testimony respecting him was, that he was a just man, that he feared God, that he prayed and that he had been kind to God's people. More could not be said of him as a worshiper of God because, first, he was a Gentile without God and having no hope in the world; secondly, he had neither the truth nor the spirit of the truth which would have permitted him to offer any higher worship than that of fear and obedience. But we note how the Lord marked such characters not only in Israel but outside of Israel; and when the time was fully come (at the end of the seventy weeks of special favor to Israel--three and one-half years after the cross), when the time came that the Gospel might be preached to the whole world for a witness, and the barrier between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, this same man, Cornelius, who worshiped to the best of his knowledge, was the first one to be favored outside of Israel. Although he prayed, gave much alms, feared God, and was just, yet before he could be called and accepted of the Lord or become a worshiper of the kind the Lord seeketh to worship him, he must be instructed --he must have the truth, and he must have the spirit of the truth. Hence by divine direction he sent men to Joppa to call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. (Acts 11:13-16.) He obeyed, he heard the words of eternal life, "the truth," he was ready for it and believed, and God immediately sealed him with the spirit of adoption as one of the sons of God. Then, as a spiritual "babe in Christ," being instructed in the truth and sealed by its spirit, he became a worshiper of God in spirit and in truth; and we doubt not he continued to grow in grace and knowledge, and

consequently to grow more and more to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Another worshiper of God under the Law according

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to the shadow of good things to come, but not a worshiper in spirit and in the truth, because not possessed of the truth nor sealed by the spirit, was Lydia, a business woman to whom the Apostle Paul was directed soon after his arrival at the city of Philippi. Being a true worshiper according to her past opportunities, she was ripe for the truth. While other ears were closed to it, she heard the Gospel; while other hearts were unmoved by it, God "opened her heart," already consecrated and waiting, and thus she was received into the house of sons and became a worshiper in the truth and in its spirit.--Acts 16:14.

We might mention also Justus, who as a believer entertained Paul at Corinth, of whom it is declared that he "worshipped God," and who on this account was esteemed worthy of the truth and its spirit and its privileges.--Acts 18:7.

Indeed, in our Lord's declaration, "The Father seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth," we see that the whole mission of the Gospel may be properly understood to be for the purpose of seeking out from amongst mankind in general these true worshipers; and, properly enough, the early ministers of the Gospel sought first those who seemed to be earnest worshipers, and the message which they bore became a test to those who heard it, separating between the worshipers in form and those who truly and reverentially sought the Lord. Thus the Apostle Paul's ministry was summed up by his accusers in these words: "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.--Acts 18:13.

Worship in spirit and in truth does not apply simply to prayer, praise, supplication and thanksgiving. It goes deeper than all these and takes hold upon the affections, upon the heart, and hence signifies not an "act of worship" but rather a life of worship--a life in which, through the begetting of the spirit and the knowledge of the divine plan, the individual becomes so at-one with God and so in unison with the law of God and all the features of the plan of God that it is, in the words of our Lord, his meat and his drink to do the Father's will. This is worship in spirit and in truth. It will find its expression in bended knee and in orderly and reverential demeanor in approach to God in personal prayer, in family prayer and in company with the household of faith; and it will find its expression also in all the acts and words of life. The captivated heart will seek to bring every talent of the body into complete subjection to the will of God and of Christ. The whole of this is the worship which God seeketh;

and, surely, only those who are thus captivated to the Lord in heart, and who serve him in spirit and in truth and endeavor to have his will done in their hearts, words and conduct, are in the full sense the true worshippers whom the Lord seeketh; the "little flock," the faithful "royal priesthood."

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THE TESTS AND PRIVILEGES OF DISCIPLESHIP.

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."--Luke 14:33.

TO be a disciple of Christ signifies much more, both in the way of responsibility and of advantage, than many seem to think. Our Lord's words are very explicit in defining the terms of discipleship to be nothing less than a full, complete consecration of

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all that we have and are to him who has bought us with his own precious blood. It must be a consecration to daily crossbearing and to following in the footsteps of Christ, even unto death. Hear the terms: "If any man come to me, and hate not [love not less] his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple;" and "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

The terms are too plain to be misunderstood. They signify nothing less than, as Paul expresses it, the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1.) No one of those failing to do this is recognized of the Lord as his disciple, or enjoys the privileges of that relationship; and, further, only those who do this intelligently and freely are accepted of him.

That the Lord would not have any one take upon himself the responsibilities of this relationship without due deliberation and forethought, is shown by his reasoning on the subject, saying, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it? lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he

be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand. And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy and desireth conditions of peace."--Luke 14:28-32.

Again, when the two brethren, James and John, desired to be very near the Lord in the coming Kingdom, the Lord endeavored to impress upon them the consecration

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that such a proposition would involve; and from the few recorded words we gather the drift of the more extended conversation. "Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." At that time they could form no idea of the blessedness of being joined with Christ in his Kingdom and glory, to sit with him in his throne and to reign with him as his bride and joint-heir. They only knew that they loved the Lord, and that it would be blessed to be forever in his immediate presence and favor. "Are ye able," said he, "to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" That baptism signified the complete surrender of self to God at any cost of privation or suffering, even unto death. And, with this understanding, they replied,--"We are able." So great was their faith in and love for the Lord that they were willing to follow in his footprints of suffering. Then the Lord accepted their consecration, saying,--"Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left [to be associated thus intimately with me in my throne] is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (Matt. 20:22,23.) From his subsequent teaching through the apostles we learn that this position is reserved of the Father for the overcomers of the Gospel age then beginning; and therefore, at that time, it yet remained to be proved whether these would be faithful to their covenant.

While the terms of discipleship are thus explicit, the advantages are none the less so. To the disciples belong the special teaching, training and discipline of the holy spirit given unto them as the seal of divine sonship, and all the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel. While our Lord did much public teaching, his special attention was always given to his consecrated disciples. Of this class were the twelve apostles and others, but few of whose names have come down to us. Such, for instance, were the company present in the mount of prayer where the Lord solemnly set apart the twelve to be his apostles (Luke 6:13); also the seventy whom he sent out two and two before his face, and who returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name, and to whom the Lord replied, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents

and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:1,17,19,20.) Such also apparently were Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and the women who were last at the cross and first at the sepulcher, and Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57), and the five hundred brethren of whom our Lord was seen after his resurrection.--1 Cor. 15:5,6.

These disciples all had the Lord's special love, fellowship and instruction; but the twelve apostles were the more constantly under his instruction in view of the work that was to be specially committed to them for the benefit of all the other disciples, both of that time and subsequently.

Notice also that the several apostolic epistles as well as the revelations of the Apocalypse are addressed in harmony with these conditions of discipleship.

It is for this consecrated class alone that the gospel feast (Isa. 55:1-3) is spread--the children's table. To this class the Prophet Isaiah (8:16) also refers, saying, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Yet from the children's table some crumbs of comfort may and do fall to others. Aside from this disciple class in our Lord's day was a great multitude who marvelled at his words, who believed, and who said, This must be the Christ, Hosannah to the Son of David! When Messiah comes will he do greater works than these?--whose sick were healed, and who were fed by the miraculous loaves and fishes in the wilderness. Yet these multitudes were weak in faith and fickle-minded. They were not committed to a definite purpose as disciples of Christ, and consequently they were swayed back and forth by the stronger wills of their leaders. They feared to trust fully to the divine testimonials of Christ when their leaders taught them to the contrary. But in their hearts many hoped this might be the Messiah, and several times they were on the point of taking him by force to make him their King. Yet they never came to the positiveness of conviction and trust in Christ which would lead to their espousing his cause fully at all hazards and thus becoming his disciples. Consequently, such never had the privileges of discipleship, and soon they became partakers in the national sin of rejecting Christ, either openly, or by that silence which implied consent.

What, we may inquire, was the Lord's attitude toward this great multitude whose faith had not brought them to the point of discipleship, but who nevertheless believed on him? Matthew (9:36) says he had pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. They were sheeplike in many respects, but they were not yet his sheep: they were not yet fully persuaded to follow his leading, though they liked his voice, and some said, "Never man spake like this man." They

followed him afar off, with uncertain steps and crooked paths, not fully determined to walk by faith, but desiring the (to them) stronger evidence of sight concerning his Kingdom and general teachings. Yet they had for a time some benefits from following Christ, even thus afar off: they had some faith, and consequently

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some hope, some love and some of the joy and peace that naturally flow from these. They also witnessed and realized some of the healing and teaching and many of the loving ministries of the blessed Lord. But because they did not improve these advantages and follow on to know the Lord, but weakly or indifferently followed their prejudice-blinded guides, not turning to the law and to the testimony of the prophets to see if they spoke according to that word, it was not long before they were all involved in the sin of their leaders, and with them they stumbled into the ditch of unbelief and of great tribulation, and were blinded to the privileges and blessings of the gospel, and lost them. But, nevertheless, the Lord will yet have mercy upon them, and his favor will return to them after the full number from among the Gentiles shall have come in to the chief place of favor which Israel failed to obtain through unbelief.--Rom. 11:1,2,23.

In like manner also many sheep from among the Gentiles may lose their high privileges, if they walk not by faith. The Apostle Paul warns them against a similar stumbling through unbelief, saying,--"Be not highminded, but fear." A similar class all through this age has been brought under the influence of the gospel, and has similarly responded to it, and yet failed of discipleship. They have believed in Christ and have followed him afar off, and have been variously swayed by other influences than the Shepherd's voice. They have had some crumbs of comfort from the "children's table"--some faith, hope and love and some joy and peace in believing in the redemption provided for all in Christ Jesus. They have enjoyed some of the healing influences of the gospel as it has enabled them to cast off many of the old sins, and they have had some of the teaching and loving ministries of the saints, the Lord's body. They, like the multitudes in Christ's day, are not unbelievers; nor are they believers in the full sense, in the sense of that implicit confidence that freely ventures a full consecration--the sense of discipleship. They are not anchored and steadfast, but are easily swayed by leaders and by their own unstable minds. They like to company with the saints for the crumbs of comfort they receive, and also because they appreciate the righteousness of the saints, although they do not walk wholly with them; and they often

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give them the cup of cold water (some word or look or act of encouragement) because they are the Lord's disciples and are self-sacrificingly engaged in his service.

Such are not the enemies of the Lord, nor can they be regarded as his disciples in the full sense. Yet, in so far as they have advanced toward Christ, they have not been repelled by him. So also the true disciples of Christ do not repel even the weakest inquirers and feelers after God. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye," says the Apostle, "but not to doubtful disputations:" receive such to do them good. And "him that cometh unto me," said Jesus, "I will in no wise cast out." Again it is written, "A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench." If there be but a little kindling of the fire of true devotion to God and to his truth and righteousness, the spirit of God will operate upon it and endeavor to fan it into a flame as long as such continue to come under the influences of divine grace by companying with the full disciples of the Lord.

That there is, and always has been, quite a large class of such as these, companying with the saints, the full disciples of Christ, is manifest. And not only so, but such were the disciples also before they came to that fulness of intelligent consecration which meets the requirements of full discipleship. Indeed, the first coming to Christ is infantile in every respect; and not until we have passed the infantile stage and have been developed somewhat in Christian character can we intelligently comprehend and comply with the Lord's terms of full discipleship.

When, by the grace of God, we have been led of his spirit to a clear apprehension of the privileges and terms of full and continued discipleship, if we draw back and fail to go forward, we lose our standing as disciples. But if, notwithstanding the difficulties that seem to obstruct our way, we meekly bow to the will of Christ, being constrained by the love of Christ to follow on, we shall receive more and more of the fullness of his grace, until, like Paul, in a blessed consciousness of the all-sufficiency of that grace, we can say, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

Happy and blessed, indeed, is he who thus follows on in the course of a true disciple of Christ; who, in love and faithfulness, quietly takes up the daily cross and bears it without complaint, remembering that the servant is not greater than his Lord, and esteeming it a privilege thus to have fellowship with him now in his sufferings and to be disciplined and trained thereby for the higher fellowship with him in the glory that shall follow.

Such faithful disciples the Lord declares to be, even now, the very salt of the earth--a healthful, cleansing, preserving element in the midst of a world

of moral decay and sinful pollution. In reference again to the same symbol and its peculiar fitness to his true disciples, Jesus here, after describing the terms of discipleship, adds, "Salt is good; but if the salt should become insipid, how shall it recover its savor?" "It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."--Luke 14:33-35; Matt. 5:13.

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Good-for-nothing, unsavory salt! castaways from divine favor, and left to be trodden under foot of men! branches cut off from the vine to wither and dry for the burning (destruction)!--such is the picture which the Lord gives of the sad end of those who draw back from their discipleship in the school of Christ. Paul also expresses the same thought, but in plain, non-symbolic terms, saying, "If any man draw back [not if he merely slip through weakness of the flesh under the power of temptation, which may indeed be followed by a godly sorrow that worketh repentance, but if he wilfully and deliberately draw back, loving sin and doing despite to the spirit of favor,--returning again like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire--if any man so draw back] my soul shall have no pleasure in him." The Apostle then shows what all such draw back to, when, encouraging all to faithfulness, he adds, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition [destruction], but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."--Heb. 10:38,39.

Beloved called ones, hearken to the Master's words: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" You may indeed be weary in well doing because of the reproaches of them that are without the pale of discipleship; temptations, violent or subtle, may press hard upon you; trials and cares may sorely afflict you; but we bring you these blessed words of cheer from the Word of the Lord:--"Have faith in God;" "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God [the divinely appointed Redeemer, Leader and Teacher of his people]?" "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." "In your patience possess ye your souls." "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," said Jesus; and Paul adds, "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Therefore, "let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."--Mark 11:22; 1 John 5:4,5; Heb. 10:35,36;

Luke 21:19; Psa. 27:13,14; John 16:33;
Heb. 2:18; Gal. 6:9; Luke 12:32.

Let us, then, in view of these precious promises, "gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ"--at the establishment of his Kingdom and his revealing in glory and power. God will work in us to will and to do all his good pleasure, if we patiently submit to the transforming influences of his grace. The tests of discipleship come to us every day, saying, This is the way: walk ye in it. It is the narrow way of self-denial, of cross-bearing, and of diligent, patient, faithful service to God. But who that has trod this narrow way has not been made to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in realizing the presence and favor of God and in communion with our Father and our Lord and with the faithful in Christ Jesus?--truly a joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

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QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Question. Please state whether you consider as typical the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in Joseph's time, and their significance in relation to the events of the next few years. There are some passages of Scripture which seem to indicate that there will be a period of prosperity prior to the breaking forth of the divine wrath.

Answer. We are inclined to think that the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine were typical: but it had not occurred to us (as you suggest) that the antitype would be like the type. We incline rather to the opinion that the seven years of plenty represent the grace and bounty of God in Christ laid up in the present time, and that the years of famine represent the Millennial age in which the world (perhaps the majority) will come to hunger after righteousness and find none except that which the antitype of Joseph (Christ) possesses and controls in the name of the great King.

And the selling by the Egyptians of their goods and themselves to the king through Joseph, in order to obtain food, we would understand to typify the consecration of the above mentioned of mankind, of themselves and all they have to Christ, if they would obtain the bread of eternal life.--See Gen. 41:54-56; 47:13-25.

Question. Is heaven a place or a condition? If a

place, where is it?

Answer. While it is true that beings might be in a heavenly condition; that is, spiritual and invisible to human sight, and yet be near us who are in the flesh; and while we believe that is the condition in which our Lord is now present, a spiritual or heavenly being, we could not agree that heaven is only a condition; it must also

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be a place, just as truly as the earth is a place. The most reasonable suggestion we know of is that offered in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. III., page 327; namely, that heaven is located in or in connection with the heavenly group, Pleiades.

In evidence that heaven is a place and at a distance from the earth, and that it requires time to go and come, notice the fact that our Lord said that he would "go away" and "come again." This could not be true if to go to heaven means merely a change from human conditions to spiritual conditions, because he will never come again to human conditions. He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (Heb. 2:9.) He has finished that work and has no further use for the body of humiliation and has been glorified; and is the express image of the Father's person.

Again our Lord says in the parable that the Nobleman went away to a far country.--Luke 19:12.

Again we are informed that the holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:39), indicating that as soon as Jesus would be glorified the holy Spirit would be given to the waiting Church. And we know that from the time our Lord ascended up on high until the descent of the holy Spirit was ten days.

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"BE TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS."

--DEC. 13.--PROVERBS 23:15-25.--

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty."--Prov. 23:21.

HAVING found a lesson for the old in the experience of Solomon and his alienation from God in old age, we come in this lesson to the words of wise instruction to the young.

(15,16) The exhortation is that of a parent or a teacher who has had experience in life and who fain

would be helpful through advice to one starting upon life's pathway. Knowledge of good and evil may reach us either through the instruction of those who have already profited by either or both of these. To profit by instruction is indeed an evidence of wisdom. The "prudent [wise] man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple [foolish] pass on, and are punished." (Prov. 22:3.) We see folly in this respect repeated every day. Those who profit by the experiences of others either through instruction or observation are the smaller number, but they are the wise ones. The majority must gain their wisdom through severe experience--punishment for errors, for rashness, for lack of observing the natural laws of cause and effect. Since they will not learn through instruction that whatsoever a man soweth the like shall he also reap, they must learn this lesson through bitter experience. The lessons of wisdom learned, no matter in which school, the school of instruction or the school of experience, are valuable, and ultimately, we believe, will be profitable to the majority of our race. Ultimately all shall learn that peace, joy, divine favor, including everlasting life, can be had only by walking in the way of truth, honesty, righteousness--the godly way.

A GOOD WAY.

This lesson seems to picture before our minds a youth starting upon life's journey where two roads meet; the one an upward road, an honorable course of morality, prudence, self-control, patience, perseverance, righteousness; the other path a downward road, a way of gratification of the depraved tastes and appetites of the fallen human nature, a way of apparent ease, of carelessness for the truth and for honesty and self-restraint, a way of loose liberty, a way that leads into intemperance of language, of thought, of conduct, of food and of drink; and which leads on to further degradation and dishonor.

The voice of wisdom is heard by nearly every young man and woman starting in life, directing them to the upward and honorable path; it reaches them either through parents or instructors or friends or observation. The smaller number, however, are wise enough to accept heartily the instruction and so to avoid the downward path entirely. The vast majority desire the pleasures of sin for a season at least. They

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have no thought of going onward in the path of sin, but merely to remain near by the noble path of morality and honesty and truth. They do not realize that each step in the downward road away from the path of

righteousness will cause their hearts to lose appreciation of righteousness and to become inured to sin. Very few, therefore, accept the lessons of wisdom promptly and heartily, and act thereon. There will indeed be opportunities farther down the journey of life to leave the downward way and to seek the upward path, but they will be much more difficult than at the beginning, at the parting of the way in youth--more difficult because the downward path has been leading their characters and sensibilities farther and farther away from the way of morality and honesty.

(17,18,19) There may be times when those who

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walk in the way of wisdom may seem to see disadvantages therein, and pleasures in the way of sensualities; but the voice of wisdom instructs such to look beyond and consider the full end of the downward way, to respect the Lord and seek to walk honestly and uprightly, assured that the end of this course will eventually be better than the other. "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the [good] way."

(20,21) Statistics show that hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year for intoxicating liquors, which not only fail to profit the users, but which do others as well as themselves serious injury--mental, moral and physical. How many have been brought to poverty through intoxicants! And, to our shame be it said, this sin against self and manhood is more common in the civilized or so called Christian nations than in some others.

The sin of gluttony leads usually to another kind of poverty. The poor may become sotted with drink, but rarely can they afford to be gluttonous. Gluttony is chiefly, therefore, a sin of the rich or well-to-do. It leads to poverty of both mental and physical strength. It is as truly intemperance as drunkenness, although not so far reaching in its bad influence.

The lesson speaks of the intemperance and impropriety of sloth, or idleness, or lack of energy; and the observation of every wise man proves that true happiness is associated with energy--mental and physical activity. "Not slothful in business," is one of the characteristics of a Christian, as set forth by the Apostle. We live in a day, however, in which another form of intemperance prevails in an opposite direction with not a few--intemperance in energy and ambition; a consuming desire for honors or wealth, that robs many, not only of proper social enjoyments, but, more important still, of spiritual privileges and joys.

(22,23) True wisdom will never despise the counsel of the aged, especially from parents, of whose interest in the child's welfare there can rarely be doubt. It is one of the peculiarities and difficulties of

our day that because of the sudden increase in knowledge and educational facilities the young have in many departments of knowledge outstripped their seniors.

The resultant tendency is disrespect for the experiences and advice of parents and seniors, and a disposition to be heady, high-minded, unthankful, unholy, disobedient to parents and other like disgraces foretold by the Apostle as features of our day. (See 2 Tim. 3:4.)

On this account additional wisdom and great patience are needful on the part of parents and all instructors of the young. Recognizing the influences which counteract parental instruction, and recognizing the fact that the children may be in advance in some points, the wise parent should seek to set a good example in proper childlikeness himself, and be ready to learn from and with the children along the lines of their superior advantages, explaining that the present increase of opportunities for knowledge are phenomenal, and not of men but of God, as foretold by the prophet respecting the "time of the end." (Dan. 12:4.) By this course of honesty and wisdom the parent will maintain the confidence of his child, who will then be the better prepared to learn in turn along the lines of the parent's experiences in life and respecting principles of morality and the evil tendencies of immorality. Thus wisdom in the parents has very much to do with the choice of wisdom by the child. One of the chief lessons to be inculcated is, that truth is precious above all things--with reference to the ordinary affairs of life and dealings between men, with reference to spiritual things, with reference to God, and with reference to the divine plan. Truth is to be prized, and those who love and practice the truth are to be esteemed, and such only; error, falsehood, no matter how gaudy or showy or attractive, is to be disdained and repudiated. This is in harmony with our Lord's prayer, "Sanctify them [i.e., separate them from the evil and set them apart for good] through thy truth: thy Word is truth."

(24,25) These verses suggest, and properly, that wisdom in the young does not depend wholly on inculcation, instruction. Probably the majority of wise children are born wise. "He that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him." If parents in general could realize the importance of the parental office and the bearing of their own characters and sentiments upon their offspring, laying the foundations for good and wise characters before the children are born, the responsibilities of their position and relationship would, we believe, not only favorably influence their children, but help also to develop positive character in themselves.

The parents who have failed to discern the laws of nature under whose control they have brought forth children; and whose children therefore reflect the parental unwisdom and unsettledness of character, have in consequence double reason for exercising patience

toward the unwisdom of their offspring, and double reason for perseverance in their later efforts to correct that unwisdom and to lead their children into right ways.

A STILL MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

It should be carefully observed that the way of morality, temperance, moderation and wisdom above set forth, although a commendable way, is not the way in which the Christian of this Gospel age is invited to walk, in the footsteps of his Lord, to

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attain glory, honor, immortality and a share in the heavenly Kingdom as one of the kings and priests. (Luke 13:24; 12:32; Rev. 5:10; 20:6; Rom. 8:17.) The foregoing is sound advice for all, and none should be more quick to follow it than the consecrated, the "new creatures in Christ Jesus." But the "Narrow Way" of self-denial and self-sacrifice marked out in the New Testament is the pathway of those who would win the prize of the high calling to joint heirship with Christ as his Church, his Bride.

All sensible people commend the path of temperance and morality above set forth, but few appreciate or commend the "narrow way" in which the Church is called as the bride to follow the Lord, her Bridegroom. The narrow way is foolishness to the world, neither can the worldly appreciate it, because its value must be spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:7-16.) The wisdom that indicates and approves the narrow way of self-sacrifice is an inspired or begotten wisdom which cometh from above only to the consecrated, the spirit-begotten. It is inspired, not by earthly hopes or aims or promises or ambitions, but by "exceeding great and precious promises," "heavenly promises," of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading, which the earthly eye has not seen, which the earthly ear has not heard and which has not been appreciated by the heart of the wisest of men. To so great an extent is this true that in the estimation of the worldly the way of the fully consecrated seems foolishness. In view of this the Apostle declares that as the world does not know the Lord, and does not understand his plan, which is higher than the world's conception as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isa. 55:9), so the worldly do not understand the true Church; and as the Apostle said, "We [who walk the "narrow way"] are counted fools all the day long,"--harmless but "peculiar people." The moving impulses which help us in this "narrow way" were only received after we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we made full consecration

of ourselves to the Lord and received the spirit of adoption into his family. Then, because children of God, we received his spirit and were privileged to know more and more of "the mystery of his will," "the hidden mystery" (Eph. 3:9; 1:9), to appreciate the divine plan in harmony with which (and in harmony with our consecration) we have joy in spending our lives, in "laying down our lives," in faithfulness in the service of the Lord; in the calling and perfecting of his saints to be the first fruits of the salvation purchased by the Redeemer.

Those who have received this special sealing of heavenly wisdom, and who are walking this "narrow way" of full consecration to the Lord, although counted "fools," are the truly wise referred to throughout the Scriptures:--"the wise virgins," "the wise shall understand," "the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." They who attain to this wisdom and this relationship to Christ do so at the expense of earthly reputation, as the Apostle declares: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool [according to the earthly standard], that he may be wise."--1 Cor. 3:18.

Once when we misunderstood the divine arrangement, and did not see that the "little flock" is to be a "kind of first fruits unto God of his creatures" (James 1:18), but supposed that the "little flock" who walked the "narrow way" of self-sacrifice would be the only ones to receive any measure of divine favor hereafter, that all others would suffer some kind of awful punishment,

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because they did not walk in the "narrow way" which few of them saw and which still fewer of them were able to appreciate, it perplexed us greatly; as it still perplexes the majority of Christian people. Thank God that we now see in his Word the clear instruction that when this "little flock" shall have been selected and rewarded with joint-heirship with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom, then the "narrow way," will have ceased and another way, "a highway" shall there be opened up--a way in which the human family as a whole shall be invited to return to harmony with God and righteousness through the Great Mediator and under the terms of the New Covenant sealed with his precious blood. It will not be a downward way like the way of sin in the present time, but an upward way. "The redeemed of the Lord shall go up thereon." It will not be a narrow way, that few can find, but a "highway," from which the stumbling blocks of temptation will be removed, and on which the ravenous beasts of evil and temptation will not be permitted.*-- Isa. 35:8,9.

We can thus see that, while a life of honesty and morality will not fill the requirements of the "high

calling" of this Gospel age to joint-heirship as the bride, the lamb's wife, yet those who during this present time seek to live soberly, justly, truthfully, morally, and who thereby develop character, will be much in advance of the besotted and degraded of mankind (who gratify instead of restraining the fallen tendencies of their nature), when the new age shall open up in which all the families of the earth shall be blessed by the great "Seed of Abraham," Christ and his Church, the bride.--Gal. 3:16,29.

The call of wisdom to the way of honesty, morality, etc., has been heard and to some extent followed by heathen as well as civilized people; by unbelievers as well as by those who have heard of Christ; and to some

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., Chap. II.

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extent they have profited by his teachings, and all who walk in this, the way of wisdom, secure blessings both for the present life and also a preparation for the future blessings promised. But the "narrow way," pointed out to some by the still higher wisdom, is found by none of the heathen; Christ is the Door, the Gate, to this "narrow way," and it has but one, which opens to believers only. Although it is not merely a way of morality, but a way of consecration and sacrifice, nevertheless it includes morality in every respect, and to a higher degree than the unconsecrated generally recognizes. Those who are on the "narrow way" are required to consecrate their all, including their wills, and to receive instead the will of their Lord and Head, and to operate in harmony with that will. And since Christ's will is perfect in righteousness, truth, purity and goodness, all who walk in his will must walk as closely as the weakness of their flesh will permit after the spirit, after the will of their Head, and not after the will of the flesh.

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ENCOURAGING LETTERS.

The following, received July 24, '96, will be encouraging to those who sometimes see little result from tract distribution. It shows that immediate results may follow in the experience of the recipient of the tract, though they may not be apparent for many months.

Florida.

GENTLEMEN:--In 1894, while attending the C.E. Convention at Cleveland, Ohio, your tract "Do You Know?" fell into my hands. I was much interested in it, and have often thought of writing for further information; but for sundry causes have delayed. Have been much interested in reading and studying the prophecies since reading your tract; but feel the need of some help and guides. What can you do to help me? What is the "Chart of the Ages" spoken of in the tract? and what does it cost, etc.? Any information or helps will be thankfully received.

Yours in Him,

Kentucky.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--We had a good meeting Saturday afternoon with about 75 people present. Yesterday we held two meetings in an old church building, about twenty miles from here, with an attendance of over one hundred. Since coming here one week ago fourteen meetings have been held, three in private houses and eleven in public buildings. Some drove over fifteen miles to the meeting yesterday. I send a number of names for sample TOWERS.

I had a very peculiar experience in _____ county, a mountain district, where the people think nothing of using pistols, and where the prejudice against the truth was very strong.

Brother _____ had spoken to one of the leaders in the Christian Church; he told him we would use the building Saturday evening; and it was so published. The Methodists held a meeting in a Baptist church building that evening, and the Christian friends closed their building out of courtesy to them, they said. It was then understood that we should have the use of the building Sunday afternoon, but matters were so arranged as to make that impossible. They then agreed to let us use the building for three services Monday, and announcement was made to that effect; but when we went there Monday morning, it was locked, and the janitor refused to open it.

Some who were very anxious to hear what we had to say then went to some of the leaders in the Baptist Church, who agreed to let us use that building Monday afternoon and night, and the janitor was paid in advance for cleaning and lighting. The friends published the meeting by going through the town and telling every one they met. A member of the Baptist Church, who heard of the proposed meetings, hurried to town to stop them. He said that if that stranger preached in the Baptist Church he would have to "stand over his dead body." As we had no desire to be riddled with bullets from a "Baptist gun," we decided not to have the meetings in the church.

You can imagine that by this time quite an excitement was stirred up. We had distributed tracts at the meetings Sunday; and this, with the bitter feeling aroused in the minds of some by the action of the church members, created a strong desire for a meeting. Several in sympathy with us then obtained the school house for the evening. The house was crowded, and I spoke

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nearly two hours. The "best element" of the place attended. We distributed more tracts, and many gave their names for sample TOWERS. I am inclined to think that the results will be greater than if we had succeeded in holding meetings without opposition.

I arrived at _____, which is a "Shaker Community," and was warmly received by Brother E_____. The "Shakers" are very exclusive religiously and do not permit preachers not of their faith to hold meetings in their midst. But for the first time in the history of this Community they departed from that time-honored custom and permitted me to preach in their school building. We held three meetings with an average attendance of 75 or 80, I judge. Most of those who attended the meetings were delighted.

Yours in love and service, FRANK DRAPER.

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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

THE day set apart for National Thanksgiving is past, but we trust that the spirit of thankfulness continues in many hearts; and no time is more appropriate for the review of our causes for thankfulness as children of the Heavenly King, than at Christmastide, on the threshold of a new year, while ruminating upon the things that were, the things that are and the things which we desire and hope shall be. Whether partial failure or moderate success has, during the year closing, marked our efforts along lines of moral, physical, financial or spiritual attainment, let thankfulness fill our hearts, as well as good resolves and holy ambitions for the coming year. Indeed, we esteem that thankfulness must be an abiding grace in all true Christians who have reached a reasonable degree of development in the higher life.

This highly favored land has much to be thankful for in the way of bountiful harvests; and although the farmer has not gotten high prices, this is a cause of thankfulness to other lands whose harvests are scant. As it is, wheat is nearly \$1.80 per bushel (silver) in India where the crop has been short for the past five harvests and gives little promise for the next, and where at present ninety millions are seriously affected and over one million on the verge of starvation, requiring military intervention repeatedly to quell bread-riots.

If the people of India cannot give thanks for rain and plenty, they can at least give thanks that the wholesale starvations of the past are now measurably prevented by the intervention of civilization and its accessories of wiser government and commerce. If the lot of any here seem hard, let him compare it with that of others; remembering that in India, in years of average bounty, millions of people never get a chance to eat three meals a day to satisfaction, even of the plainest food. Yes, the "curse," the penalty of sin, rests heavily upon the earth. The convict, man, is being made to feel its weight. Conditions are not what they would have been, had he remained obedient to his Creator in Eden.

But "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift,"--his Son, our Lord; and for the "ransom for all;" and for the reconciliation by it made possible; and for the promise of his Kingdom soon to come; and for our call to a share in it with our Lord; and for the glorious prospect of coming "times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." --Acts 3:19-21.

Thank God, this will mean the lifting of the "curse" from the ground, and from so many of the death-sentenced convict-race as will accept the grace of God in Christ. Ah! blessed thought; this will mean an end of famines, an end of pestilences, an end of storms and floods and droughts, and ultimately "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things [shall have] passed away." (Rev. 21:4.) Already a blessing has followed in the wake of the gospel of Christ--since the "Great Light" was "lifted up" on Calvary. Wherever any have been made free indeed by the Son, a light has shone out and has brought with it blessings; although, alas! this intelligence and its accompanying blessings have been sadly perverted by selfishness--especially in the large class of Christian counterfeits, called in the Scriptures "tares."

But if others have cause for thanksgiving, how much more cause have those into whose hearts the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of

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Jesus Christ our Lord, has shined. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Those thus favored can rejoice and give thanks under all circumstances and conditions;--in sickness, in death, in poverty's vale or in comfort and health. Surely, thankfulness is a necessary ingredient to Christian living. It must be mixed with our songs of praise, and with our prayers; it must fill our hearts to enable us to render faithful and efficient service to our Lord, in any direction. It was this gratitude, thankfulness, which enabled Brothers Paul and Silas to serve our Master so faithfully that they could sing praise and offer thanks for

the privilege of suffering for Christ in the jail at Phillipi, while their backs were smarting from the cruel lashes received as the cost of their discipleship.-- Acts 16:25,33.

Moreover, the thankfulness of the true Christian must continue--daily, hourly; its loss even for a moment should be deplored as an evidence of spiritual sickness, and the afflicted should go to the leaves of healing in the divine Word, that he may be refreshed in strength of love and zeal and realize afresh that "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live [now reckoned alive in Christ] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but [in thankfulness] unto him which died for them and rose again."--2 Cor. 5:14,15.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts,... and be ye thankful."--Col. 3:15.

* * *

The New York Observer, a high class "orthodox" religious journal has been studying the question of Israel's restoration to "the land of promise." After viewing the subject in various lights it gives its conclusions, as follows:--

"A 'restoration,' then, through the efforts of the Jews themselves, must be the only hope. And that it will be brought about by the voluntary efforts of others is exceedingly improbable. Under any notion of the fitness of things, Palestine ought, when the Turk is driven across the Euphrates and the Ottoman Empire is partitioned, to revert to the Jews. But all the plans which have thus far been suggested to restore it to Christian control have been negatived at the outset by the jealousy of the Russians for the safety of the Holy Places. It was that safety which formed the popular Russian pretext for the Crimean war. With passionate reverence for the Holy Places an unchanging tradition of the Russian peasantry, there is no reason to believe that the Czar will permit the transfer of Palestine to any save a great power, and that power Russia. Probably if before the Ottoman break-up the Jews desired to buy the Holy Land, and Europe consented, he might acquiesce on condition of a European guaranty. But there is little present reason to believe that he would consent to such a reversion as a part of the final partition of Turkey. It would seem, then, that the hoped-for 'restoration' may never come, and that although Palestine will again become cultivated and prosperous, to the Jews it may always be a land of promise."

The italics are ours and point out the hopelessness of Israel's cause from the human standpoint. We admit that the Observer's views and reasonings are clear and logical; but it has omitted the most important factor in question; namely the will and plan of God. That will

and plan, as revealed in God's Word, teaches us to expect that within eighteen years the "times of the Gentiles" will expire, and that with their expiration Jerusalem will cease to be trodden down by the Gentile kingdoms;--that the set time to favor "Jacob" with Millennial blessings as the first-fruits of the nations will then have come, and that it will include their saving or recovery from the blindness which came upon them nationally, at their rejection of Messiah. Who can question this interpretation of the prophets in the light of the Apostle's testimony in Romans 11:25-33?

* * *

Protestant federation has been little discussed of late, but is evidently progressing slowly as indicated by the following from the Literary Digest:--

"The committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada on Union with other churches reported to the recent Canadian General Assembly upon its proceedings with reference to the proposition of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada for the establishment of a federal court composed of representatives of the negotiating churches, whose function it should be to promote cooperation and economy in respect to mission work and 'dependent churches,' but which should not have power to deal with matters of creed or discipline, or with any question vitally affecting the independence of the negotiating churches. The proposition was generally accepted."

The expectancy of the Episcopal Church Rome-ward has doubtless hindered progress toward Protestant Federation or union; but this is now out of the way, as Rome has closed that door. The new policy of Romanism will surely revive Protestant desires for a consolidated and sizable Protestant system as an offset in influence with the governments and with the people.

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"COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST."

God has his best things for the few
Whose love shall stand the test;
God has his second choice for those
Who do not crave his best.

It is not always open sin
That risks the promised rest;
A good more often is the foe
That keeps us from the best.

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There's scarcely one but vaguely wants
In some way to be blest;
'Tis not a blessing, Lord, I seek,
I want thy very best!

Yet others make the highest choice,
But when by trials pressed
They shrink, they yield, they shun the cross,
And so they lose the best.

I want in this short life of mine,
As much as can be pressed
Of service true for God and man;
God help me do my best!

I want to stand when Christ appears
In spotless raiment dressed;
Numbered among his chosen ones,
His holiest, his best.

I want among the victor throng
To have my name confessed;
And hear my Master say at last,
"Well done! You did your best."

Give me, O Lord, thy highest choice;
Let others choose the rest;
Their good things lose their charm for me,
Since I have found thy best. --Selected.

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WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING DEC. 1, 1896.

ALTHOUGH the above has been the recognized name of our Society for some four years, it was not until this year that the Board of Directors took the proper steps to have the name legally changed from ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY to that above. The new name seems to be in every way preferable.

Although disinclined to make frequent reference to the work centering in the TOWER office, lest it might be misunderstood to be boasting, we are nevertheless glad to avail ourselves of the opportunities offered us in connection with this our annual report, to lay before our interested and sympathizing Brethren and Sisters, for their encouragement, a brief summary of the work itself, as well as of the moneys expended in the propaganda.

If the following statement even seem to a few to savor of boasting and show, nevertheless, it is our duty to those who have contributed the means which have permitted the work: and they represent in the aggregate a large proportion of our paying subscribers;-- and the letters from those who receive the WATCH TOWER free as "the Lord's poor" indicate that many of them are equally deeply interested in the work, in its every feature. Many of these, although hindered by poverty from sharing in this work financially, have efficiently cooperated in the work as tract-distributers, etc.

The work divides itself into the following departments.

(1) The WATCH TOWER Editorial Department, to which three proof-readers lend efficient aid. Each reader must judge for himself respecting the Lord's blessing upon this department. We trust that the study of the TOWER by its readers gives them even half the blessing enjoyed in its preparation. The withdrawal of our "Associate Editor" has been noted by some, so we explain now to all that this was granted at her own urgent request. She prefers to appear as a correspondent over her own signature, MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

The growth of the TOWER list is one of the best evidences of the progress of Present Truth for which it stands as a defender and servant. Our friends will be glad to know that notwithstanding the money pressure of the past year the TOWER lists show an increase of the interest--although of course some "fall away" as we are forewarned to expect.

(2) The Correspondence Department,--with which is associated the keeping of accounts, attention to your orders for DAWNS, O.T. TRACTS, WATCH TOWERS, Bibles, etc. This department handled during the past year about twenty thousand of your letters and sent out thirteen thousand two hundred and ninety-one replies. This is a very important feature of the work, very helpful to many in perplexity, and, blessed by modern progress, enables us to be in touch with such as the Lord may please to direct to us from all parts of the world.

(3) The Publishing Department.--To this belongs the type setting of the TOWERS, DAWNS and OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS, contracting for paper, press-work, binding, etc. (for we save both time and money by hiring our printing and binding done). This department also includes packing and shipping of DAWNS, tracts and TOWERS by freight, express and mail. The writing of wrappers for the sending out of sample tracts and TOWERS belongs also to this department; but efficient aid in this matter has been rendered by friends at a distance, who have our hearty thanks.

(4) The Colporteur Department.--This is conducted by dear Brethren and Sisters who give, some a part, and some all, of their time in visiting house after house, and city after city, with a view to interesting

fellow Christians in "present truth," respecting the Plan of the Ages, in which the divine wisdom, love, justice and power are made manifest; in showing, too, that we are now in the Millennial dawn onto which laps the forty year "harvest" in which ends the Gospel age in a great time of trouble--social, financial and

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religious. The past year has been a very trying one upon these dear faithful "reapers," obliging several of them to temporarily seek other employment. And many who continued got so deeply into our debt that it was very trying to them as well as to us. Many of them will be made glad and encouraged to fresh energy by one item of this report yet to be mentioned. Already the prospect of "better times" is leading to new inquiries for fields of service, etc. This branch of the service continues to yield most favorable results which are, however, ably supplemented along the other lines.

Any who may have the idea that the colporteurs are in the service merely as a business, are greatly mistaken. We never knowingly encourage such, and if, by chance, they do slip into the harness, they soon become discouraged. As an illustration of the spirit which prompts the colporteurs, we will here give an extract from a letter written by one of them to a friend, with no expectation that it would ever reach your eyes or ours. The Brother is not yet nineteen years old, but since getting the Truth has caught its spirit, and with his sister is seeking to spread it. His letter says:--

"We had very poor success in selling DAWNS that day. Yet it was no more than I had expected (having been in the business before), but I think my sister was a little disappointed, as it was her first attempt, and she became pretty tired by evening. But I do not see that we should be discouraged, but rather encouraged, since we are following in the footsteps of our dear Master, and we remember how he also many times became weary, and how he sat down by the well to rest. We should be encouraged when we look at the course of Jesus and the apostles, how they went from door to door, sacrificing all earthly things, and when we remember the life of the great Apostle Paul and the sufferings he endured for Jesus' sake, working his own way as he preached.

"Now I know that the Lord is abundantly able to prosper us in this work and make it an honorable service before the world; but on the other hand I see also his plan in not permitting it thus. Our work of preaching is made to be dishonorable and a reproach before the world and the nominal church, that we may thus prove our love and loyalty to God and his truth, and show ourselves worthy to be of that "little flock" who, through much tribulation, shall enter the Kingdom of God. Unless we suffer with him, we cannot reign

with him.

"All my brothers and sisters (ten children in our family) are studying the DAWNS and TOWERS with the Bible in hand and learning the truth as fast as they can. The death of our dear mother has also been a chastisement to father and is leading him closer to Jesus and farther from the world and its spirit."

(5) The Evangel Department.--This branch looks after the holding of meetings, to water the good seed sown by the colporteur brethren, and to refresh and assist little groups of the Lord's people, wherever accessible, and to assist them to the most profitable methods for private and social study of the Lord's Word. Of the good results of this service, as now carried on, we have constant evidence through your letters; and still we are endeavoring to make it more efficient. To the Lord of the "harvest" be all the glory, and to his people, the true "wheat," more and more blessing. The expenditure for this branch of the service is noted in the Financial Report in another column: it has been, we believe, wisely and economically used for legitimate expenses only; and, so far as we have been able to judge, has cooperated with such only as have considerable knowledge of present truth and some talent as speakers. It has been expended for meetings held in 224 places, from one day to a week at each place and from one to three meetings per day in the following States:--Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky.

(6) The Tract Distribution Department.--Every TOWER reader is desired to be an active participant in this branch of the service. Some have more and others less opportunity for engaging in this service. The report given in another column shows that this department lagged a little this year as compared to last; probably because of the general distraction incident to the recent political campaign. However, many may now be all the better prepared to see that "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them" from the impending trouble, and to look for the only hope of the groaning creation.

(7) The Financial Department.--The work of course must have means or stop, as we have no power to work miracles. But it may surprise you all, as it does us at the Office, how, almost miraculously, the Lord keeps opening the way more and more from year to year. The report for this year will doubtless amaze you. It shows that notwithstanding the extreme financial depression, your increasing zeal has been blessed and used of the Lord to such an extent that we open the new year with a small balance on hand for the use of which contracts are already let. It will soon be out on its mission in the form of O.T. TRACTS and TOWERS, to be used of the Lord in reaching others of his children who are now more or less blinded by the

falsities propagated by the god of this world,--to help them "out of darkness" into God's "marvelous light."

It is a rare matter for us to mention the names of the Tract Fund contributors--nor would we have space

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for them all, for our list of contributors is nearly or quite five thousand; and their donations range from half a cent per week upward. Neither do we intend now to change our rule, believing that it is best that the left hand know not what the right hand does for the Lord's cause, until the King shall make known his

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judgment, based upon the purposes and intents of our hearts. And indeed the Brother, whose name and very generous gift we will mention wrote--"I prefer you do not mention my name, unless you think that some special good would be secured. It is quite sufficient to credit it to 'A deeply interested Brother.'"

But we are not satisfied to do this for two reasons; (1) because many might say, That is Brother Russell's own gift to the work, and thus make a mistake; and (2) because we believe it does us all good to know something of the noble sacrifices of others. We therefore conclude that it will be to the Lord's glory and our readers' good for us to give you some particulars including the name, as follows.

Some time ago Brother W. Hope Hay fell heir to a fortune in Great Britain. On securing the money he invested most of it in mortgages; and being anxious to do something in the Lord's cause, he built and donated a neat little Episcopal church for the town in which he resided. About that time the Lord counted him worthy and sent him MILLENNIAL DAWN, which, as the Lord's messenger, guided our Brother to a better and more consistent understanding of the divine Word. With a heart full of thankfulness to God for "his marvelous light," Brother Hay visited us at Allegheny, looked into the work and said, Brother Russell I want to have a share in this work. By simple living I can spare \$10,000, and I want you to put it into active service in spreading the "harvest" message of divine love and wisdom to others who are yet in the darkness from which God has so graciously delivered me. Not only do I believe that this is Truth, but more, I believe it to be the very message ordained of God "to gather together his elect" unto himself preparatory to their glorification with him.

It required some time and sacrifice to get the money out of the mortgages, but it finally came. Brother Hay's idea and our own originally was to invest this money and use the interest to help defray the additional expense of making ZION'S WATCH TOWER

a twelve page weekly, without increasing the subscription price. (In harmony with this thought we made quite a number of this year's issues sixteen pages instead of twelve.) But the pressure upon our time, the greater necessity for getting out additional volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and the growing burden of Colporteur debts has hindered. And now we have received from Brother Hay a letter directing the sale of the investments and the direct application of the money to the uses of the Tract Society; part of the sum to be applied to the cancelling of portions of the accounts of burdened Colporteurs in arrears--for their reencouragement, and for the Tract Society's relief from the burden of debt, interest, etc. He remarked incidentally that he feared anyway that if the TOWER were made a weekly its important subjects would be merely read and not studied, Bible in hand, as they should be.

We in no wise wish to intimate that Bro. Hay's gift is greater in God's sight than the much smaller donations of many others less able; but we are sure that all who are in harmony with the work which God has been pleased to assign to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society will rejoice with us, and with the Colporteurs, and with Brother Hay, in view of the great blessing which, as a servant of divine providence, he has been permitted and enabled to render to the Lord's cause. And besides, while Brother Hay did not give out "of his penury" nor "all his living," like the poor widow (Mark 12:42-44), nevertheless, neither did he give this out of a vast superabundance; for in this gift he laid upon the Lord's altar (we believe) more than half of all his earthly possessions. And indeed he would have given more, had we not counseled otherwise; urging that he keep enough to maintain himself and family, so that he could give his time in the service of the truth. And now he is so engaged,--holding meetings on Sundays, and during the week engaged in DAWN and tract work, seeking and feeding the Lord's sheep.

DISTRIBUTING ACCOUNT.

During the year from December 1, 1895, to December 1, 1896, there have been circulated, at the expense of the Tract Fund.

Copies of the OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS.....1,134,952
 " " ZION'S WATCH TOWER..... 183,187

In view of the fact that tracts vary greatly as to the number of pages, it is customary to state their circulation by pages. The foregoing, so stated, represent a total of tract pages,.....23,978,780

The total number of copies of MILLENNIAL DAWN circulated by the cooperation of this Fund, but not at its expense, was..... 74,013

FINANCIAL ACCOUNT.

EXPENDITURES:

For Tracts and for TOWERS sent out free,.....\$8,213.48
 Labor, for mailing same,..... 485.00
 Postage, freight, wrappers, etc.,..... 747.78
 Interest paid on Colporteur accounts overdue, 555.23
 Cash paid out on account of foreign
 translations, etc.,..... 1,264.42
 Expenses of traveling Evangelists, etc.,..... 925.04
 Colporteurs' hopeless indebtedness paid off
 by W. Hope Hay's donation..... 8,847.66

 Total,.....\$21,038.61
 Cash balance on hand, now being invested,
 1897 account,..... 104.49

 \$21,143.10
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RECEIPTS:

From "Good Hopes,"\$ 6,502.80
 " other sources,..... 4,850.20
 W. Hope Hay's contribution for the
 general uses of the Society, and specially
 to clear off part of the Tract
 Society's liabilities,..... 10,000.00

 Total,.....\$21,143.10
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Respecting the helpers connected with the above work we must say a word. Our office force consists of eight Brethren and Sisters and two lads, besides Sister Russell and the Editor. The amount of work turned out must be your guide as to the zeal and efficiency of these dear co-laborers. There are no "drones" among them: each labors "as unto the Lord," and seems to wish that there were more hours to each day that he might accomplish more. Indeed, strange as it may seem, we have been obliged to hinder some from overtaxing their strength in willing, joyful service to our King and to you our fellow-servants.

It will be noticed that no items of rent, fuel, gas, salaries, etc., appear in the above. This omission is not by oversight: we have no such expenses, but share the office comforts of the TOWER PUBLISHING CO., free of charge. Thus we are enabled to accomplish much more proportionately than other tract societies, much of whose receipts goes for rent and salaries.

Another matter. Not one cent of the above fund was begged or even asked for,--directly or indirectly. It was all voluntary. Those who have been truly blessed by present truth love to serve it out to others, and need no urging. They want to do what they can, and we merely show them what is being done, and

consider that they and we are highly favored in being permitted to join in it. The rewards for present sacrifices and services cannot be expected now, but they will come later,--from the King of Glory himself!

The usual "Good Hope" blank goes with this issue; do not understand it as a request, but as a notice of opportunity to join in this service. Knowing in advance what the friends wish and hope to do enables us the better to regulate the work economically and efficiently.

We congratulate all of the friends of present truth upon the result of our united efforts for the year past; and trust that as our King shall pass judgment upon it he may be able to say to us each and all,--Well done, good, faithful servants, enter ye into the joys of your Lord.

Let us now unite our hearts in fervent prayer for divine wisdom and blessing for the new year, remembering each part of the work and all co-laborers in any manner associated with it.

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"WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS." NO. 2.

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."--John 4:23.

AT the first advent our Lord said of some of the unbelieving professors of religion of the scribes and Pharisees: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The majority of those addressed, it seems, were outwardly very pious, and fasted and prayed much, and for a pretense made long prayers in the streets; but theirs was not true and acceptable worship; and therefore, they were not prepared to be introduced at Pentecost to the begetting of the spirit and thus to become worshipers in spirit and in truth. And our Lord in the above words shows one important hindrance to their proper attitude of heart, and hence to their acceptance as worshipers; namely, false doctrines--human tradition and commandments as instead of the pure teachings of God's Word. And it is but reasonable to suppose that similarly all down through this Gospel age many, very many, have been hindered from proper development as true worshipers of God, worshipers in spirit, worshipers in every act and word and deed of life, by the same baneful influences; namely, false doctrines, human creeds and traditions accepted and held to as instead of the Word of God, the true bread which comes

down from heaven.

Many think lightly of faith, and hold that it matters little what a man may believe; that his life and conduct are the only things of importance in the divine sight. But in our Lord's testimony here considered (and it is corroborated by Christian experience) a man's faith concerning God and his plan is very important indeed, and has a wonderful influence upon his life, conduct and character. The Christian who under the delusions of the great adversary has accepted the human traditions (presented by nearly all the theological schools of "Christendom"), that God is a tyrant, who uses his omnipotent power in the creation of angels and men with the foreknowledge that the great mass of them (all except a little flock) will be by his providence preserved in indescribable torments and anguish throughout all eternity;--such Christians, thus blindfolded by false doctrines, attempt in vain to worship such a God with their whole heart; for their fears hinder perfect love and full devotion. They would find every element of their moral nature in antagonism to such a plan of damnation; and although they might bow the knee in fear and submission, they would find it impossible to bow down their hearts in full acquiescence, unless their hearts were grossly depraved as to justice and love and mercy.

It may be safely said, however, that all who become children of God and whose hearts are honest are delivered to some extent from bondage to this false

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doctrine, and are enabled through truths received to counteract the baneful effect of this error to such an extent as to permit them through certain great truths to see God's love and in a general way at least to hope and trust that God will commit no injustice upon any of his creatures, and that somehow, somewhere and at sometime all men will have a full chance to be reconciled to God through Christ. Thus with many of God's saints, we believe, the spirit of error hindering worship is overcome by the spirit of truth in general and true worship made possible. Yet many never fully escape the fear "taught by the precepts of men" (Isa. 29:13), and to the very last are hindered thereby from the attainment of "perfect love" and from the rendering of the highest degree of worship in spirit and in truth.

And what is true of this false doctrine is true to some extent of all false doctrines. Every error hides some truth; every misunderstanding of the character of God or of the fundamental features of his plan of salvation is so much to hinder men from becoming to the fullest extent possible worshipers of God in spirit and in truth. It is to this end that God's people are exhorted to search the Scriptures to "know the truth," to "know God," because, as our Lord declares, the object

of the giving of the truth is to produce sanctification of heart and life, and hence whatever beclouds or hinders the truth hinders sanctification of heart. No one can possess the spirit of the truth without having considerable of the letter of the truth upon fundamental principles.

WORSHIPING FELLOW MESSENGERS.

God's people are to love and esteem each other, and that in proportion as they recognize in each other the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of holiness and devotion to truth and righteousness; as the Apostle says, the faithful should be esteemed "very highly for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:13); but while there may be danger that some will fail to render "honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7), there is undoubtedly danger also that some might render too much honor to human instruments, whom God is pleased to use in connection with the service of the truth. It is proper therefore that we call attention here, as we have done heretofore, to the danger of man-worship. This matter is very forcibly brought to our attention in Revelation 22:9. John the Revelator, who, representing the living saints all down through the Gospel age, is caused to see unfolding the various features of the divine plan, in conclusion falls down to worship the angel who showed him those things. So there has been and is a tendency on the part of many to give more than love, respect and honor to the servants of God who from time to time have been used as special servants of God in bringing to the attention of the Church things new and old, or to the particular brother or sister who was the means of conversion or other spiritual benefit. There was this disposition in the early Church, some exalting one Apostle and some another as their chief and master, and naming themselves as his disciples, saying, "I am of Paul;" or "I am of Apollos;" or "I am of Peter," etc. The Apostle Paul assures them that this disposition indicates a measure of carnality, and he inquires, who then are Paul, Apollos and Peter, but merely the servants or channels through whom God has been pleased to send you the blessings of the truth. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." He indicates thus that they should recognize, not the channels through whom the blessings came, but the Lord, the Author of their blessings, and loyally bear no other name than his who died for and redeemed them.

Likewise, when the Church began to get rid of the gross darkness of the dark ages under the help and instruction of the reformers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others, they naturally and properly had great respect

for those whom God had honored as the instruments in the work of reformation. But again the tendency to "worship" the messengers, the human agents, instead of the divine Author was manifested, and to-day there are hundreds of thousands who call themselves by the name of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell and others, and who give more respect to their teachings and writings than to the Word of God, and this with corresponding injury to themselves.

Likewise, to-day, in the light of present truth, shining more clearly than ever before, no doubt there is need to be on guard against this carnal tendency which has had so deleterious an influence in the past.

When John fell down to worship the angel who had shown him the wonders of the divine plan, the angel's refusal to accept homage should be a lesson to all ministers (servants--messengers) of God. He said,

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"See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant [not thy Lord and Master], and [fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and [fellow-servant] of [all] them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God [the source from which come all these blessings and all this light]." All servants of God are fellow-servants regardless of the time or extent of their service.

The Apostle calls attention to this man-worshiping tendency in his epistle to the Colossians (2:18,19), saying, "Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels [messengers]." The intimation is that this temptation will come insidiously, craftily, and not by brazen demands for reverence. Such is the reverence accorded in general

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to the ministry of the nominal churches. Many ministers who seem very meek, and who would not think of demanding reverence or worship, nevertheless accept of their flocks the voluntary title, Reverend, and encourage it, and feel offended if reverence or worship of this sort is not rendered. The effect has been and still is to injure the household of faith, to give an over-confidence in the judgment and word of the minister in spiritual things, so that many neglect to prove their faith by God's Word, and to trust implicitly to its authority.

And there is danger amongst those who do not use the title, Reverend. It should always be remembered (as pointed out in our issue of Nov. 15, '95) that control resides in the congregation and not in self-appointed leaders, whether they seek to serve a dozen or thousands. The churches of Christ should recognize the leading of their Head, and know their leaders to be of his choice (See Heb. 13:7,17,24, Diaglott), but they

should beware of any disposed to usurp the rights of the congregation or to ignore those rights by taking the place of leaders without the specific request of the congregation; beguiling the company into supposing that the leader alone is competent to judge and decide for the congregation as to the Lord's choice, and thus failing to hold the Head (Christ) as the only real teacher, who is able and willing to guide all the meek in judgment, because they are his Church--"his body."

Nor is this beguiling of the attention of the flock, away from the only Shepherd, to a fellow sheep always the fault of the "leaders:" there seems to be a general tendency on the part of all who have the true, humble, sheep nature to follow one another. It is a lesson, therefore, for all to learn,--that each sheep recognize as leaders only such as are found in full accord with the voice and spirit of the Chief Shepherd (Christ), and the under-shepherds (the Apostles), and that each sheep see to it that he eats only "clean provender" and drinks only "pure water" as directed by the Shepherd. (See Ezek. 34:17-19.) This implies the exercise of the individual conscience of each member of Christ's flock on matters of doctrine and practice, and tends to keep each one in sympathy and fellowship with the Shepherd, who knoweth each sheep and "calleth his own sheep by name." The same intimate relationship of the individual Christian with the Lord is illustrated in the figure of Christ the Head and the Church as members of his body.--1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:15,16.

As we have been to some extent, by the grace of God, used in the ministry of the gospel, it may not be out of place to say here what we have frequently said in private, and previously in these columns,--namely, that while we appreciate the love, sympathy, confidence and fellowship of fellow-servants and of the entire household of faith, we want no homage, no reverence, for ourselves or our writings; nor do we wish to be called Reverend or Rabbi. Nor do we wish that any should be called by our name. The name of him who died for all--the name Christian--is quite sufficient to designate the spiritual sons of God, the true brethren of Christ; and whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil, of carnality, and tends toward more of the same.

Nor would we have our writings revered or regarded as infallible, or on a par with the holy Scriptures. The most we claim or have ever claimed for our teachings is, that they are what we believe to be harmonious interpretations of the divine Word, in harmony with the spirit of the truth. And we still urge, as in the past, that each reader study the subjects we present in the light of the Scriptures, proving all things by the Scriptures, accepting what they see to be thus approved, and rejecting all else. It is to this end, to enable the student to trace the subject in the divinely inspired Record, that we so freely intersperse both quotations

and citations of the Scriptures upon which to build.

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WHO SHALL ABIDE IN THY TABERNACLE?

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?
who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"--Psa. 15:1.

THE tabernacle of God is his dwelling place in the midst of his people. As the typical tabernacle in the midst of the typical Israel indicated that the divine presence was with them, so the antitypical spiritual Israel is similarly, yet even more highly, favored, as the antitype is higher than the type. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." And "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High [in the holy place--the place or condition of full and faithful consecration to God] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." They abide in his love, under his protection and care, and in communion and fellowship with him.

Every "saint" has realized something of the blessedness of abiding in this secret holy place of the divine tabernacle, and with the Psalmist can say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" Wherever God is, there is his Tabernacle: wherever there is a loyal consecrated heart, there is a dwelling place of God; and wherever two or three or more such are met together in his name, God is in the midst, and there is his dwelling place. How amiable indeed are thy tabernacles;

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how blessed to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, how sweet the songs of praise, how fervent the prayers, how blessed the communion!

But only those who abide in the secret place know how to appreciate these things. With them there is a longing after more and more of the manifestations of divine favor. The language of their hearts is, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God; [elsewhere]. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." --Psa. 84:1,2,10.

Yes, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;" blessed are they that dwell in God, and in whom God dwells. They find in him a shadow from the heat, where the heart may rest its burdens and find refreshment, and a refuge from the storms of life (Isa. 4:5,6), and that the Lord God is a sun and shield, giving

grace and glory, and withholding no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

These are some of the blessings of those who abide in the tabernacle of the Lord now, while it is pitched in the wilderness of this present life. But what pen can portray the blessedness of abiding in that glorious tabernacle, that temple of God, which shall be the dwelling place of the overcoming saints to all eternity, after we have passed through this wilderness and beyond the Jordan of death? There we shall see the Lord in his glory, and be like him; there we shall see our Father's face, and worship and adore; there we shall delight in the society of all his holy angels; there we shall be endowed with power to execute the gracious designs of our God toward all his creatures; and life and everlasting joy shall fill his temple, and thence shall flow streams of blessing to all creatures in heaven and in earth.

This is the glorious hope of our high calling to live and reign with Christ: and this will be the joy of abiding forever in the tabernacle of the Lord and dwelling in his holy hill (his holy Kingdom). With such a hope before us, and with the conditions of its attainment yet to be fulfilled, how solicitous should be the inquiry of every sincere child of God, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"

The answer is plain, that those so honored must be lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity; they must be persons of uncompromising integrity, having no fellowship with the workers of iniquity; and those who, having made a covenant, do not ignore its solemn obligations,--"He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not." "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

These considerations call very forcibly to mind the great importance which the Scriptures attach to the--

COVENANT OBLIGATIONS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

The man that sweareth to his own hurt, or, in other words, who makes a solemn covenant to present himself a living sacrifice to God, is thenceforth bound by that covenant. He cannot, by subsequently changing his mind, be released from the obligations thus incurred; and to endeavor to ignore them is to be caught in a most deceitful snare of the adversary.--"It is a

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snare to man to sanctify things hastily, and to make inquiry only after having made vows;" i.e., to make inquiry in the sense of reconsidering the cost and whether or not, in view of the cost, we shall keep it, when already its solemn obligations are upon us and cannot

be either repudiated or ignored with impunity. (Prov. 20:25--Leeser.) Again we read, "When thou vowest a vow unto God [when thou makest a covenant or promise], defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin."--Eccl. 5:4-6.

Again the obligation was expressed to typical fleshly Israel--and if it was applicable to them, the typical people, it applies with at least equal force to the still more highly favored and enlightened antitypes of the Gospel age--thus: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform, even a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth."--Deut. 23:21-23.

It is those who thus respect their covenant obligations, and fulfil them, that shall forever abide in the tabernacle of the Lord and dwell in his holy Kingdom. It is in view of these solemn obligations that the Lord counsels those who would come to him to "first count the cost" and make sure that they are ready to assume them (Luke 14:28-32), and that on another occasion he said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.) Again we read, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." And the Apostle Paul shows that some at least will draw back unto perdition--destruction.--Heb. 10:38,39.

Thus viewed, how imperative are the obligations of our covenants with God. But, on the other side of this great responsibility, are the bountiful encouragements and assurances of divine grace:--"My grace is sufficient for thee;" "My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness;" "I will teach thee and guide thee

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in the way which thou shalt go." Yes, the blessed promises stand out on every page of the sacred Word; and the spirit of God is ever ready to seal them upon the hearts of his consecrated children who continue to look to him for the supplies of grace, and who make diligent use of them.

Thus the Lord is able to carry on to completion the good work which he has begun in us; and he will do it in all who continue loyal and true to their covenant and zealous for the cause of truth and righteousness. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

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BIRTH OF "THE MAN CHRIST JESUS."

--DEC. 20.--MATT. 2:1-12.--

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."--Luke 2:10.

OUR subject does not take us back to the beginning of God's creation when Christ as a spirit being became "the first born of every creature;"--the Word that was with God in the beginning of creation, and by whom all things were made, and without whom not one thing was made. (John 1:1-3,10.) Our Master at that time was "the beginning and the ending, the first and the last," of Jehovah's direct creation: all subsequent creations being by and through him as Jehovah's honored agent. (Rev. 1:11; 3:14; Col. 1:15; John 1:1-3.) We come to the time when he who was rich for our sakes became poor (2 Cor. 8:9) and left the glory which he had with the Father "before the world was." (John 17:5.) Then, without dying, our Master underwent a change of nature and "humbled himself," "was made flesh" (Phil. 2:8; John 1:14), "took upon himself the form of a servant" and was "found in fashion a man;" "a little lower than the angels;" and then still further he humbled himself even unto death, and yet more even unto the shameful death of the cross--as a culprit, as a sinner. (Heb. 2:9,16; Phil. 2:6-9.) This lesson, appropriate to the season, calls our attention to the birth of "the man Christ Jesus."

In the divine predictions of a coming Savior attention is largely called to the fact that he is to be a King, a Deliverer, a Savior. This point is made prominent because God appealed to mankind along the line of their necessities and hopes. The sacrificial feature of our Lord's ministry was made less prominent than his power and majesty and glory, because the sacrifice related specially to God and was to meet the demands of the divine law against the sinner-race. The question of how God would settle the matter consistently with his own sentence of death, resting upon the race, would to the average human mind be much less important than the statement of the resulting glories, restitution and blessings. Hence, we find the references to the sacrificial features of our Lord's ministry largely presented under types and symbols intended to be comprehended only by those who, as sons of God, would be guided into the truth by the spirit of God.

It is not surprising that the angels who announced our Lord's birth mentioned only the glories to follow and not his sufferings which would intervene. It is not surprising that they did not weep for the sufferings and humiliation, but sang "Glory to God in the

highest, on earth peace, good will toward men;" grasping merely the culmination of the great divine plan which had its beginning in the birth of Jesus.

(1,2) Whether or not the "wise men" of the East were Hebrews we are not informed; but since divine favor was for the time confined to Israel, and since that favor did not depart until they had rejected the Messiah, we consider it highly probable that these wise men from the East were part of "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," who, "instantly serving God," were hoping for and "waiting for the consolation of Israel" through the long promised Messiah. (Acts 26:7; Luke 2:25.) We do know that hundreds of thousands if not several millions of Israelites were carried captive to this very East country--Babylon, Medo-Persia; and we know also that less than 55,000 availed themselves of the decree of Cyrus permitting their return to Palestine. The great bulk of the people Israel, therefore, at that time (as now) resided in foreign lands. And it would appear that their foreign captivity was helpful to their religious interests, and that the Israelites in general had more faith in the Lord and more strong interest in prophecies respecting Messiah after the captivity in Babylon than for several hundred years previous, when they were continually beset with idolatry.

The promise of God to Abraham of a great "seed," a great king and ruler who should bless the world with a righteous reign, it would appear, was carried by the Israelites into all the then civilized world; leading some to expect a Jewish Messiah, it led others through a feeling of pride to declare that they were as able as the Jews to produce the desirable government and ruler for the world. Hence, we find that the idea of universal dominion began to prevail. It is claimed by some that Zoroaster, the great Persian religious teacher, was a disciple of the Prophet Jeremiah, and the memoir of Mrs. Grant, missionary to Persia, says:--
"Zoroaster taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should

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conceive, and that as soon as the child was born a star would appear, even at noonday, with undiminished luster. 'You, my son,' exclaimed the venerable seer, 'will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star follow it wherever it leads you and adore the mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the almighty Word which created the heavens.'"

Although this is only a legend, it is interesting to know that there was such a legend amongst the people of the East. And respecting Zoroaster it may be said that his teachings were of a higher character than those of other heathen teachers.

(3-6) Expecting a king, the wise men naturally came to the palace of Herod, who, although called the King of the Jews, was the representative of their conquerors, the Romans. Herod was the founder of the House of Herod and naturally had great expectations, not only with reference to the duration of his own dominion, but also with a view to the establishment of his posterity in the power and office which he enjoyed. No wonder, then, that he was "troubled." The prospect of a rival either in the power or in the esteem of the people was not to his liking. "And all Jerusalem [was troubled] with him." Political influence takes in a wide circle. There were connected with Herod's government or benefited by it, directly or indirectly, many whose plans, hopes, etc., might be very much disarranged by any change of the government. Herod evidently knew of the Jewish tradition respecting Messiah, for he at once sent for those who were learned in the Scriptures to demand of them where the prophets indicated that Messiah should be born. The scribes and Pharisees were evidently quite familiar with the subject, had looked it up, and apparently without hesitation gave the name of Messiah's birthplace as Bethlehem, and quoted from the prophet in support of it.

(7-12) The cunning art of Herod, by which he hoped to learn who was this divinely designated Prince and heir to his throne, is only appreciated when we remember the sequel to this narrative: how, when he found that the wise men did not return to give him the information and permit the destruction of the child Jesus, he determined to kill all the children of the city of Bethlehem of two years old and under; thus he might be sure, he thought, that he had outwitted the divine plan and protected his own power.

The star which seemingly had led these wise men toward Jerusalem, and which then apparently had vanished, and left the searchers to arouse the curiosity and interest of the people of Jerusalem, again became their guide as they left the city, and led them to Bethlehem, which is only a short distance, and the star appears to have indicated even the very house in which they found the new-born King. According to the custom of the time they presented costly treasures as well as their homage.

Although the King came, his own received him not; and like the "young nobleman" of his own parable he went "into a far country," even heaven itself, there to be invested with power by the King of kings, and to postpone the establishment of his kingdom until his Church, his bride, his joint-heirs, should be selected and prepared to share the Kingdom with him.

Meantime, the world still needs a King as much as ever. All nations are learning more and more their need of a wise, a just, a powerful, a loving, a merciful ruler. They need this very one, and are gradually

learning that none of the fallen race can be trusted with much power, honor and glory; that all are weak through the fall, and that a superior king and a superior government are essential to their highest blessing. The masses are beginning to feel this need more keenly; and it is remarkable to what extent various advocates of Socialism recognize and quote the teachings of this very King with commendation;--even though it may be said that they wish others to be governed by the Golden Rule, while they themselves fail to walk by it.

The world is beginning to realize that the King is at the door: the Herods of to-day and with them all those of influence and power, political and financial, are "troubled" at a prospect of a change of government, which their own "wise men" announce as imminent. We need not expect that the princes of the world will welcome him: rather they will fear a disruption of present institutions;--fear that under his government they would not have so favorable opportunities for prosperity; and that in the general levelling, which the prophets declare will accompany his reign, some that are high shall be abased, and some that are low shall be exalted. As a consequence, Messiah's Kingdom, although a kingdom of peace and righteousness, must be introduced by "a time of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation." Yet we rejoice in the promise that "when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," and that eventually his kingdom shall come to be the "desire of all nations."

Thus far the gospel of the kingdom has been received by only a few; and the special blessings have been with the few who have acknowledged the King, and who are being prepared to be joint-heirs in his kingdom. But let us not forget the gracious results that are to follow the establishment of that kingdom, when, as declared in the Golden Text,--the good tidings and the great joy "shall be to all people."

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DEC. 27.--REVIEW of the lessons respecting Solomon.

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CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

--JAN. 3.--ACTS 1:1-14.--

"While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."--Luke 24:51.

THE writer, Luke the evangelist, here introduces the Book of Acts and associates it with the Gospel of Luke.

(2,3) These two verses cover briefly the forty days of our Lord's presence with the disciples after his resurrection, prior to his ascension. An important part of our Lord's mission during those forty days was to give the disciples instruction respecting the spiritual character of the kingdom to be established, and the necessity for his sufferings as a prelude to the glory to follow. His words of explanation, as for instance to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, constituted only a part of this instruction; another and, we may judge, a still more important instruction was conveyed to them through observation of his conduct. He would prove to them two things: (1) that he whom they had seen crucified and buried had come to life, had arisen from the dead; (2) that, although alive and the same person, with the same individuality, yet now his conditions were entirely altered;--that he was no longer "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom," but that, having finished that work for the performance of which he took the form and nature of a servant, he was made alive again on the higher, the spiritual plane, which he left more than thirty-three years previously in order to redeem mankind.

Since the apostles were still natural men, not having as yet received the gift of the holy spirit, they were still unable to appreciate spiritual things (John 3:12); and hence it was necessary to give the proofs of a spiritual matter (namely, that Christ had risen from the dead a spirit being) along lines which the unilluminated could appreciate. It would not have availed the accomplishment of his purpose, it would not have given the disciples satisfactory evidence of his resurrection, had he appeared to them as he did subsequently to Saul of Tarsus in the glory of a spirit being "above the brightness of the sun at noonday." That was a valuable lesson to the Apostle Paul and to all the apostles; but it needed the connecting links associating the risen and glorified Jesus with the man Jesus, and these links of association were provided during the forty days before the ascension. It was to this end that our Lord appeared to the disciples in bodies of flesh, and on two occasions in bodies resembling the one which they had seen crucified, bearing also the nail and spear marks. He thus associated in their minds the crucified man-Jesus and the risen spirit-Jesus.

The second step in the lesson was in the fact that these appearances were infrequent: in all the forty days the records would not indicate that he appeared to them at the very outside more than ten times, and his interviews with them would appear to have been very brief, so that we are certainly safe in concluding that out of the forty days he was not visibly manifest to the disciples more than four hours--quite probably

not more than one-half hour at each of the five to ten interviews recorded. Where was he the remainder of the time? would naturally come to them as a question. Why not with them continually as before his crucifixion? they probably asked. And this was part of the lesson--to induce reasoning and reflection on their part, and to cause them to understand that a great "change" had taken place in the interim between his crucifixion and his first appearance to them on the morning of his resurrection. We can fancy their study of the subject during those forty days, and discussions pro and con, their wonders when the next appearance would take place, and what would be the outcome of the whole matter.

The third feature of their lesson in observation was in respect to the manner and variety of his appearances; once as the gardener to Mary, who saw no nail prints in his hands or feet, although she embraced his feet; again as a sojourner and guest at Emmaus in another form, so that the disciples did not know him and did not remark anything peculiar about his hands or his feet, although he was with them at the table. It was in his asking of a blessing upon the food that they recognized him. Again at the seashore where he evidently appeared in still another form to Peter, James and John who recognized him by the miracle, and concerning whom the evangelist says, None of them durst ask him who he was, knowing that it was the Lord--not by the marks of the crown of thorns, not by the nail prints, but by his manner and the miraculous draught of great fishes following their unprofitable night of toil. And on two occasions he appeared in a body of flesh like to that crucified, with nail prints and spear marks; once when doubting Thomas was absent, and once when he was present. These various appearances under various conditions in various places, wholly unlike his previous conduct with them, were calculated to teach them the lesson that he was "changed"--that he was no longer a flesh being, "the man Christ Jesus," "made flesh" and limited to fleshly conditions in locomotion and visibility, etc.; but that now he was alive, though so changed that he could appear or disappear, assume one kind of body or another kind, assume one kind of clothing or another kind at pleasure.

The fourth lesson along the lines of observation was taught by the fact that he appeared and disappeared miraculously, suddenly, unaccountably. Coming from they knew not whither, the Lord had joined the two going to Emmaus; and then, after he had given them as much of a lesson as they could digest, he "vanished out of their sight." The same evening in another city he suddenly appeared to the ten, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, and, we may suppose, securely barred: he needed not to undo the bolts nor to open the door as the "man Christ Jesus" would have needed to do; the spirit-born Jesus could do and did do just

what he had previously explained to Nicodemus in the hearing of the disciples as recorded by the Apostle

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John (3:5). He came and went like the wind; they could not tell whence he came; and when he went he vanished out of their sight again, and they could not tell whither he went: So is every one that is born of the spirit. No wonder the disciples were astonished and affrighted at the first, and needed that our Lord

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should convince them that they were not looking at a spirit but at plain, ordinary flesh and bones, of which they need have no fear. Of this he assured them saying, you do not see a spirit, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Similarly he appeared in a body of flesh and bones to Father Abraham and ate and drank with him (Gen. 18:1,2); and similarly angels in the past upon certain missions have appeared to men. We are to draw a great distinction between the power of a spirit being to appear in a body of flesh and the great humiliation which our Lord accomplished on our behalf, when he entirely left his glory and exchanged his nature as a spirit being for human nature and was "made flesh." In the one case the spirit nature was maintained with unrestricted power and merely used a human form as a means of communication, creating the human body as well as the human clothing in an instant, and as quickly dissolving both. This was evidently what our Lord did, when he appeared in the room, the doors being shut, and when he vanished, the doors still being shut. The power thus manifested is so far beyond human power as to be incomprehensible to us, as the turning of water into wine or as the resurrection itself. It can only be received by faith based upon the evidences of reliable witnesses and supported on every hand by our knowledge of the divine power.

That the apostles got this thought is evident from the peculiar manner in which they refer to the Lord's manifestations after his resurrection. They say, "he appeared," "he showed himself." These are not ordinary expressions nor do they mark ordinary circumstances. Ordinarily, people are seen if present without any necessity of showing themselves or appearing. The disciples learned and noted also the fact that these showings and appearings were only to the believers and never to the world; which agrees with our Lord's testimony before his death,--"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more." Nor will the world ever see the man Christ Jesus. While he still bears the title of Son of Man as a mark of his great obedience to the Father, and the purchase of the human race, and his title to the glories of the divine nature which he

now possesses as a reward of his obedience even unto death, even the death of the cross, God has now highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess.

Many confuse themselves greatly by failing to clearly distinguish between spirit-beings and human-beings and their distinct powers. Very many suppose that a spirit body must be made out of a human body, and must still contain certain human elements. They overlook the fact that the resurrection body is not the body buried, as the Apostle so forcibly proves (1 Cor. 15:37,38); nor will those have "flesh and blood" bodies who shall inherit the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 15:50; John 3:3,5,8.) Some, in an effort to harmonize a false theory with the Scriptures, claim that a spirit-body is one in which the blood gives place to spirit. (Do they mean wind?) They fail to see that this would not harmonize with the conditions noted foregoing. A body of flesh and bones with wind in the veins instead of blood could no more come into a room when the doors were shut than could a body of flesh and bones and blood: nor could it vanish from sight--nor could its clothing come in and then vanish out of a closed room. The only solution is that which recognizes the truth of our Lord's words,--"A spirit hath not flesh and bones;" although spirit beings in harmony with God have in the past been permitted to assume flesh and bones and clothing for approved purposes.

(4,5) Here our attention is called again to the fact that the gift of the holy spirit to the gospel Church is something unique--wholly different from any previous gift of the holy spirit except upon our Lord Jesus himself. They were to wait for it, and did wait ten days from the time of our Lord's ascension, until the spirit power came upon them. They waited while he as the great High Priest went into heaven itself and there appeared in the presence of God and presented to God on our behalf the merits of his sacrifice at Calvary.

(6-8) They were perplexed with the new order of things since Christ's resurrection. Their previous ideas, common to the Jews, had been of an earthly kingdom, and Christ and themselves, the apostles, associated in a human or fleshly glory and kingdom power. Now however they perceived their Master wonderfully changed, and he spoke to them again of going away and said nothing about the kingdom for which they in common with all recognized as the twelve tribes of Israel waited. (Acts 26:7.) So they asked him concerning the time for its establishment. In his answer he does not deny that there will be a kingdom, but the reverse, merely telling them that it is not for them to know the time. When they asked him a similar question before his crucifixion he answered that he did not know. (Mark 13:32.) But he does not so answer on this occasion. We must suppose, on the contrary, that he

did know, because he was now born of the spirit, and he himself testified "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." This must therefore have included the power of knowledge; but he withheld the knowledge from the disciples in their interest and instead told them of the coming power of the spirit, and of the intermediate mission appointed for them and all his Church, of witnessing to the world before the establishment of his Kingdom.

(9-11) The account of the ascension is very simply given and yet, strange to say, many stumble over the statement of the angels "this same Jesus" "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." Many think of this as though it read that same Jesus, "the man Christ Jesus," shall come again. But it was this Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, the Jesus whom none of the world saw; the Jesus who was seen by the disciples only a few times during that forty days; the Jesus who was seen by them only when "he appeared" or "showed himself;" the Jesus who could come into their midst, the doors being shut, and who could and did "vanish out of their sight;" "this same Jesus" is the one who will "come again."

Again, many get a wrong impression from the word "manner." They think of manner as meaning flesh; but manner means manner. He ascended in a quiet manner, without display or commotion or noise, in a secret manner, so far as the world was concerned, in a manner known only to the disciples. Hence, when he comes again in like manner, it will be likewise unknown and invisibly to the world, without noise or demonstration, and recognized only by believers.

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