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OUR GENERAL PULPIT. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.

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does not wish to preach to any except willing hearers, it is as proper
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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

WE wish the WATCH TOWER readers, all and everywhere, a very happy New Year--1897. And whether or not they get the fulfilment of our wish depends almost exclusively upon themselves, individually, --in the cases of those who belong fully to the Lord, by a full heart consecration, a full self-surrender to his will, as expressed in his Word.

Circumstances may change, hopes or health may fail, trusted friends may become cool or even become enemies, poverty and lack of life's necessities may stare some in the face; yet none of these, nor all of them, should they fall to our lot, need hinder the true Christian from having a happy year.

To the worldly this will be both impossible and incomprehensible; for the world has no sources of comfort and peace and joy other than the creature-comforts of the present life. When deprived of these they have nothing but misery and despair; and these evils are only increased as knowledge and refinement increase the appreciation of earthly good things. Hence the remarkable increase of suicides in recent years, especially in the most civilized lands, and wherever civilization extends;--for instance, in Japan, where it is said that the average of suicides per year is over seven thousand. Respecting suicides here and in Great Britain the Rev. P. S. Henson, D.D. (Baptist) of Chicago said recently in a sermon:--

"There never was such unrest in the world as now. The old world is threatened with an upheaval. What is the matter with New York and Chicago? Humanity is not constituted to be satisfied. People are going mad faster than you can build mad-houses to put them in. In London the suicides number ten a day [3,600 a year], New York is not much better. There was never such unrest. What the world wants, the rich want, all classes want, is Jesus Christ."

But the child of God has other than earthly friends and joys and hopes and prospects. He is rich, whatever his outward condition may appear; rich in the fact that his debt of sin has been paid for him; rich in the assurances of God's Word that his present experiences are all under the supervision of divine wisdom and love, and are all being overruled for his highest good (Rom. 8:28); rich in joy and hope through the present trials and experiences faithfully and patiently endured. God is preparing him for future honors, and so he is enabled to reckon those trials which once would have utterly

crushed him as "light afflictions which are but for a moment," and which, faithfully accepted, "will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus he looks, not at the transitory things that are seen, but at the invisible and eternal things. Thus, like Moses of old, he endures as seeing him who is invisible, a present help in every time of trouble. Whatever he may possess of earthly luxury and comfort he accepts with gratitude, realizing himself not more deserving than millions less favored. Whatever he may lack, he reflects that the faithful of every age have been required to "endure hardness as good soldiers," and that our blessed Savior and his noble apostles, in choosing the course of faithfulness to the truth, denied themselves and endured hungerings, thirstings, privations

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and loss of friends, and yet, though poor, they made many rich (2 Cor. 6:10) with the true riches of grace --"godliness with contentment," "great gain," which the world can neither give, nor take away. In every condition these may hear the Word of God saying,-- "All things are yours,...for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

"Why should the children of the King
Go mourning all their days?"

The Christian's secret of a happy life lies in his knowing and trusting the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Bridegroom. Even worldly physicians, sceptics, are coming to recognize the fact that the peace of God ruling in and keeping the heart is not only an excellent medicine, but a great preservative of health. How many, looking back, can see that not only their spiritual but also their physical health has improved since they found the Lord "a very present help" in time of trouble! If they had nervous troubles which formerly caused them sleepless nights and haggard looks, and which almost unfitted them for life's duties and responsibilities, they have doubtless found some improvement since they have heard the voice saying,--

Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth
for you.--1 Pet. 5:7.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed
upon us, that we should be called the sons of
God.--1 John 3:1.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord
pitieth them that fear (reverence) him.--Psa. 103:13.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your
heart.--Psa. 31:24.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: His
goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
--Psa. 23:6.

True, the exceeding great and precious promises
of God's Word may not hinder us from feeling pain,

but it will modify the severity of the pain and its frequency. Physicians are of one opinion on this subject, that the mind, the brain, the nervous center of our being, exercises a great influence over all of our physical sensations, either an aggravating or a pacifying influence. Truly did Solomon, the wise, say that the Lord's word is a valuable "medicine."--Prov. 3:8.

But we have said that these blessings come through knowing and trusting God: some fail to get the blessings because of a lack of knowledge; others having the knowledge lack the trust, the faith; still others, and they are probably in the majority among consecrated Christians, enjoy a small measure of these blessings when they might have them in abundant measure by a more thorough knowledge of God through his Word (accompanied, of course, with obedience to the spirit of their knowledge) and by the exercise of greater trust in the Faithful Promiser.

We exhort all the consecrated TOWER readers to join with us at the beginning of the New Year, in a remembrance and renewal of our covenant with the

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Lord,--to be obediently and lovingly his, in thought, word and deed--and in harmony therewith, and to the intent that we may enjoy his blessings to our fullest capacity and under all conditions, let us put on the armor of truth and righteousness; fastening the same upon us with the graces of the spirit. As an assistance we suggest as a text to be remembered and practiced daily, the words of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 7:1)--

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

And whoever would have success in carrying out the foregoing resolves should not only make the engagement at the throne of the heavenly grace, but should at all times and under all circumstances preserve the spirit of thankfulness and prayer. As the Apostle expresses it, he should "pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." For what son is he that the father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisements and lessons, then are ye not sons. The Heavenly Father chastens for correction, every son whom he receives.

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RENEWED DEVOTEDNESS.

Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,

And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfill,
And our talents improve,
By the patience of hope, and the labor of love.

Our life, as a dream, our time, as a stream
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moments we would not delay.
Haste, haste ye along, dark moments be gone,
For the Jubilee year
Rushes on to our view, and its dawn is now here.

O at close of our day may each of us say,
"I have fought my way through;
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!"
O that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,
"Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne!"
--Charles Wesley.

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"ALL THE ISRAEL OF GOD."

A Brother writes: I have been in the habit of speaking of the true Church as spiritual Israel; recently the propriety of so doing has been called in question by certain "advanced teachers" who claim that since the time of Rehoboam the name Israel is Scripturally applied to the revolting ten tribes only. I have looked up the question in Young's Concordance, but find nothing satisfactory. I cannot find that the term Spiritual Israel is used a single time in the Bible. Please give us some help on this question.

We reply: We are aware that there are a few who confine the term Israel to the ten tribes which revolted from Rehoboam and the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) which upheld him. And they have an object in so doing,--they have a theory about the ten tribes having been "lost," and claim that they have now "found" them;--that the English-speaking people of the world are the ten lost tribes--Israel. Earthly patriotism no doubt has much to do with the theory in those who have not taken a strong enough hold upon the heavenly citizenship. Although we also are Saxons according to the flesh, yet we have learned that as there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, in Christ Jesus, so there is neither French nor English, German nor Spaniard; for all who are in Christ are one "royal priesthood," a holy nation, a peculiar people, of which Christ is the Head. The spread of British influence during the past century and

a half has indeed been remarkable; but let us not forget that similarly Spain "ran over the wall" three centuries ago, and ruled much of North America, all of Central and South America, and many of the isles of the sea; and that her language still dominates a territory almost or quite as extensive as that in which English is the prevailing tongue. Did Spanish prosperity prove them to be Israel? If not, why should Anglo-Saxon prosperity be recognized as a foundation for such an assumption?

The endeavor to uphold their theory (which is not even a "tradition of the elders"), seemingly blinds those who become interested in it, so that they ignore, and apparently cannot see the plain teaching of the Scriptures on this subject,--Israel. The fact is that the phrase, "ten lost tribes," cannot be found in the Bible; it can only be found in the writings of those who have adopted the theory by which they are blinding themselves. Nor is the term, "lost Israel," nor any analogous expression, found in the Scriptures. The expression, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24), has no reference to lost tribes, but to individuals who had wandered from the Lord and were lost in the wilderness of sin and darkness.

As is well known to Bible students, there was a split in the twelve tribes for four hundred years,--ten tribes separating from the king's tribe, Judah, on the ground of kingly oppression.

It was natural enough that at the time of the revolt of the ten tribes the name Israel should be held by the majority, while Rehoboam's kingdom was naturally known as Judah, the name of his tribe, which constituted the majority of his supporters,--the tribe of Benjamin being very insignificant in numbers. This distinction continued for several centuries--until the captivity to Babylon. The ten tribes were captivated first, and their people scattered throughout Babylonia; the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were captivated later, and were similarly scattered in Babylon. From that time the pride and rivalry between the two divisions of Israel grew less and less. Common adversity made them feel their kinship again, and the name Israel became, as at first, the common name for "the whole house of Israel."

OLD TESTAMENT PROOFS OF THIS FACT.

If in the Old Testament writings which recount the return from the Babylonian captivity we find the returning ones no longer recognizing themselves as two nations (Judah and Israel), but, on the contrary, find the whole people spoken of as one, and called "Israel," "the twelve tribes of Israel," etc., it is proof positive

that the two sticks (representing the divided people-- Ezek. 37:16,20) had become reunited in Babylon before the return from the Babylonian Captivity. Indeed, as already shown,* the proclamation of King Cyrus releasing the captivity proves that at that time the petty jealousies between the two divisions had subsided, and that the two parts had again become one nation with the common name Israel; for the proclamation ignored Judah entirely, and was to all the people of the Lord God of Israel. And, as already shown,* people of various tribes did return to Palestine, although the tribe of Judah appears to have been specially loyal to the city and land; probably because to that tribe belonged the kingly promise, and because the "scepter" of influence, by divine intention, was to remain with that tribe until "Shiloh" should come. Besides, the ten tribes had gone into captivity more than one hundred years earlier, and their children had become more settled and rooted in the various parts of Media and Babylon than the tribe of Judah, a few of whose youth, who had seen the city of Jerusalem and the temple, lived long enough to return. However, many people--the vast majority

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. III, Chap. 8.

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--of the various tribes, including Judah and Benjamin, although reverent toward God and his worship, did not return to reside in Palestine. The total number of those who returned of all Israel was less than fifty-five thousand, whereas we have reason to suppose that "Judah" numbered several hundred thousand at the time of the captivity, and the ten tribes still more.-- See 2 Chron. 28:6,8,15.

Even before the captivity a fellowship had sprung up between the people of the two divisions, so that when Josiah, king of Judah, instituted reforms, repaired the temple and made the great Passover celebration, the remnant of the ten tribes (for the mass had gone into captivity nearly a century before) joined in the work of repairing, by contributing money, etc., and joined in the feast of Passover at Jerusalem. (See 2 Chron. 24:9,10; 25:18.) And at a still earlier date the piously inclined of the ten tribes left their king and allied themselves with the tribe of Judah, and were known as "Jews."--2 Chron. 15:9.

The record of the return from the captivity is given by Ezra and Nehemiah; and if the breach were not already healed it would show itself in their accounts. But as Cyrus set free "all the people of the God of Israel," so the records show that Ezra and Nehemiah and the people regarded themselves as Israel. Let each one prove this for himself, by turning to and noting their use of

the words "children of Israel," "people of Israel," "tribes of Israel," "all Israel," and the offering of sacrifices for all Israel, according to the twelve tribes, in the following passages:--

Ezra 2:2,59,70; 3:1,11; 4:3; 6:16,17; 7:7,11,13,28; 8:25,35; 10:5,10.

Nehemiah 1:6; 2:10; 7:7,61,73; 9:1,2; 10:33,39; 11:3,20; 12:47; 13:3,18.

NEW TESTAMENT PROOFS THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT
TEN TRIBES, BUT TWELVE, AND
WAS NOT LOST
IN THE DAYS OF OUR LORD AND THE APOSTLES.

The term, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24) most positively contradicts the theory that the ten tribes were lost in the days of our Lord's first advent; and also contradicts the thought that the term "Israel" now belongs

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to the ten tribes only. Read the passages cited, and see that the "lost sheep" were individuals--not tribes, and that Israel was not lost, because Christ had come to the only Israel whom he recognized; and, with his disciples for three and a half years, he went through "the cities of Israel" seeking therein "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."--Matt. 10:23.

That the term "Jew" had come to be synonymous with the term "Israel" is proved by the fact that those terms are repeatedly used interchangeably. For instance, Pilate wrote for the cross--"Jesus, the King of the Jews," while the soldiers and others mocked, saying, Let Christ, "the King of Israel," come down from the cross.--See Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32.

Nathaniel was an "Israelite indeed," and his testimony to our Lord was, "Thou art the King of Israel." (John 1:47-49.) The people never thought about a king of Judah, but rather, when the Lord rode on the ass as King in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, the people strewed the way with palm branches, etc., shouting, "Blessed is the King of Israel." (John 12:13.) Neither were the disciples thinking of Judah as a kingdom; for they asked the Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" And talking over the matter on the way to Emmaus they said, sorrowfully and disappointedly,--"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed [recovered, delivered] Israel." (Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6.) Is it reasonable to think that these all erred in their choice of language and said Israel but meant Judah? No! but it is proof positive that they recognized no "lost" tribes, but a reunited Israel--part "dispersed among

the Gentiles," but coming to Jerusalem occasionally to keep the national festivals, and part at home in the land of Israel, in the cities of Israel, also trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

The angel, when directing Joseph to return from Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus, said, "Go into the land of Israel." And the Apostle Matthew says, "He arose, and...came into the land of Israel." (Matt. 2:20,21.) Were the angel and the apostle mistaken? What would they answer present-day teachers who would say to them, "You were mistaken, the land of Israel was then Great Britain and Ireland, and the savages of those islands were the true Israelites, and they had the only genuine king of Israel represented in 'King Fergus' or some of his posterity, and today represented by Queen Victoria?"

John the Baptist, when introducing Christ, declared that his ministry was to Israel. (John 1:31.) His ministry surely was to the Jews; and if they are not Israel John was mistaken and told an untruth; yet the power of God was upon him from his mother's womb, and there never was a greater prophet. (Luke 7:28; Matt. 11:11.) If John erred, how great a prophet must he be who could be relied upon to correct him?

Our Lord sent his disciples throughout Palestine to seek "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and he went also himself to "all the cities of Israel," and when commending the faith of the Gentile centurion, he said, "I have not found so great faith,--no, not in Israel." And, addressing Nicodemus, he called him "a ruler in Israel." Was our Lord mistaken? Had

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he missed the place in not going to the British isles? Or shall we not conclude that those who would pervert these plain testimonies of Scripture to support a theory are greatly mistaken? "Let God be true!"

APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY RESPECTING ISRAEL.

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, preaching the gospel under the influence of the holy spirit, addressed himself to the Jews, saying, "Ye men of Israel," hear these words,--Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know: Him...ye [men of Israel] have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. ...Therefore, let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye [men of Israel] have crucified, both Lord and Christ.-- Acts 2:22,23,36.

John was with Peter at the healing of the impotent

man, a few days after the above discourse, and therefore joined in the statement,--"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?" (Acts 3:12.) The same two were together preaching a few days later, when they were arrested and agreed in the testimony of Peter recorded in Acts 4:8,10: "Peter, filled with the holy spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, ...be it known unto you and unto all the people of Israel," etc. Evidently these Apostles knew nothing about any "lost ten tribes" nor of any other people than the Jews entitled to the name Israel. Further along, verse 27, a prophecy which specifies Israel is quoted as fulfilled by the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ; and proves to whom the name Israel belongs in prophecy.

All the Apostles were together when "all the senate of the children of Israel" convened, and Gamaliel, a leading doctor of the law (of whose pupils Saul of Tarsus was one), a man noted among the people for his learning, showed that if Israel were lost he did not know of it, for he said to all the senate of the children of Israel, not, Ye men of Judah, but, "Ye men of Israel," etc.--Acts 5:21,35.

The Apostle Paul, one of the learned men of his day, and one of the most exact and logical men of any day, did not know of it if the ten tribes were "lost," and surely thought quite the contrary, as is proved by the following statements of his respecting Israel:--

He went to Antioch in Pisidia--among the Gentiles --and had no trouble in finding the "dispersed" Israelites, "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," and their synagogue; and getting opportunity to speak to the people (being recognized by the ruler of the synagogue as a man of education) he said, "Men of Israel, and ye [Gentiles] that fear God, give audience: The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers;...God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus, when John [the Baptist] had first preached before his coming [manifestation] the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." (Acts 13:16,17,23,24.) In verses 43,45 and 50 these "men of Israel" are called by the common name by which all Israelites are known to-day; namely, Jews. And it is worthy of note that, while a small band of Jews recently returned to Palestine claim to be of the tribe of Dan and another band claiming to be of the tribe of Gad, yet, as a rule, the Jews to-day do not know from which of the twelve tribes they sprang--so completely have the twelve tribes amalgamated into one nation.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after several years' absence among Gentiles, and especially among the people of Israel scattered abroad and dwelling everywhere among the Gentiles as to-day, he went into the temple and was recognized; and a tumult was raised by a man crying out,--"Men of Israel, help!" etc. (Acts 21:28.) That Jew evidently thought the same

as all the rest, that Israel was again a united nation, and that all Jews were now, as before the rebellion,-- "men of Israel."

When Paul pleaded his cause before King Agrippa, he said, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee,... especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." When therefore he said, "Our twelve tribes instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come" to the promises which God made to our fathers, it proves conclusively that neither the Jewish scholar and lawyer, Paul, nor the well-informed Roman governor, had any knowledge of the ten tribes being longer separated from the two tribes; nor did they know that the ten tribes were "lost;" nor did they in any manner or degree recognize the then heathen savages of the British isles as any part of the twelve tribes; for of the latter he expressly says, that they were serving God and hoping in the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Acts 26:2,3,7.) The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to those same "twelve tribes instantly serving God" and hoping; especially such as were Israelites indeed and had accepted Christ: it is applicable therefore also to all those who from among the Gentiles have been grafted into the promises of God to Abraham, by union with Christ, the true, faithful "Seed." Similarly, the Epistle of James was addressed to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad."--James 1:1,2.

In his epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul has much to say about Israel having rejected Christ and thus having brought blindness upon herself, unquestionably referring to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ by

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the Jews, "all Israel." He points out that so it was foretold by the prophets, and thus shows that the prophets are in accord with this fulfilment; and that they, when speaking of Israel, have no reference to our savage forefathers who, when found by "Saint Patrick" and "Saint Augustine," were totally devoid of knowledge of Jehovah, and of Moses and the Law, and of David, and of Solomon, and of the prophets, and of all expectation of a Messiah. Such total ignorance and forgetfulness are not supposable in any people, even in longer period;--much less in Israelites who never lose their respect for Abraham and circumcision, nor for Moses and the Law--even when they become "Free-thinkers."

The Apostle then proceeds to show that it is the same Israel that was blinded because of rejecting Christ that is to be saved from that blindness at the second coming of Christ. (Compare Rom. 9:27,31-33; 10:1-3; 11:2,7,15,24-28.) Is it supposable that if there were another Israel recognized by the holy spirit and

the Apostle they would have been ignored in the comprehensive statement of the entire plan of God from first to last, given in this wonderful and logical Epistle to the Romans? It is not supposable!

Furthermore, the Israelite according to the flesh who would lay claim to anything under God's Covenant with Abraham must indicate his adherence to that Covenant by observing the ordinance of circumcision. If, therefore, it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxon people have any Israelitish blood in their veins (and we deny that this has been proved), we may know that from the time they failed to perform the Israelitish ordinance of circumcision, that long they have been cut off from all share in the promises made to Israel. The law on this subject is found in Genesis 17:14 and is very explicit. It says: "The uncircumcised man child... shall be cut off from his people [from Israel--shall no longer be an inheritor of the promises made to Israel; for in neglecting thus to indicate his fealty to the covenant] HE HATH BROKEN MY COVENANT."

So then, if it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxons are descendants of Abraham (which we deny), it would avail nothing for them; for, having been uncircumcised for two thousand years, or as far back as their history extends, the covenant of God would be broken, so far as they were concerned, and they could inherit nothing under it. Neglect of circumcision by an Israelite constituted him an alien, a foreigner to the covenant of promise,--a Gentile.

Our conclusion, therefore, respecting the blessing upon the Anglo-Saxon people is that, whoever their fathers may have been, they have no hope for any divine favor or blessing as Israelites according to the flesh; for such they are not. Their blessing has resulted from the fact that some of them became members of the body of Christ--the higher, the spiritual Israel; and that a larger number have been blessed through the influence of these, and become members of "the household of faith"; and that in general the light of the gospel, and the spirit of liberty which it always induces, has been shed abroad abundantly upon that people--bringing with it great responsibilities, as well as great blessings.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL.

Freed from some false conceptions on the subject, we come now to our correspondent's principal question --"Is there a spiritual Israel which has taken the place of natural Israel? And, if so, Why cannot I find frequent references to her in the Scriptures?"

We answer, There is a spiritual Israel, but she has not taken the place of the fleshly Israel: her hopes are spiritual, not earthly; they are built upon heavenly or spiritual promises, not upon earthly promises: they are therefore called by the inspired writers "better promises." Nor does spiritual Israel desire to take the place of fleshly Israel: rather, she rejoices that, although fleshly Israel for the past eighteen centuries and more has been treated as enemies of God and blinded, for spiritual Israel's sake, yet the time is coming when she (fleshly Israel) shall obtain mercy through spiritual Israel's mercy and inherit the chief earthly blessing as the natural Seed of Abraham, when spiritual Israel, with Christ Jesus her Lord, shall have been exalted to heavenly glory.--Rom. 11:25-30.

Some who see that Christ and his Church, "his body" or "bride," constitute the real Seed of promise (Gal. 3:16,29) are blinded to the fact that there is also an earthly "seed" which through Christ shall inherit earthly good things of divine favor, and be used also in blessing all the families of the earth;--as earthly representatives of the spiritual (Seed) Israel. During this Gospel age the "elect" Church is constituted the Seed by being joined to Christ Jesus as his bride or joint-heir. During the next age fleshly Israel will be favored with the opportunity to be the first-born of the children of Christ--who, as "the man Christ Jesus," gave his human life for them and for all of Adam's race; and will give the human life, thus purchased, to all who will receive it (by restitution) on the terms of the New Covenant;--"to the Jew first."

There is the best of reason, therefore, for the holy spirit by the apostles not wholly appropriating the name Israel to spiritual Israel: it will be wanted later on by the natural seed. We do, however, find just what we should expect with a proper view before our minds; namely, the suggestion that the Gospel Church is the higher Israel, the spiritual, which gets blessings which

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natural Israel never possessed, but which she was given the first opportunity to possess, and failed to obtain through unbelief and lack of consecration.--See Rom. 11:7; 9:31,32.

For instance, the Apostle (1 Cor. 10:18) mentions the customs of the Jews, and calls them "Israel after the flesh," which implies a spiritual Israel, or Israel after the spirit; especially when he draws a comparison, as here, between their customs and our higher, more spiritual customs and arrangements. Again (2 Cor. 3:7,13-18) he refers to Israel's Law Covenant and Israel's mediator, Moses, and the vail he put on to hide the glory, and shows that those who are only fleshly Israel are still hindered from seeing anything more than the vail, the outward, the ceremonial, while we

(spiritual Israel) may see with open face the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same glory as his joint-heirs. "Nevertheless," the Apostle declares, "when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" from the eyes of Israel after the flesh;--after spiritual Israel has been selected and changed to the Lord's glory. Again (Gal. 6:16) the Apostle evidently refers to spiritual Israel, when he speaks of "the Israel of God." Again (Eph. 2:12,13), writing to the Church concerning the time when they were Gentiles, he says: "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers;... but now...ye...are made nigh by the blood of Christ." This means that by God's grace the middle wall of partition has been broken down, and that the new creatures in Christ are made sharers of those spiritual blessings and opportunities first offered to fleshly Israel. Indeed, that we get the choicest portion of blessing proffered to fleshly Israel is clearly stated by the same writer. (Rom. 11:17-24.) He describes our relationship to the promises under the illustration of an olive tree whose natural branches have been broken off, and into which wild-olive branches have been grafted, and whose natural branches may yet later be reengrafted. The Gospel Church, as the engrafted branches, are partaking of all the fat and richness of the root--the Abrahamic promise. Evidently, then, these engrafted branches constitute spiritual Israel.

Besides, have we not on a higher or spiritual plane all that Israel after the flesh ever had? They came under a Covenant with God--the Law Covenant sealed with the blood of bulls and goats: we come into covenant relationship to God under the New Covenant sealed with the precious blood of Christ. They had a mediator between God and them--Moses: we have a better "mediator between God and men--the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all." They had typical sacrifices for sins: we have the "better sacrifices" --the real, efficacious sin-offering. They had a priesthood under a high priest, and holy places made with hands, with their vails, candlestick, table of shew bread and a golden altar and incense and a mercy seat: we have the realities therein typified; for the fullness is of Christ (head and body), the antitypical "Israel of God," the "Royal priesthood," the promised seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We might multiply such proofs which clearly identify the true Church as the higher or spiritual Israel, but more is unnecessary. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear!

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"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."--Isa. 33:17.

It is always the part of wisdom to regard the present from the standpoint of the future, and to regulate the conduct of the present with a view to worthy future possibilities. Any other conception of life, or any other course in life, is unworthy of the dignity of man and dishonoring to his Maker who endowed him with those mental qualities of reason and judgment which, if used, place him far above the plane of a mere animal life of present gratification. The beasts that perish may indeed properly live for the present only, but not so man who was created in the image of God, and with the possibilities of eternal life and everlasting bliss before him. Howbeit, though that image was marred by the fall, yet, having been redeemed from the fall, the full restoration of that image is made possible by the assistance of divine grace; and it is only in the endeavor, in harmony with the divine directions, to regain that image, by daily overcoming sin, that true manhood can be reasserted and maintained. Otherwise, if any man persist in ignoring the future possibilities of worthy manhood, and, like the beasts that perish, live only for present gratification, then, like the beasts, he too will be esteemed of God unworthy of eternal existence, and must die. This verdict, however, will not be passed upon any until divine love and mercy and discipline have utterly failed to impress upon the heart a true sense of the dignity of manhood, and the obligation of honoring God in rising to that dignity by his assisting grace.

But here the question arises, How far into the future shall we look to find the standpoint from which to view and properly estimate the things of the present? That, we answer, must depend upon circumstances. In some instances we need to look only an

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instant ahead; while in others a week, or a year, or a few years, as indicated by the time necessary to develop the project. In infancy we learn by experience to look just a short distance ahead, reasoning that it is best not to put the hand into the fire, because the fire will surely burn again, as it did yesterday; that this or that disobedience will bring the censure of parents or teachers, while the opposite will bring approval; and by and by childish plans are formed and carried forward with a view to anticipated results in the near future. In maturer years wider plans are formed with a view to desirable results a few years hence; as, for instance, plans for fame, or fortune, or for the good of others--the training up of children to noble manhood

and womanhood, etc.

In all this there is a measure of wisdom; but the man whose thought and planning, either for himself or others, is based upon the standpoint of the future of this life only, is not a wise man in God's estimation, however wise he may appear in the eyes of his fellowmen; as it is written, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (1 Cor. 3:19.) It is not, therefore, the standpoint of the future of this life only that should be a criterion of present valuation with those who would be truly wise, but the standpoint of a possible destiny in the life which is to come, and which may be eternal if we so wisely and prudently conduct ourselves as to prove worthy of eternal life. It is to the future standpoint of a possible eternal life and blessedness and to the glorious consummation of the divine plan, that the Scriptures invite the attention of all the people of God. We are shown that God has a wise and benevolent plan for all his creatures, both in heaven and in earth; that the plan is wide and deep, requiring ages for its fulfilment; that the victory of that plan is assured; that it will culminate in that glorious victory at the end of Christ's Millennial reign; and that its victory will be the victory of truth and righteousness.

The truly wise man is the man who takes all this into account, accepting by faith all of the divine revelation concerning it, who, in this faith, makes and pursues all his plans, both for himself and others, with the ends of ultimate victory and eternal life in view; and who therefore seeks daily to become more and more established and confirmed in righteousness.

Such a man the Prophet Isaiah describes as one that "walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; that despiseth the gain of oppression [refusing to be profited by any unrighteous scheme]; that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes [that cannot, by any consideration, be bribed to do evil], that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood [from any scheme of oppression that would cause a brother's blood to cry unto God for vengeance], and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil [from beholding evil approvingly, or with quiet acquiescence.]" --Isa. 33:15.

Such a course of conduct is one squared by those principles of truth and righteousness to which ultimate victory is assured through Christ, whose reign of righteousness will fully establish them in the earth, so that the will of God will then be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Such a man, the prophet further assures us, is fireproof even in this day of trial, when the fire is trying every man's work of what sort it is. He shall dwell in the midst of the devouring fire and the lasting burnings of this day of wrath, which shall burn until all opposition to God and his righteous way is consumed. (Isa. 33:14.) And not only shall these, like the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, come out of the flames without even the smell of fire upon them, but

they shall come out of every such fiery trial triumphantly. "He shall dwell on high [in the place of divine favor]: his place of defence shall be the strongholds of rocks [in the Rock of ages]: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure"; for "no good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly," even in this present life while they tread this valley of humiliation and vale of tears.--Vs. 16; Psa. 84:11.

It is to these also that the words of our text are addressed: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." "The land that is very far off" is not visible to the natural eye; but to the eye of faith, looking through the telescope of God's Word, it is a glorious vision. There is the King in his beauty reigning in power and great glory, and with him all his elect, crowned at his side. There is the happy condition brought about by the victory of truth and righteousness, when all tears are wiped away. There the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven, and peace and everlasting joy are upon all heads. There the hitherto desert earth blossoms as the rose; for there is no more curse. And there the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them; and there shall be nothing to hurt nor to offend in all that holy Kingdom. --Isa. 11:9.

O what a vision of rest and peace, of glory and blessing, of joyful fellowship, of deathless love, of unsullied purity and unending bliss! Who, but those who have caught a glimpse of its glory, can estimate its power to inspire to holy zeal, to earnest endeavor, and to patient endurance of all the losses and crosses of the path of discipline that leads to it? It is no matter of surprise that not all who name the name of Christ are filled with the inspiration of this blessed vision; for but few, even of those who theoretically know these things, really behold the vision, and by faith realize that they have a place in it. Only those who do the

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will of God can thus know of the doctrine,--as a guide and inspiration to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord. Only such can really see afar off with a realizing sense that what God hath spoken he is abundantly able also to perform. Only such can have the inspiration of such a faith. If thou art a faithful doer of the Word of God, and not a hearer only, then, even now "thine eyes" of faith shall catch the inspiration of the glory to be revealed, and thy steps shall be quickened in the paths of righteousness.

The Apostle Peter reiterates the same truth in a negative form, when, after enumerating the virtues of the truly righteous character, he adds,--"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." (2 Pet. 1:9.) That is, he cannot see them as an inspiring

and impelling power, though he may know of them theoretically, and hold the truth even in unrighteousness. (Rom. 1:18.) It is only those who truly love righteousness, and whose daily walk and conversation are therefore in harmony with the principles of righteousness, who can be in any measure inspired with the vision of faith of the ultimate victory of truth and righteousness and its firm establishment in all the earth. Who is so blind to the glories of righteousness as the man who is out of harmony with any of its principles? Can he who glories in oppression rejoice in the assurance that "the oppressor shall cease," and that the gain of oppression shall perish? Can he who despises the truth rejoice in the promise that the knowledge of the truth shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea? Can he who hates his brother rejoice in the assurance that none shall have eternal life save those in whose hearts is written the law of love? No; to thus by faith behold afar off the blessed land of rest and peace, all radiant with the glory of the King in his beauty (Rev. 21:11,23-25; 22:4,5), the heart must be in sympathy with that glory and that beauty of holiness. No matter how much we may know about it, we cannot thus see it, unless, as both the prophet and the apostle assure us, we are lovers of righteousness--doers of the word, and not hearers only.

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There is a note of solemn warning in these words of the Apostle, which all would do well to carefully consider; for not only does he affirm that the one lacking righteousness cannot see afar off, but he further states that he is blind--blind even to things near as well as afar off. A little reflection will show how very true this is; for there is a philosophy in the course of life which constantly tends either toward ultimate perfection, or toward ultimate degradation and ruin, according as the ways of righteousness or sin are pursued. The two principles, good and evil, tend to exactly opposite results, and their opposite fruits mature on the philosophical principles of cause and effect. Consequently, as the Apostle declares, only a blind man,--a man mentally blinded or deceived so that he cannot perceive the fruits that must inevitably result from his course--could expect ultimate good results from an evil course of life. Such a one is blinded by his prejudices and preferences: his judgment is warped so that he cannot see ultimate results, being infatuated with the present gratification of his desires.

Let all who now see the King in his beauty and the land that is afar off continue to feast their eyes on the glorious vision, that they may catch more and more of its blessed inspiration, and let our treasure and our hearts be there. And let us guard carefully against any perversity of will which would so pervert the judgment

as to hinder us from continuing to see afar off, and so blind us both to present and eternal interests.

MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT.

JAN. 10.--ACTS 2:1-13.

"They were all filled with the holy spirit."--Acts 2:4.

OUR last lesson contained a promise of the holy spirit, the "Comforter," and instructed the apostles and believing brethren to tarry at Jerusalem until thus endued with power from on high for the work of the ministry, in harmony with the Lord's commission, to preach the gospel to every creature. In that lesson we noted the methods adopted by our Lord to prove to the disciples his resurrection and the change from human to spirit nature, and his ascension to the Father, in harmony with his declaration that he would go into a far country to be invested with his kingly authority, and would come again and receive his faithful ones unto himself. Some have endeavored to make of this Pentecostal outpouring of the holy spirit upon the Church a fulfilment of the Lord's promise to "come again." But nothing could be further from the meaning of the Lord's words and from the expectations of the apostles, as can be readily proved. While telling them that he would come again and receive them unto himself, he also told them that in the interim of his absence they were to preach the gospel to all the world, for a witness, before the end of this age. He assured them that during this interim of his absence they would suffer persecution and be despised of all men for his sake; that they were incompetent for so great a work, and therefore must not begin it until they would

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be endued "with power from on high"--the promise of the Father, the evidence of the Father's acceptance, the foretaste of his blessing, which shall be completed and fulfilled on the glorification of the Church in the Kingdom. (Rom. 8:23.) The Lord did not represent that the holy spirit would be himself, but merely a power or influence emanating from the Father and from himself.--Acts 1:4,5.

None of the apostles had the idea that the holy spirit was the Lord, nor that its outpouring represented the second advent. Quite to the contrary, they spoke of this outpouring as being only the "earnest" or "first fruits" of the spirit, a divine blessing upon the Church. The Apostle

Peter in preaching under the power of the holy spirit, after declaring the death and resurrection of Christ, said, "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:33.) There is no intimation here that "this" outpouring of the spirit was the second coming of the Lord; but to the contrary it is stated that the Lord at the time was highly exalted, with the Father, and had shed forth this spirit or power upon his Church; having received authority of the Father to shed it forth, by virtue of the atonement which he had accomplished by the sacrifice of himself.

There could not be better proof that the apostles did not understand the outpouring of the holy spirit to be the second coming of Christ, the establishment of his Kingdom, etc., than the fact that speaking under the influence of this miraculous power, they continually and repeatedly exhorted the Church to wait for and to expect still greater blessings at the Lord's return, assuring them that what they had already received was but a foretaste. Not merely one of the apostles so points forward to the second coming of Christ, but all of them without exception--Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John in their most earnest exhortations point to the second advent of the Lord as the greatest hope and inspiration for faith, courage, patient endurance and hope, for the things that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Those expositors of Scripture, therefore, who endeavor to turn the attention of God's people from the hopes set before us in the gospel, of the "glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," so as to induce them to believe that our Lord's second advent took place at Pentecost, are guilty of gross perversion of the Word of God. And from the abundance of the testimony against such a view and the absence of all testimony in its favor, it seems difficult to see how their course can be anything short of a wilful "wresting of the Scriptures."

And in view of the fact that some of those who thus pervert the divine Word, so as to make its testimony of none effect through their traditions and false theories, are seemingly earnest people, it behooves all who would not be blinded to rid their minds of everything in the way of prejudice in coming to the Word of the Lord; that we may see light in his light and not confuse ourselves by our own or other men's darkness. How strange it would be indeed for the Apostle John in his great vision (Revelation), nearly sixty years after this Pentecostal blessing, to be shown and to be commanded to record for our information, symbolic pictures of the events of this Gospel age, and of its close, and of the second coming of Christ, and of the Millennial judgment, and of the final destruction of Satan and evil, and of the introduction of the everlasting

Kingdom beyond--how strange and inconsistent all this would be if our Lord's second advent took place sixty years before, and the beloved disciple John, although blessed by the holy spirit and especially inspired to be an instructor of the Church, were left in total ignorance of the truth and inspired to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus." Come quickly!

(2) It is not said that the holy spirit came as a rushing wind, but merely that a sound came, as of a rushing mighty wind. A wind is an invisible power, and so is the holy spirit an invisible power. The choice, therefore, of a sound of wind as a symbol of the holy spirit, and as a means for drawing the attention of the apostles to the wonderful blessing coming upon them, was an apt one. We cannot think what would have better represented the invisible power with which they were imbued. The word "spirit" is from the very same Greek and Hebrew words as the words "breath" and "wind:" not that the holy spirit is merely breath or wind, but that nothing else so well symbolizes God's invisible power.

(3-11) The cloven tongues, that is, the split or parted tongues of light, like fire, which sat upon each of them, were also evidently symbolic, representing illumination, --the intelligence which comes through the holy spirit. The holy spirit might have come upon them with equal power without either the sound of rushing wind or the tongues of light; but these accessories were no doubt intended to help the Church to grasp the situation, to expect and to appreciate the blessing then conferred and to make the matter the more notable and satisfactory to them.

The number of believers who were together in the upper room at the time of the outpouring of the holy spirit was about one hundred and twenty. They were all immersed in the holy spirit, because the holy spirit filled the house. But whether or not the tongues of light rested upon any others than the apostles we cannot surely know. It may have rested upon them only,

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by way of distinguishing them as mouthpieces of the holy spirit. Certain it is that in the subsequent preaching with various tongues there seems good reason for supposing that the apostles only preached; because it was said of the speakers, "Are not all these which speak Galileans?" We cannot suppose that the entire company of one hundred and twenty were all Galileans. It is quite probable, indeed, that the majority of them were Judeans; but the eleven apostles were all from Galilee, and hence it is probable that they alone did the preaching; and probably also that they alone had the manifestations of the tongues of light in the upper room.

The number of Israelites, otherwise called Jews, residing in the surrounding nations "dispersed amongst

the Gentiles," where they were engaged in business, was much greater than the number who permanently resided in Palestine. Yet there was amongst them a reverence for the Holy Land and the Law; and the latter commanded an assembling, at least representatively, at the Passover or at Pentecost. In consequence great numbers came to Jerusalem from the surrounding countries as representatives of families and communities to bear tithes and to offer prayers and sacrifices at the temple, on these occasions. "From a census taken in the time of Nero, more than 2,700,000 were gathered at the Passover, and still greater numbers came to Pentecost." The larger numbers in attendance at Pentecost was doubtless because this feast came in the Summer. These gathered multitudes were not drawn from idle curiosity, but were "devout men."

The countries from which many of them came are mentioned, and include a radius of several hundred miles and the most enlightened portions of the world at that time. Although Greek was the ruling language of that period in official matters and amongst the learned, the majority of the people evidently understood little more than their native tongues and dialects, nor did the character of the worship at Jerusalem make it necessary that they should be very fluent in one language. They came together to worship and to present offerings rather than to hear preaching. Yet doubtless the Lord's arrangement through Moses with reference to this feast had in view the very opportunities for publishing the good tidings recorded in this lesson. The miracle of speaking various tongues was appreciated by some at least of these representatives of true religion throughout the world. And the testimony of the apostles heard there was no doubt carried to every quarter; if not in sufficient power to convert to Christ, at least in sufficient measure to prepare the way in some degree for the message which was to be carried throughout the world by the apostles and believers in general who subsequently, as a result of persecution in Jerusalem, were scattered also and "went everywhere" preaching the gospel.

(12,13) Although the people mentioned were religious, "devout men," it does not appear that the miracle of the apostles speaking in various languages did more at first than to excite curiosity in some, while with others it was attributed to an evil influence--intoxication. Thus Satan, who endeavored to calumniate our Lord as a "wine bibber" and possessed of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, would now fain hinder the people from hearing the message of the gospel preached with the power of the holy spirit sent down from heaven, and accompanied with wonderful manifestations. Then as now the servants of God were traduced

even by "devout men."--See 2 Cor. 6:8.

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PENTECOSTAL PREACHING.

--JAN. 17.--ACTS 2:32-47.--

"The promise is unto you, and unto your children,
and to all that are afar off."--Acts 2:39.

THE major portion of the New Testament consists of written addresses to the Lord's people, and each Epistle shows great order and ability in presenting truth logically and forcefully. The Book of Acts, however, contains records of several preached discourses, amongst which none are more interesting than the one now before us for consideration.

Apparently the eleven apostles had been talking to little groups of people, here and there, as they came together after hearing of the miraculous manifestation of divine power in connection with the Pentecostal blessing. Whether the apostles spoke each in a distinctly separate dialect and were heard by different groups of different tongues, or whether they spoke in one tongue and were miraculously heard and understood in different tongues by their different hearers we are not informed, but the miracle would be about equally great either way, and the result the same. After being charged with intoxication Peter seems to have become the main spokesman and "lifted up his voice," and thus changed the matter from private conversations by a number to a public discourse by himself. He protested, not indignantly but mildly, against the charge of drunkenness, in very reasonable and logical form; showing that it was too early in the morning to suppose the apostles to be drunken. The third hour would be what we term nine o'clock, a.m., and would imply that the disciples had met quite early in the upper

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room, and that after the blessing they immediately improved the opportunity for letting the light shine out by preaching the truth to the curious.

Peter immediately connected the outpouring of the holy spirit with the prophecy of Joel, and connected this with our Lord and his crucifixion and the prophecies concerning him, pointing to his resurrection.-- Acts 2:15-32.

(32,33) After thus laying before them the basis of the gospel, the death of Christ, he most forcefully announces that himself and all of the apostles were witnesses of the fact that our Lord Jesus was not left in

death, but the Father had raised him up to life and exalted him to his own right hand. Upon this, the only proper foundation of gospel hope and preaching, the Apostle proceeded to build the discourse of this lesson and to account to the people for the power of the holy spirit which they saw manifested.

(34,35) Realizing that his hearers did not understand the prophecy which he had just quoted from the Psalms (Psa. 16:8), Peter proceeded to prove to them that David could not have been speaking these words respecting himself; but that his words were an inspired prophecy respecting the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead. In proof of this he called their attention to what they would all very readily admit; namely, that David was dead and in his sepulcher; that David was not risen; that David had not been exalted and made to sit at God's right hand; and that consequently some one else than David must have been meant; and he proceeded to show that Messiah was referred to by the prophet.

Very many Christian people are surprised when first they notice this positive statement by the Apostle, that the beloved Prophet David is not in heaven: so used are they to thinking of all the prophets as being now in heaven, instead of remembering as is clearly pointed out in Heb. 11:39,40, "that they without us should not be made perfect"--that the ancient worthies will not receive the blessings which God has provided for them, and intends to bestow upon them, until first the Church, the bride, the body of Christ, has been perfected with her Lord at his second advent.

The character of this discourse by the Apostle Peter is not only worthy of notice and remembrance, but worthy of imitation, by all who would preach the true gospel with power. His discourse was not to the effect that this manifestation of power was the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his Kingdom and glory; but to the very contrary of this he shows from David's prophecy that Jehovah said to Christ, David's Lord and Master, "Sit thou on my right hand [that is, occupy the chief place of my favor and power] until I make thy foes thy footstool." This implies that the Heavenly Father has engaged to honor the Son and to bring all things into subjection to him. In his discourse the Apostle does not intimate that this has already been accomplished and that all foes are overthrown, but merely that the first step in this programme has been accomplished; that Christ had suffered, that Christ had been raised from the dead, that Christ had been exalted to the right hand of power. This he emphasises by saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Messiah." Peter's discourse was not about the stars, nor about the leaves, nor about politics, nor about finances, nor about eternal torment; but about the great central

features of the gospel, that Messiah had come, had suffered the just for the unjust, and had been glorified and was yet to be recognized Lord of all. Nor did he fail to point out the responsibilities of the Jews before him, as a part of the nation, for the death of Christ.

(37-41) The effect of this preaching, on a right theme and in a direct and forceful manner, was the conviction of some of his hearers that if these things were true they were under a responsibility, and an inquiry as to what should be their course. We look with intense interest to see whether or not the Apostle advised them, as some preachers of today would advise --that they come to a mourners' bench and pray and agonize and cry aloud to the Lord to receive them, while he and the apostles gather around them and sing hymns and pray also for them. We find nothing of this kind, nor do we find the Apostle losing his senses and his argument and logic in excited declamation without meaning, intended to terrify the repentant ones. On the contrary, he proceeds in the same earnest, logical manner as before to answer their questions and to inform them, not that they need to urge God to forgive them, but on the contrary, that God has already provided forgiveness in Christ and is waiting and ready to receive them, and that the proper steps for them to take are (1) repentance, reformation of life,

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"the turning over of a new leaf," and (2) that as repentant believers they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ--thus consecrating themselves to him and to his service, and outwardly and publicly acknowledging the same. And he assures them that upon so doing they shall receive the gift of the holy spirit also. He points out that the promise of the holy spirit included them (as Israelites), and that the Lord had specially called them, through the hearing and understanding of the truth, that they might become heirs of these promises and recipients of this seal of acceptance.

The astounding fact that three thousand were converted to the Lord, as the result of the Apostle's clear presentation of the simple facts and how

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they fitted to the prophecies, is not to be accounted for by supposing that the holy spirit operated upon the hearers as well as upon the speaker; for the holy spirit is never given to any except consecrated believers. Nor are we to suppose that the Apostle spoke with such an intensity of power as would of itself have produced such results upon any congregation of hearers. The explanation lies in the fact that his hearers were specially "devout men," and the work of that day and of a succeeding period was merely the gathering of the ripe

grains of "wheat" from that nation, which had for over sixteen centuries been the recipients of Divine favor with "much advantage every way, chiefly in that to them were committed the oracles of God." The same Apostle and the other apostles under the power of the same holy spirit and with probably increased natural ability in the handling of the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, did not subsequently succeed in accomplishing similar results so far as numbers were concerned.

It is worthy of note also that the holy spirit's method was not to send the apostles, when imbued with power, off to heathen lands to preach to those who had never heard of God; but, on the contrary, divine providence so ordered matters as to gather some of the most worthy Jews out of every nation under heaven to the apostles, for the purpose of hearing and being blessed with the truth. These "strangers" from various parts were all Jews, although their language differed because born in foreign parts; furthermore, it was not until about three and one-half years after this that the Lord sent the good tidings beyond the Jews to the Gentiles--Cornelius being the first Gentile convert.

So we hold that the present harvest message is now sent primarily to the "devout" of Christendom: and we therefore seek and use the means provided for preaching to these first, "for the perfecting of the saints"; rather than neglect this work by going after those who can and will be so much more successfully reached in the Millennium, by the glorified Church--the seed of Abraham in which all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

(42-47) We cannot wonder that such a group of consecrated children of God, after being illuminated with the holy spirit of promise, felt an instinctive desire to be in each other's company; nor can we wonder at the unselfish, loving spirit manifested in the arrangement that they should have "all things in common." No, such a course is only what would suggest itself to all true Christian as a desirable one. Their zeal toward God is also attested by their application to the study of the doctrines of Christ, their daily prayers, etc. And this, as verse 47 informs us, resulted in attracting others of kindred spirit to the truth. Thus the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved,--such as were in a condition to be saved from the blindness of their nation (Compare Rom. 11:25,26); such as were the "wheat," ready to be separated from the "chaff" and gathered into the "garner" of the Gospel age, and away from the "fire" of trouble that presently came upon all the "chaff" of that nation. --Luke 3:16,17.

Although the Lord specially blessed this Communistic arrangement in the beginning of the Gospel age, it was, we believe, for the purpose of drawing to the

truth the unselfish lovers of righteousness and peace. For the same reason he blessed the Church at that time with peace, and with "favor with all the people." After the Communistic arrangement and the favor with the people had been permitted for a time, and had accomplished their work, of gathering certain characters to the Church, the Lord broke up the arrangement entirely, and scattered the Church through persecution and disfavor with the people "everywhere." Nor do we believe that it was ever the intention of the Lord that his people should live in a communal manner during this Gospel dispensation. But on this subject we refer the reader to an article in our issue of Sept. 1, '95, entitled,--"They Had All Things in Common."

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ENCOURAGING LETTERS.

We publish the following as an evidence of the fact that the Lord is pleased occasionally to grant physical healing, probably as an indication of the approach of the "times of restitution." (Acts 3:19-21.) The sister does not mention the tenor of her prayer; but anticipating queries we would refer inquirers to the articles on prayer and faith healing in our issues of July 1 to Sept. 1, and suggest further that if in her place the strongest prayer we could offer consistent with our consecration of all to the Lord, would be,-- to tell the Lord (1) of our unbounded confidence in his ability to heal, if he saw best so to do; (2) of our desire to have his will done whether it be for our life or death, our sickness or health; (3) of our earnest desire to serve him, and our determination to use whatever strength and health and ability he saw best to grant in his service--as called out of darkness into his marvelous light. (4) There we would rest the case--
"Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

Indiana.

DEAR FRIENDS:--I have been in the valley of the shadow of death, and my restoration to life and health

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is thought by many to be little if anything short of a miracle. Having been crippled for over thirty years by spinal and sciatic rheumatism, I had no hope of ever recovering and was resigned to the Lord's will. In January, '94, I fell on the ice, resulting in concussion of the spine and fracture of the hip joint, breaking

two principal bones. For three months I was unable to move a finger. Friends sent me three of the best surgeons they could find, and all three agreed that it was useless even to prescribe for me, that recovery was impossible. Finally, when all looked for me to die at any instant, a poor old colored friend, a Christian woman, said to me, "You never tried Doctor Jesus. He can cure you. Now pray with me, and rejoice; for we will be heard." So we prayed, and soon I noticed an improvement. To-day I am not only better in health, but I can walk better than in thirty years, and all traces of my old infirmity are gone.

While I lay helpless, I thought how I would try to lead others to the light. I had often thought to devote my time and labor to the Lord and his kingdom work, and am longing to do so now, if it be his will. I thought of your tracts, and especially of "Do You Know." I have delayed too long now, God forgive me this sin. I can offer something on "Good Hopes," as the Lord has sent me a pension. The time is at hand, the Kingdom is at the door. O may I be found worthy to work for it, and to enter into its glory, is the prayer of

Your friends and servant in the Lord,

MRS. E. S. L_____.

The following letter is from a "Quakeress" or "Friend" who had long followed the Lord according to the light possessed, but failed to recognize him as having "bought us" by the sacrifice of himself. Thank God, she has found the only "door," the only "way" to God, and has entered as a true sheep into the fold of the true Shepherd. Alas! how many excellent moral people, blinded by the Adversary, fail to find the only gate to the true "narrow way." Thank God! the hour is near when all the blinded ones, who are now feeling after God, shall have the eyes of their understandings opened and shall find the "way." (Compare Acts 17:25-27; Isa. 29:18; 42:16.) But what shall we say to comfort or encourage those whose eyes have seen the love of God and of Christ, manifested in the "ransom for all," and whom the love of Christ has not constrained to love in return nor to be his disciples? Ah! theirs is a much more serious case; and we know of nothing in God's Word for their encouragement, except it be the suggestion of beating with "many stripes," which may be understood to signify some hope of a blessing through tribulation, if then properly exercised by it.

There is a good suggestion in the letter for some, respecting the propriety and necessity of definitely accepting the Lord by faith, and of making a positive covenant with him upon the only terms,--full, free, unreserved, joyful self-surrender, as preceding the evidences

of full acceptance.

Pennsylvania

DEAR FRIEND:--Just a word to thank you for your letter and prayer, which has not been altogether without answer, and for the WATCH TOWER which came

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two or three days ago.

I think my error has been that I have taken the right of sonship too much as a matter of course, instead of realizing that the disobedient child is not in the true sense a child of God. From the condition of disobedience Jesus has purchased me at the heaviest possible cost, and I have been enjoying the redemption or the purchased blessings without rendering to him due gratitude in return. I have not taken him into account as I ought.

By degrees it came to me that a definite act of faith was required of me. I must cast myself unreservedly, without doubt or fear, upon Jesus Christ as a Savior, and trust him for righteousness. I winced at the thought of such a complete surrender; but, when Jesus bent to ask me to give him my heart "once for all" and "now," I found there was no escape, I was already a captive; and that the sweetest possibility in all the world would be to be his "prisoner," "bond-servant," subject, slave, only to follow and serve him henceforth; relying upon him alone, in God, for the ability to do so.

And so, "once for all," with Bunyan's Pilgrim, I have dropped my burden at the foot of the cross. Now I go to my comparatively neglected Bible, having given myself once for all to a neglected Savior. And if to be baptized into Jesus Christ is to be baptized into his sufferings and death,* I will choose these in preference to any present health or exemption from trial, unless it be made very clear to me that I am to do otherwise. I believe that the redemption gives us health sufficient to do all that the Father expects of us, and I will not ask for more. Very gratefully,

[That is a good point to keep in memory: preservation of health and faculties is as truly to be esteemed providential as restoration when impaired; although not generally so esteemed. And afflictions (physical or financial) are sometimes blessings: One of old wrote, "Before I was afflicted I went astray." Another wrote, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

All of the saints, "sons," receive some chastisements: some in one way, some in another; some in ways that all can see, some in ways that none but themselves know: some learn the lessons slowly, and

some more rapidly: but all have need of divine direction and correction. Unless disciplined and pruned they will not bear the fruits of the spirit in such profusion as the Master seeks; and unless fruitbearers they are cumberers of the Vine and will be "cut off."
--EDITOR.]

*See Baptism and its Import; discussed in our issue June 15, '93.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

--ADDRESS TO--

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Those of the interested, who by reason of old age or accident, or other adversity are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if they will send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the paper.

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TRAVELING BRETHREN ON TIME.

When you get word that any of the "Pilgrim" brethren are coming to your vicinity at a particular date, you may expect them and prepare accordingly. Do not delay arrangements for meetings until their arrival; else there will be little time left for meetings; for rarely do they remain over two days at one place. The routes are arranged in the WATCH TOWER office, and the time apportioned according to circumstances and interest--sometimes but one day at a place. These "pilgrims" are not slothful, but fervent in spirit serving the Lord; so arrange for two or three meetings each day, as will suit your convenience. Improve such opportunities for having your friends and neighbors, whom you have been trying to interest by conversations and reading matter, hear a connected delineation of the Plan of the Ages from the Chart of the Ages. We commend to you as a privilege the entertainment of these brethren of whose coming we send you notification (Heb. 13:2; Rom. 12:4-18); but they do not take up collections, all needful expenses being provided from the Tract Fund.

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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

TENDENCIES already noted, toward a combination of religious sentiments in sympathy with "political reform" movements, are step by step making headway, preparing for the predicted politico-religious "Confederacy." (Isa. 8:12.) These give evidence of four things: (1) that the "form of godliness" and outward ceremony flourish as the Apostle predicted (2 Tim. 3:5); (2) that personal, vital godliness and clear appreciation of the divine mind are decreasing; (3) that the nominal church contains so much of the world and its spirit as to be ready for the move; (4) that the worldly, while unconverted in the true sense, are greatly influenced by respect, fear and public sentiment, and see no danger from the movement.

We are far from claiming, as many do, that our day is witnessing a general decline of moral and religious sentiment. On the contrary, we hold that these sentiments are more general perhaps than ever before, as witnessed by the philanthropies and charities of both public and private support, and the increase of humane and kindly sentiment. But we claim that while the civilized world is much brighter and better as a whole than it ever was, because of the diffusion therein of the Gospel light, yet the mass of the church, the light-bearers, are declining in intelligent faith and zeal and approaching the worldly standard about as fast as the world has been approaching the Christian standard, so that the world and the nominal Church

have again come close together;--closer than at any time before during the present century; so close that to many it appears that, to fully install the Millennium --the triumphal reign of the churches--only the three following "reforms" are needed; viz.--(1) Insert the names of God and Christ in the United States Constitution; (2) compel professing Christians to take a more active part in politics, form Good Citizenship Leagues, etc., and learn to outwit Satan at his own game; (3) by so doing obtain prestige and power enough to influence legislation to the enactment of stringent Sunday laws which would at least make us look like a religious people; also suppress the social evil and break up present "rings," or else convert them to the new religio-political program. Later on it will do to enforce religious worship and have the public servants attest their fidelity by attending in squads and in uniform. The appointing of obligatory fast days and thanksgiving days as is and has long been the case in countries thoroughly dominated by Roman Catholicism will follow later. The next step would be to suppress all literature antagonistic to this union; symbolically behead it (Rev. 20:4--like John the Baptist) for pointing out the wrong of the professed bride of Christ being united to the world. Then, later, when questions would arise as to what would constitute Christian worship, the Supreme Courts could be called upon to define more and more explicitly what is, and what is not, Christian faith and worship.

Such a reign of the churches will be but the counterpart to the reign of Papacy during the "dark ages," except that it will be a more enlightened reign, from

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the fact that general civilization has progressed, and general intelligence will have some weight.

But that reign will be short. Worldliness, being merely covered with a thin outward veneer of religion, will speedily assert its true nature--selfishness, envy, malice, hatred and strife. But it will not be left thus to disintegrate: its fall will be sudden; it will be utterly disrupted by the "great earthquake" (Rev. 16:18), the revolt of the masses, precipitating the anarchy foretold in Scripture, in the midst of which the dominions of this world shall pass into the hands of the true Kingdom of God, when the true Millennial reign will begin.

The fact is that the faith of the Church has always been the most pure and fervent when under opposition and even persecution from the world. There can be no ground for union between the Church and the world except as the Church wholly or in part loses sight of or abandons the divine program. Our Lord's example and precepts are applicable to all of his followers yet, and will continue to be so until the "present evil

world" shall give place to "the world to come" and its Messianic Kingdom. Our Lord declared, "Ye are not of the world. I have chosen you out of the world. Marvel not if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own."

The present effort to unite the Church and the world more closely, like the successful efforts of the past, is only a trap and a snare by which the great Adversary would divert attention from the true work of the Church--her self purification and separation from the world, by which her light would shine upon the world with greater clearness, convincing of sin, of righteousness and of a coming judgment.

But as in the past a falling away of the majority into worldliness served to separate the Lord's "jewels," so now such a separation is in progress. And it is for this "jewel" class that God is supplying the light of present truth;--clearer light on the "ransom" and its present and future results; on the "royal priesthood" and its present sacrificing and future glory; on Covenants and their fulfilment; on the Kingdom now in embryo suffering violence, and by and by in glory and power the blessing of all the families of the earth; on the fulfilment of prophecies which prove that we are in the "harvest" of this age, and that the great Reaper is present, "gathering together his elect," his jewels.

* * *

The champions of Church and State have been rejoicing considerably over two incidents which they consider favorable to their cause,--

(1) A Supreme Court decision which, although indirect, can be, and no doubt later on will be, construed to signify that the United States Government is in some sense a religious, a Christian government, and become a basis for Christian laws and regulations, and not merely laws of Justice. All should know how many narrow meanings have been given to the term, "Christian regulation," by various well-meaning, but grossly deceived, parties in the past.

(2) President Cleveland in his last Thanksgiving-day Proclamation departed from all past usage by mentioning

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in it the name of Christ, and what might be construed as partisan politics in the suggestion of thankfulness that the Silver Party had failed to carry the election. His example was followed by the Governors of several States in their Proclamations. There is nothing in the Constitution giving any authority for such Proclamations: they are therefore merely suggestions; and in making the suggestions all previous Presidents have wholly separated politics, and in consideration of

the fact that millions of citizens (including Jews, infidels and skeptics) do not acknowledge Christ, have merely suggested that thanks be rendered to Almighty God for his blessings, etc. The framers of the National Government were not devoid of religious sentiment, but they were logical when they said, "Who does not see that the same authority that can set up the Christian religion over all other religions, can with the same ease set up some particular sect of Christians in exclusion of all other sects?" Acting upon this thought, they sought to found a government of the people entirely free from religious bias, under which every citizen and stranger shall have liberty to worship God or not to worship him, according to his own conscience.

So intelligent a journal as the Independent proves the wisdom of the foregoing, for while defending President Cleveland's proclamation, it says,--

"Suppose the President had been a Roman Catholic and referred to the invocation of Mary as a mediatrix, he would have made a mistake, because the prevailing sentiment of the land would be against him."

The intimation is that so broadminded a man as the Editor of the Independent would be inclined to allow the majority to rule the minority, especially if he were on the side of the majority.

Indeed, the United States Constitution seems to us almost miraculous: we believe that God must have providentially guided in its preparation--so remarkably does it guard religious liberty even against the will of a majority; and that in a land where majorities rule in general matters.

Considerable opposition was aroused by these two evidences of religio-political combination, as well as considerable approval; but the masses of the people are apathetic and care little one way or the other, and do not see the danger. In answer to criticisms the Cleveland

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Plain Dealer seems to suggest an Amendment to the Constitution, establishing rules (to be drafted by experts) for such occasions as Thanksgiving-day Proclamations.

The Reform Bureau, commenting appreciatively on the proclamation, says,--

"Thus at last we have a proclamation in accord with the Supreme Court dictum, 'This is a Christian nation.'"

Again, in the Washington Evening Star, the same Bureau says,--

"The Thanksgiving proclamation is in this respect the first one that might not have been appropriately issued in China or among the Choctaws, or wherever a Supreme Being is recognized. This is the first proclamation in accord with the long list of historic facts on the basis of which the Supreme Court said, on Feb.

29, '92, in a unanimous opinion (Trinity Church case):
'This is a Christian nation.' This proclamation, with
the burial of the spoils system and the arbitration
treaty, will make this administration distinguished in
history above any other since the war."

"On the other side we quote from the Chicago Israelite
as follows:--

"Between undue sensitiveness and a just appreciation
of insult and rightful apprehension of encroachments
upon liberty, there are great differences. No
one familiar with the systematized efforts of the numerous
Christian organizations to obtain recognition of
Christ in the Constitution; of the tendency of the decision
of the United States Supreme Court, that this is
a Christian nation; and of the natural results which
must follow upon the arrest and conviction of Seventh-day
Adventists in various States of the Union, can view
with indifference President Cleveland's departure from
the precedents of all the presidents who have gone before
him. Mr. Cleveland has done what no previous
president has ever dreamed of doing, what all have
taken pains to avoid doing....

"There is an untiring effort being made to turn
this country into a Christian State and to place on a
footing of toleration only, all those who do not profess
the Christian religion. The danger of the eventual
success of this scheme is much greater than many are
inclined to believe. Eternal vigilance is the price of
liberty, and it behooves every lover of freedom to be
on his guard against its foes, and, more especially,
against such an evident attack as is made in President
Cleveland's message, whether it was intended or not.

"Those who close their eyes to the strength of the
movement which has for its aim the Christianization of
our country, and the consequent death blow to all of
its boasted freedom, either know little of what is going
on or sadly underestimate the number and influence
of those engaged in this revolutionary and retrogressive
movement. Ignorance and indifference only
can account for the tendency to make little of President
Cleveland's breach of the unwritten law which has
hitherto been held sacred....Those who are inclined
to underestimate the influence of his action will have
a chance to estimate it at its true value when the jubinations
of Christianizing elements have had time to
make themselves heard. That they will be heard in
tones unmistakably loud, only those who know nothing
of the fight being made can doubt."

* * *

The desire to rule others and to compel obedience
is very strong in some people. The Christian Standard,
for instance, is urging a rigid religious observance of
Thanksgiving Day, and would like to have all religious
people oppose foot-ball and other recreative games on

that day.

The Christian Endeavor Society wants to make its mark also, and proposes another holy day. It proposes to give to Washington's Birthday a "religious tone."

The Christian Endeavorer says:--

"Many Christian Endeavor societies last year utilized Washington's Birthday for Christian Citizenship day. They found this plan to be helpful to the cause of Christian Citizenship....

"As Washington was distinctly a Christian citizen and showed his loyalty to his divine Master on every occasion, there is every reason why the celebration of his birthday should have a religious tone to it."

It says that about six hundred C.E. Societies will follow the plan this year. It is proposed to make it general at the next convention. It will not be long, probably, until those who hold aloof from these church and world combination schemes will be esteemed religious anarchists.

All this is of a piece with Rome's saint days, only modified to suit our times.

* * *

Advocating Sunday observance before the "Iowa Sabbath Rescue State Convention," Rev. E. L. Eaton gave the key note of the present movement when he said,--

"We want to touch legislation; we want to go over yonder into that Capitol building and sit there among the law makers with as much serenity and with as much right as do the lobbyists of the great corporations. We want to put our finger on the moral pulse of the legislature until they feel the power of our influence to the extent that they dare not refuse our demands.

"He added that Catholics, Lutherans and all other Protestants could as brothers work together in a great cause that is worthy of their effort."

As usual, false doctrine, ignorance of and opposition to the divine plan expressed in the Word, lies at the foundation of these well-meant but really evil movements.

Let all who can read the signs of the times draw specially near to the Lord and his Word, and seek the more grace and wisdom to walk circumspectly and to labor while it is called day, before the night shall close our opportunities and indicate that the gathering of the elect is complete.

* * *

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The "Evangelical Alliance" has taken a specially active part in Christian Union efforts of late. It is

worth while remembering that in this association directly the union movement took its start in the formation of the "image," as marked in prophecy, in 1846 A.D. It is altogether probable that it will also play an important role in connection with its receiving "life."-- Rev. 13:15.

* * *

A remarkable sensation was created in London recently, in connection with the public consecration of Rev. Dr. Temple as Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of the Church of England, and next to the Queen the head of that church. As the ceremonies (which took place in the Church of Saint Mary LeBow) commenced, the Rev. Edward Brownjohn of Bath arose and solemnly and earnestly protested against the consecration, "on the ground that Rev. Dr. Temple was a confessed believer in the full doctrine of Evolution, a doctrine incompatible not only with the Bible but also with the Book of Common Prayer and Articles of Religion of the Church of England."

The Queen's commissioners refused to entertain the protest of one man; and considering that they had the backing of practically the entire Church of England in favor of Evolution, and the Queen's choice of Primate, the ceremony proceeded. This was on Dec. 22, '96.

On Jan. 8 the Archbishop was enthroned, as the following dispatch describes:--

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"The mandate for the enthronement was presented by the vicar-general to the chapter of Canterbury, in the treasury. After this ceremony the chapter proceeded to the deanery and conducted the archbishop to the great West door. The procession was then formed.

The archbishop was attired in full archiepiscopal robes, his long scarlet train being borne by two boys, king's scholars of the cathedral school. They wore, according to immemorial custom, surplices of pure white linen, yellow sandals and little purple caps.

"There was a dramatic incident as the archbishop was traversing the nave at the end of the procession. A voice shouted loudly: 'The whole proceedings are a fraud.' The interruption came from an elderly gentleman of clerical appearance. He was speedily and forcibly ejected amid considerable excitement.

"The order of installation was read in Latin, and the archbishop was conducted to the marble chair, accompanied by the archdeacons of Canterbury. The marble chair, known as the patriarchal throne, is said to have been used by St. Augustine, and in it during many centuries the archbishops of Canterbury have been enthroned.

"The new Archbishop of Canterbury is one of the

most advanced Liberals among English churchmen. He is a professed advocate of Darwin's theory of evolution."

* * *

The reaction in the Church of England against Papacy is showing itself in an increased desire to form a Universal Protestant Organization. The Bishop of Salisbury at a public meeting recently said, of the Pope's recent deliverance which repudiated Anglican Orders and union,--

"It has set us free to do work which lies nearest hand, without so much regard to ulterior consequences. We are free to follow the path opened to us by a Divine Providence, and to create an independent world-wide communion." He suggests that the first step should be toward a union with Presbyterians.

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."--John 14:21-23.

IN these words the people of God have set before them the blessed privilege of intimate communion and fellowship with our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus, the privilege of a realization of the divine presence, of which the world cannot know, and which realized is an earnest of our inheritance with Christ beyond the veil of the flesh. If we be one with Christ here, his faithfulness is our assurance that nothing can separate us from him now or when we shall have finished our course and proved our faithfulness even unto death. "Who," says Paul, "shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For,...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." --Rom. 8:35-39.

This is the blessed assurance of faith that springs

spontaneously from the realization of a present and vital union with Christ. Such fellowship and intimate communion should therefore be the longing desire of every child of God, whose prayer and constant attitude of heart should be,--

"O God, this is my plea,--whate'er the process be,
This love to know."

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It is only in heart-to-heart fellowship that we become truly acquainted with another; and only so can we realize the depth and sweetness of divine love. But the conditions of this fellowship, the process by which we may come to really know him in whose favor is life, and his dear Son, our Redeemer and Lord, must not be overlooked. The conditions are that we have and keep the divine commandments. The having and keeping of the commandments, our obedience to the heavenly wisdom, constitute the proof of our love to God. Thus also is proved our love of righteousness; for the law of God is the law of righteousness, commending itself to the highest moral instincts of our nature. To the soul, therefore, that loves righteousness the commandments of the Lord are not grievous (1 John 5:3); for they are the expression of the most exalted virtue, the noblest benevolence, the purest love, and all the beauties of holiness.

In the inspired words of the Lord and the apostles and prophets we have the divine will expressed, explained, illustrated and enforced, line upon line and precept upon precept. And yet, with all this teaching, it is possible, even for the consecrated people of God, to be forgetful hearers and readers of the Word, so that its most explicit directions for daily living, its most faithful warnings against snares and besetments, and its most careful expositions of the principles of righteousness and truth, may avail little or nothing in the education and training of character. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip;...for...how shall we escape [the wrath of God] if we neglect so great salvation"--the salvation which comes only through faith and obedience to the Word of the Lord diligently laid up in our hearts, and its principles carefully and prayerfully wrought out in our lives. (Heb. 2:1-3.) The promise of the divine favor and blessing is not to the forgetful, listless hearers who fail to apply their hearts unto instruction, but to the attentive hearers and faithful doers of the Word.--James 1:25.

It is not enough, therefore, that we have read the Word of God and gained a general knowledge of its principles and precepts and the plan and purpose of our God: there is yet more, much more, to be learned and done. There must be a daily laying up of its

treasures of wisdom and counsel in the heart, and the working out of its principles in the life. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them," said one of the saints of old; "and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jer. 15:16.) So must we also feed upon them in our hearts.

Moses, addressing the typical people of God, shows with what carefulness God would have all his people regard his testimonies, saying, "Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house and upon thy gates." (Deut. 11:18-20.) Joshua also said to them, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein."--Josh. 1:8.

Again we read (Prov. 7:1-3), "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart."

It is those who thus carefully lay up the treasures of divine wisdom that they may in deed and in truth live by them, that truly keep the commandments of God. It is very manifest that our Lord would have us apply not only our heads, but also our hearts, to the instructions of his Word. (Prov. 23:12.) This implies

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the study of ourselves, as well as of the divine Word, that we may see just what portions of the Word apply to our individual present necessities. We know that as members of the fallen race we are all afflicted with the malady of sin; and though through faith in Christ, our Redeemer, we are freely forgiven and reckoned of God as free from sin, even this reckoned standing before God, through faith in Christ's merit applied to us, is accorded to us only in view of our hatred of sin, our love of righteousness, and our earnest heart-desire to be pure and holy. It would indeed be a vain thing to trust for eternal life in the imputed righteousness of Christ, and at the same time to love and continue in sin. If any of the world of mankind do so in the next age, they will never reach perfection and eternal life. Accepting first, the favor of redemption through Christ they must then work out their salvation by obedience and persevering effort to eradicate sin and put on righteousness. The same principle applies also to the Church now on trial. We should ever bear in mind that justification through faith in Christ does not

directly, and beyond all peradventure, insure to the believer eternal life; but it does secure that legal standing before God upon which believers, both of this age and the next, must work out their salvation with fear and trembling.--Phil. 2:12.

Having, by faith, accepted this legal standing before God, our subsequent course of life must make manifest our heart-desires to be cleansed from all sin: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may

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abound? God forbid;" for if we continue in sin, the grace of God will not abound; and if we give up the struggle against sin and allow it to take possession of our mortal bodies, the grace of God must eventually be withdrawn.

Sin is a disease inherited from our fallen progenitors: it affects one individual in one way and another in another: and even though, through faith in Christ, we are reckoned of God as free from sin, nevertheless the actual tendencies to sin are still present with us. Like the children of Israel, we are led into Canaan (the rest of faith and of the divine favor), but we have still a great work to do in the way of routing the enemies of righteousness long intrenched there; and for this work both persevering effort and divine grace are needed. While the precious blood of Christ applied by faith is the great atoning remedy for sin whereby we are justified to life, the only restorative remedies are in the law and testimonies of the Word of the Lord, all which would, however, be unavailing except as supplementary to the great atoning remedy; and these must be carefully and prayerfully sought out and applied with persevering effort for our cleansing and healing. To this end it is important also to remember that a correct diagnosis of our case is one of the first essentials to a cure. But who is sufficient for this?--"Who can understand his errors?" who is able to look into his own character and, without prejudice, to mark its defects? Surely none who are intoxicated with the spirit of the world, with pride, or selfishness, or vain glory.

It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul counsels sobriety and humility, saying, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly."--Rom. 12:3.

A sober estimate of self is a humiliating, not an exalting, exercise; yet it is healthful and beneficial. It reminds us continually that we are "men of like passions" with other men, and thus enables us not only to strive against our own weaknesses and besetments, but also to sympathize with those of others, and to bear with them as we wish them to bear with us. It makes us continually to realize that our fallen nature gravitates toward sin, and that we must resolutely strive

against it or else float with its downward current to destruction.

A sober estimate will remind us too of our mental infirmities; for, however favorably we may compare with some other members of the dying race about us, we are very imbecile as compared with human perfection. How slowly and laboriously does the mind act; how dull are the perceptive faculties; how inert the reasoning powers; how unskilled the judgment; how feebly we discern the great principles of truth, and how stupidly we go about applying them; how repeated are our blunders and failures, and how tedious and slow our progress! Surely no man, however favorably he may compare with some of his fellows, has anything whereof to boast in a sober estimate either of his mental or his moral capacity or development as compared with the standard of perfection.

In a sober estimate of character how painfully manifest are those overestimates of pride and vainglory which are due to the intoxicating spirit of the world! How unlovely it is, how absurd and ridiculous, how mean and contemptible, how vain and foolish! and how effectually it impedes progress toward actual perfection! No man can make commendable progress toward perfection in any direction who does not recognize his shortcomings. If we say we see, our blindness remains; if we say we are wise, our ignorance remains, and our folly is manifest to others while we glory in our shame. --Phil. 3:18,19.

Such is the spirit of this world. It is blind to the highest interests and noblest ends of life; it intoxicates the mind and heart and sends the man staggering along the downward way to destruction, wise only in his own conceit. Against the intoxicating spirit of this world it is the duty of the Christian to set a vigilant guard. He has covenanted to live apart from the world with all its ambitions, pride and vainglory, and apart, too, from its selfishness, greed and strife. Let us, therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer; and let the burden of our prayer be, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults [show them to me that I may put them far from me]. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."--Psa. 19:12-14; 139:23,24.

We need to know and clearly recognize our errors, if we would indeed be cleansed from every secret fault. If there be any secret fault in us, what though no human eye might detect it, if we are indeed lovers of righteousness, we will want the cleansing power of the Word applied to take it away, remembering always that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."--Heb. 4:13.

Yes, it is in the diagnosis of our case that we are

most likely to err, and it is here that sobriety of mind and meekness are so much needed. Self-love does not like to admit the faults that are in us, to particularize them and look them squarely in the face with the searchlight of God's Word clearly revealing them. It is much more conducive to complacent ease of mind to generalize, and to overlook particulars;--to say, Yes, I know I am not perfect, etc., etc. But it requires a

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great deal more of moral courage to say, Yes, I see now, in the light of God's Word, that I have been selfish, or unkind, or unfaithful to my obligations, or whatever the fault may be. It requires meekness, humility, to admit these things, even to one's self; and still more, to confess them to those who have been injured or grieved by them. Yet how necessary are the recognition and the confession--the proper diagnosis of the case--to the healing. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another," says the Apostle James, "that ye may be healed." (Jas. 5:16.) The recognition and the confession, as well as the prayer, are thus seen to be very important in order that the heart may be in the proper attitude to receive an answer to the prayer.

Careful reflection will show at once how necessary to the cure is a correct diagnosis. For instance, suppose a case of extreme selfishness. For a time it moves along and prospers, and the disease grows worse and worse until, by and by, some of its bitter fruits begin to appear. Now if the patient fails to discern or admit the selfishness, he may regard the bitter fruits of it, not as the penalty for wrong-doing, but as sufferings for righteousness' sake. And with this incorrect diagnosis he may come to the Word of God and take away the wrong remedy. If he should go at all, he will probably look for words of consolation designed for those only who are truly suffering for righteousness' sake. And that will not help his selfishness, but will make it worse: he will go on cultivating the selfishness and take comfort in the promises that are not his; whereas, if he realized and admitted the selfishness, he would be considering the warnings against it and praying for grace to overcome it; he would be acknowledging it to those concerned, and endeavoring to make amends for it; and in so doing its bitter fruits would begin to wither, the peace of God would come into his heart, his heart would enlarge, and the love of God and of his fellow-men would begin to fill it.

This is what it means to keep the Lord's commandments and to apply our hearts unto instruction. It means, not self-gratification, but self-abnegation, and self-purification: it means that, in meekness and humility, we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, and follow Christ. This is the narrow way; walk

ye in it. There is no other way to life, and certainly no other way to the Kingdom, than the way of righteousness, humility and true holiness, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose abundant merit, applied by faith, will make up for all our deficiencies that are not wilful. It is those who walk this narrow way that may even now enjoy the sweets of fellowship with the Father and our Lord Jesus and with all who are led of

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the spirit of God.

Let as many, therefore, as would follow on to know the Lord, whom to know is life eternal, studiously apply their hearts unto instruction, and in meekness and humility receive the ingrafted word, and let it do its purifying work. Hear the exhortation, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded....Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."--James 4:7-10.

Paul speaks of the great profit to the Corinthian Church of their humble recognition of and godly sorrow for sin, saying, "Now I rejoice...that ye sorrowed to repentance;...for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation;...for behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge [against the evil]. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Cor. 7:9-11.) Such are the results of sober self-examination in the spirit of meekness and prayer and with a view to cleansing our hearts and minds from all the defilements of sin, both small and great. O Lord, keep thy servants in the way of thy commandments, in meekness and soberness, and let the rich reward of divine fellowship be ours, both here and hereafter!

MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

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THE LAME MAN HEALED.

--JAN. 24.--ACTS 3:1-16.--

"His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong."

THE stirring scenes of the Day of Pentecost were past, and this lesson introduces us to another notable discourse by the Apostle Peter, delivered probably

not long after the day of Pentecost in company with the Apostle John. They had gone up to the temple at the hour of prayer. The clear intimation is that the apostles were praying men and that under the leading of the holy spirit they were guided in their ministrations of the truths connected with the new dispensation to the praying Jews, "devout" people, rather than to the godless. And so it is with the true gospel ever since. There is a message or a call to repentance which is

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applicable to every member of the human family; but the special message of the gospel is not to the unregenerate, but to the repentant, to the forgiven, to the reconciled. The Jews who assembled to worship the Lord at the temple were of course not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore were not justified by faith in his blood, but, under their Jewish covenant, the Law covenant, and by means of its typical sacrifices, they were up to this time typically justified as a people, and the grace of God was offered to them from that standpoint: they were not treated as strangers, aliens, foreigners, but as heirs of all the divine promises and blessings. And as a people the Jews continued to occupy this position for three and one-half years after our Lord's crucifixion and their national rejection. The Lord's favor according to promise continued with them individually until the full end of their "seventy weeks."*

(2,3) At that time hospitals, homes for incurables, blind asylums, poor houses, etc., apparently were not thought of, and were not instituted as we have them to-day in civilized lands; nor are they yet institutions in the East. Thus public alms-giving was probably considered a duty. We might here remark that, in our judgment, the course adopted by civilized nations of taxing all property and wealth for the reasonable and comfortable support of the incapables of society is eminently proper, and should be so completely carried out as to make public begging unnecessary.

(4-7) Peter's statement would indicate that he at least was a very poor man. "Silver and gold have I none." Although he said, "Look on us," thus directing the cripple's attention to the Apostle John as well as to himself; yet, speaking of their financial condition, he does not say, "Silver and gold have we none." The fact is that there is good ground for supposing that the Apostle John had some property. We remember that our Lord with his dying words commended his mother to the care of John--possibly not merely because of his love for John and John's love for him, but also because John had some means wherewith to care for Mary. We remember furthermore that the account states that John took Mary "into his own home."--John 19:27.

The Apostle Peter seems to have exercised his individual

gift in the healing of the cripple--"Such as I have give I thee:" nevertheless, it was not in his own name that the miracle was performed, but properly all credit was given to the Lord Jesus. This was evidently not a case of "prayer cure," for we have no record that the Apostles prayed over the man, nor that they anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord. It was on the contrary an exercise of "the gift of healing," which was then with the Church for the purpose of introducing the apostles and the gospel which they preached.

Although fully conscious of the power of God operating through him to perform the miracle, Peter, apparently to assist the exercise of faith on the part of the cripple, stretched forth his hand and helped him to his feet; thus illustrating the propriety of acting according to our faith, and permitting the influence of our faith to reach others in a natural and helpful manner.

(8-10) It is very evident that the poor cripple was not an impostor, for such a one instead of leaping about and enjoying his blessing, and praising God, would have regretted any circumstance which would deprive him of the opportunity for preying upon the sympathies of the people in order to avoid working for a living.

(11,12) We may reasonably suppose that the going of Peter at this particular time to the temple was of premeditation; we may suppose that he had been there frequently before; and that frequently before he as well as the others who attended at the temple had seen this same cripple. If Peter did not plan this particular visit and healing, we may reasonably suppose that the holy spirit planned and directed it for him. At all events the whole matter was very successful in that it drew the attention of the most devout, prayerful Jews to the gospel of Christ. The Apostle Peter was quick to use any and every opportunity to tell the good tidings. He began by modestly assuring the people that it was nothing wonderful in John and himself that had produced the miracle, and that the man was not cured either by their holiness or by their power, but by the power of the risen Christ Jesus. It is worthy of note that although in addressing the man Peter exercised his own faith only, yet now in speaking of the matter he associates John with himself as a sharer in whatever honor might belong to them as the instruments of God. How unselfish and how beautiful! What a lesson is in this verse for all who attempt any service for the King of kings. How necessary that we should realize not only our own insufficiency and nothingness in connection with the work of God, but how proper that self should sink entirely out of our thoughts and the glory all be given to Him whose right it is.

(13-15) The apostles' discourse as narrated was a short one, but well directed and right to the point. Beginning with a statement by which his hearers would

understand him to be also a devout Israelite, he proceeded directly to the point--Christ, a crucified and risen Savior. Nor did he spare his hearers, but drove home the truth that the nation of Israel were the real crucifiers of God's dear Son, even when a Roman governor found no fault in him and desired to set him at liberty.

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chap. 3.

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"Ye killed the Prince of life!" What a thought! They all realized themselves as death-condemned and dying creatures. They felt their need of life, eternal life, and had been praying for it and hoping that according to the divine promise it should come through Messiah, a Savior--a Life-giver, and now they were almost staggered by the Apostle's words, "Ye killed the Prince of Life"--the Life-giver! It is presumed that our Lord and the Apostles spoke in the Syriac language; and in the Syriac version of the New Testament the word "Life-giver" is used where in the English the word "Savior" occurs. The Apostle must have struck a very tender chord in the hopes and aspirations of these devout, prayerful Jews. We fancy them looking with incredulity, and saying within themselves, "Could it be possible that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, the Life-giver?"

(16) While they were yet wondering on the subject, the inspired Apostle quickly drew their attention to the evidences before them in the healing of the cripple, which attested the truth of his declaration that Jesus was no longer dead but risen. Here was just such a miracle as those which he a few months before had performed in their midst. It was another of Jesus' miracles; the apostles themselves performing it in his name and utterly disclaiming any ability to do such things themselves.

(17-21) Thus pointing them to the fact that Jesus was still a living, powerful, sympathetic and gracious Savior, he urged them to repent, assuring them that it

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was God's intention to send great blessings through Jesus and to send Jesus himself back again a second time: assuring them also that at his second coming there would be an abundance of such manifestations as these which they had just witnessed, saying,--

"Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you whom the heavens must receive [retain] until the times of restitution of all things

which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."

Note that the Apostle began by expressing confidence in the "fathers" and in Israel's hope, built upon Jehovah's promise to them. Note also that after connecting those promises and hopes with Christ and his sacrifice, and linking it with the cure of the cripple, he points them down to the Millennial age as the grand consummation-time for all the blessings, all the good things, which God had promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Is it any wonder that such testimony--both reasonable and comprehensible--delivered to such devout Israelites, drawn together by a desire to worship the Lord, resulted as it did, in the conversion of about five thousand? As in the case of those noted in our last lesson, these were the "wheat" of that Jewish age, which the Lord was gathering out preparatory to the blinding of all the remainder of that people for the period of the Gospel age, at the close of which their blindness will be turned away.--Rom. 11:25,26.

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"THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS."

--JAN. 31.--ACTS 4:1-14.--

"There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

AS the apostles were preaching Christ, taking for their text the manifestation of his power through Peter in the healing of the impotent man at the temple gate "Beautiful," and while the devout worshipers heard them gladly and repentantly, the theologians were disturbed; it seemed monstrous to them that any but themselves should undertake to teach the people, and that the people were giving more interested attention to these "laymen" than they gave to them,--the chief priests, religious rulers and doctors of the law. In this they but manifested the usual worldly spirit, which in every religious system except the true one manifests special opposition to any light or teaching which does not emanate from those recognized as "ordained" teachers. True, these apostles were ordained by the very highest authority in the universe --the spirit and power of God, communicated by Christ; but such ordination, such authority to teach, was not recognized by those doctors of divinity who, like their successors to this day, failed to recognize the ordinations of God and merely recognize human authorizations to preach.

Not only were they envious that others than

themselves should have the ear of the people for religious instruction, but they had listened sufficiently to the discourse themselves to ascertain that the apostles were really imparting to the people some knowledge of spiritual things. The people were actually being taught, and that upon subjects concerning which they, the recognized doctors of divinity and theology, knew nothing and could teach nothing. If, therefore, such teachings were permitted, the worshipers would very soon know more than their religious rulers, which would never do. They were unable to teach the people themselves, and were not humble enough of heart to receive instruction, and hence were quite ready to

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be overcome by the spirit of envy, hatred and malice, against those whom the Lord had appointed and was using, while passing them by. They had power to stop the preaching and to imprison the apostles, and they made haste to use it.

This same spirit was equally manifested, and even more unrighteously, by the Roman Catholics during the dark ages: they not only imprisoned but tortured and put to death those who ventured to instruct the people in spiritual things without their permission, ordination, etc. This same spirit was manifested to a considerable extent by the reformers also, we are sorry to say: Calvin, Luther, and numbers in authority in the Episcopal Church from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries were similarly grieved with efforts to instruct the people outside their own channels; and the same spirit to a considerable extent followed some who fled from persecutions, in the Mayflower, to this free land. We need not accuse any of these of intentional wrong: they lived in a time when religion and politics were blended, and they verily thought they did God service in opposing as they did that which they considered to be "heresy." Had they opposed the heresy with force of logic and Scripture merely, and sought thus to vanquish what they believed to be errors, with what they believed to be truth, they would not only have been worthy of approval, but also of admiration, and they might have been led into the truth; but their zeal misled them into the use of unjust means, and they more or less fought against God. But be it noted, all these improper efforts were unavailing to suppress the truth, and merely served to purify and refine the saints, as "gold tried in the furnace."

Intelligence and liberty during the last century have to a large extent annulled the power of the spiritual rulers, and unwillingly confined their opposition against advancing truth to anathemas, excommunications, insinuations as to "unorthodox," and social ostracism. And as each reform grew in strength and asserted itself, these oppositions gradually died out;--as,

for instance, the opposition to the "Quakers," to "Baptists," to "Disciples," and others. But as we read the signs of the times in the light of the divine revelation, we have every reason to believe that the present movement in favor of "Christian union" will eventuate in such a combination of all the powerful and influential religious systems as to affect politics and laws, and put into the hands of theologians the power to head off the further advance of divine truth and to stop the spirit-ordained ambassadors of Christ from teaching the people advanced truths respecting the close of this and the dawn of the new dispensation.

Arrogantly accustomed to overawing the common people with their titles, learning and authority, the High Priest and all the priestly family, and the religious rulers, and elders, and learned scribes, met as a court to hear, to overawe, to browbeat and to condemn Peter and John for their temerity in attempting to teach the people.

They were surprised when the two men whom they had judged from their general manner, dress, etc., to be "unlearned," not theologians, but of the "common people," addressed them meekly, simply, yet with holy boldness, concerning Jesus of Nazareth and his power to heal--as much since his crucifixion and resurrection as before. Peter if speaking of himself might have been inclined to avoid mentioning the guilt of his hearers in connection with the crucifixion of our Lord; but as a chosen vessel for this very purpose he was specially under the control of the holy spirit; and, although in no bitter or acrimonious language, he told his hearers the plain truth concerning their guilt as the crucifiers of Jesus, and showed them from the prophets that they had set at naught the chief stone of the spiritual temple of God; but that nevertheless God had highly exalted him to be the Head over the Church, which is his body--the spiritual temple--into which we as living stones are being built up.

There is no ambiguity in preaching done thus, under the inspiration of the holy spirit: it is direct, to the point. Peter did not say that Jesus of Nazareth was one of the great teachers of the world, and as worthy to be heard as Moses or Confucius or others; neither did he say, It makes no difference whether you ever hear of the historic Christ or not, as some false teachers now declare. Peter's spirit-inspired teachings were evidently not at all in harmony with what is known as the "new theology," nor with what is known as the "higher criticism," nor with what is known as the "broad theology," espoused by the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and advocated by many of the "great theologians" of our day. Peter gave the message direct and with force--"There is none other name given, under heaven or among men, whereby we must be saved." In these words he told his learned hearers that there was no hope of salvation in Moses and in the

Law, any more than in the heathen systems of theology --that knowledge of, and faith in, and obedience to Christ was the only God appointed way of salvation.

What could they say! What could they do! under such circumstances? They had utterly failed to overawe these humble fishermen, and instead had received a discourse from them, which was wholly unexpected under such conditions. They were not in the humble attitude of heart to be affected as were the three thousand who on the Day of Pentecost were pricked to the heart and converted; nor were they of the humble, worshipful, teachable spirit of the five thousand worshipers who had been converted by hearing the apostles in the temple the day before. They could do nothing but marvel. But they took knowledge of the fact, that the same meek and quiet spirit of Jesus was in these, his disciples, and the same powerful logic, directness of discourse and humility of manner.

So let it be with each of us, the followers of Jesus! If we have opportunity for testifying to his grace and gospel, let us not fear to declare the whole counsel of God, but let us not do it rudely nor unkindly, but with the gentleness and force which are of the spirit of the truth.

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