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"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD!"

Do not forget that our ever active Adversary seems to be granted additional liberty and power of temptation at the Passover season. Let each soldier of the cross be specially on his guard to resist him--steadfast in faith and good works and love. Let each also be on guard to help and not to stumble the "brethren" at this time. Pray for one-another and for us; as we also remember all of you at the throne of the heavenly grace.

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GOD'S "PECULIAR PEOPLE."

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."--1 Pet. 2:9,10.

WE LOOK in vain for this "holy nation" amongst the various nations of the world today. The pathway of even the best of those denominating themselves Christian nations is marked with blood and violence and various evidences of selfish rapine. The very best of them would fall far short of any reasonable standard of holiness. They are all, as the Scriptures declare, parts of the kingdom of darkness under the prince of darkness, "the prince of this world," who still rules the "kingdoms of this world."

This "holy nation" was founded by our Lord Jesus, and had no existence before his advent. The basis upon which it was founded was the "ransom for all" which he gave at Calvary, and the beginning of the construction of his kingdom was at Pentecost. Since then it has progressed after a manner which is

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adapted to his purposes, tho very contrary to the manner of the world and the nations of earth. It is unknown to the worldly, as it is written, "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not."

This Kingdom is an ecclesiastical Kingdom--a Church-Kingdom; but even if we look amongst the numerous church-kingdoms which have sprung up in the world (each of which claims to be the kingdom of God's dear Son), we find that this "holy nation" or

Kingdom is none of these. It is not the Roman Catholic church or ecclesiastical kingdom, nor the Greek church, nor the Armenian, nor the church of England, nor the Methodist church, nor the Lutheran, nor the Presbyterian, nor the Baptist, nor the Congregationalist. These all may have amongst their millions some members of this "little flock," this "holy nation," this true Kingdom class which the Lord is selecting; but none of these institutions is the Lord's Kingdom; none of them contains all who are his. There is only one record in the universe that enrolls all the members of this "holy nation" or Kingdom: it is called, "The Lamb's Book of Life." Hence, if we examine church history, we shall no more find this "holy nation," this holy ecclesiastical Kingdom, than amongst the temporal kingdoms. The historians knew not of the true "holy nation:" they saw and knew and recounted the incidents of the human organizations, called "Christ's kingdoms," but they knew nothing of the true one. Altho it has existed from the day of Pentecost to the present time, it has always been the kingdom of heaven suffering violence--despised and rejected of men, insignificant and ignored in the sight of the world.--Matt. 11:12.

The reason for this is that it is a "peculiar people"--not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor in foolish, senseless forms and idiosyncrasies; but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world. It has the spirit of Christ--a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aims. It is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith, and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self-sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its King.

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It is peculiar in that it knows the truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt.

The King, when establishing this Kingdom, forewarned all who would be of it that, in proportion as they possessed his character and his truth, and were thus "children of the light," and likenesses of himself, who was "the Light of the world,"--in that proportion they would have the enmity of the world and the opposition of the flesh and the devil to withstand and overcome. In view of his forewarnings, "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, but now ye are not of the world; because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;" "Whosoever will live godly

in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" in view of these admonitions it should not surprise us that the nations of the world (political and ecclesiastical kingdoms) have always hated and persecuted the individuals composing this "holy nation." They seem to realize an antagonism, however little it may be expressed. This "holy nation" looks to a higher King and higher laws than any by which others are governed, and as Herod sought to destroy "him who was born king of the Jews," so the various worldly nations have sought (under the influence of the prince of this world) to hinder the development of this holy nation as antagonistic to their systems.

Nevertheless, we note the care with which the apostles pointed out that all who compose this holy nation shall, so far as possible, "live peaceably with all men"--avoiding strife and contentions, except where principles are involved; and even when contending "earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," to manifest the spirit of meekness and patient forbearance, that "whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." He urges, therefore, all of the holy nation, saying, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:...For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God...For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully....For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."--
1 Pet. 2:13-23.

Thus the King of this "holy nation" set for every member of it an example that they should walk in his footsteps. He declared that his Kingdom was not of this world; consequently neither does the Kingdom power of this "holy nation" belong to this present age. It awaits the return of the King himself, who said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." He has promised, moreover, that when he comes again it will not be in a body of humiliation for sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the world--for this sacrifice he has already accomplished to the full: He comes to reign, and has promised that his "holy nation" shall be associated with him in the reign of righteousness, wherewith he will "bless all the families of the earth."

But we notice further the Apostle's statement that this "holy nation" or Kingdom is also a "royal priesthood." We look amongst the priesthods of

earth, but we find that the priestly office is distinctly kept separate from the kingly office, everywhere. Indeed, they are generally antagonistic. The kings and royal families usually represent the highest developments of ambition and self-gratification: the priests of earth, theoretically at least, present sacrifices, and thus seek to make atonement for sins. Priests do not exercise kingly authority, nor kings condescend to priestly services. But in this "peculiar people" the priesthood and kingship are united.

It was so with the King himself,--as a priest he offered up his own life, unselfishly, for the redemption and blessing of others. As a King he still has the same unselfish character and will use his kingly office to carry forward to all mankind, and make available to all, the blessings, liberties and privileges purchased with his own precious blood. His reign will be for this very purpose;--and for the establishment of righteousness and the extirpation of evil and those who adhere to it. The King himself is the great High priest of this "peculiar people," this "holy nation," this "royal priesthood;" and it is required of each individual member of this "holy nation" that he shall be a priest; that he shall be a sacrificer; that he shall partake so much of the loving and generous disposition of the King that he will desire to do good unto all men, as he may have opportunity, especially to "the household of faith;" and that he shall lay down his life for the brethren--in the service of the truth, in their interest. In these and all respects they must all be conformed to the image of God's dear Son.--Rom. 8:29.

This experience as sacrificers in this present time as sufferers for righteousness' sake, as tempted and tried and able to sympathize with the weak and the erring, is a necessary part of the educational discipline which must be undergone by this priesthood before they are

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accounted ready to enter the honors and powers of their divine kingdom, as representatives and associates of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Nor does their priesthood end when their kingly powers begin, for it is written concerning their future reign,--"Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10,11.) This "peculiar people," this "holy kingdom" or nation all of whom are "royal" priests, has a great work to do when established in the kingdom power; for it is none other than the promised "Seed of Abraham," which, according to the divine promise, is to have entrusted to it the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, by bringing them to the knowledge of the Lord, and into harmony, if they will, with the New Covenant sealed by the precious blood of the King. As explained by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 3:16,29), the

King himself is the head of this "seed," this "peculiar people," this "royal priesthood;" and they are reckonedly members of his body, and with him they complete this holy seed to which is committed the work of blessing.--Rom. 11:31.

Israel after the flesh, the natural seed of Abraham, supposed that they would have inherited this great privilege and honor, of being the divine representatives in blessing and enlightening the world; but when the King came unto them as "his own," they received him not, as a nation, but to as many as received him, the faithful remnant, to them gave he "liberty to become the sons of God" and members of this "peculiar people," this "royal priesthood;" and he then visited the Gentiles to take out of them suitable ones of sufficient number to complete this foreordained priesthood. This "royal priesthood" then, be it noticed, is not the priesthood of Levi, even as this "holy nation" is not the nation of Israel. It is a new priesthood, a new people and a new nation, which never before had any existence, "which in times past was not a nation," and was not a priesthood, but now is become the people of God,

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the "royal priesthood," the "holy nation."

The Apostle notes still another distinctive feature pertaining to this "peculiar people," saying that it is a "chosen generation" or race. How strange it would at first seem that the Apostle should speak of this peculiar people, gathered out from amongst various races, Jews and Gentiles, as being a special, particularly chosen race: as though they were a different family entirely from the remainder of mankind. If tribal relationship be understood, is not this "peculiar people" a mixture of all the races? And if all humanity be considered, are not these "peculiar people" of the same race as the remainder of mankind?

Ah, no! they are a new race, a race separate and distinct from all others. True, they once were of the same race, and some belonged to one branch or family and some to another; but their King, in calling them to be this "holy nation," set aside entirely their previous genealogy and started them as a new race. As members of the Adamic race they were already slaves of sin and under condemnation of death; but their Master and King, who redeemed them from sin and death, opened the way for a full completion of the great divine purpose, and they were begotten again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:3.) They are therefore "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 6:15.) To them old things have passed away, and all things have become new.--2 Cor. 5:17.

The apostle therefore was right in his declaration that these are a different generation or race from others

of mankind. He was right also in speaking of them as a "chosen generation"--the race which God himself is selecting for the accomplishment of his great and wonderful plan, first declared to Abraham, but not understood, and expected to be fulfilled in Abraham's literal posterity. In reality this salvation "began to be preached by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3.) True, God has certain provisions and blessings in reservation for the natural seed of Abraham, and let us remember that to them also came the first opportunity, and the first place, in this new, select, spiritual race or "chosen generation." The Head or Chief of this chosen race, the twelve subordinate chiefs, the apostles, and many of the other members of this "holy nation" came from the literal seed of Abraham; but as a whole the natural seed was not worthy to become the "chosen race" or generation; but only to as many of them as received him (Christ), to them gave he liberty to become the "sons of God,"--by regeneration.--John 1:11,12.

Grasping the full statement of the Apostle with reference to this peculiar people, this holy nation, this new or regenerated race, this royal priesthood, we can see readily that none of the human systems or organizations of earth, past or present, fit these demands. But we can see also that the conditions are well fulfilled in a "little flock" of which we may find scattered members here and there to-day, and all the way back to Pentecost. They are all self-sacrificing priests, who serve the living God through Christ Jesus acceptably, by serving one another, and all men as they have opportunity, and in general serving the gospel. Fully consecrated to God, and their imperfections (unintentional) all covered by the merit of the Redeemer, they are indeed a "holy nation," with higher and different aims from those of the world, and with a different spirit, they are indeed a peculiar people. And the royalty of their priesthood, altho unknown to the world at present,

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shall be revealed in due time; for it is declared by the inspired Word, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."--Rom. 8:19,22.

When the glory of these sons of God, this chosen race, this royal priesthood, shall be revealed in the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, during the Millennium, the entire groaning creation--the whole race of Adam, condemned in Eden, but ransomed at Calvary--shall be blessed by this great "Seed of Abraham." Instead of their groanings they may have joy and peace, through accepting the blessed arrangements of the New Covenant; and as a result, by the close of the Millennial age, all who will may have experienced

the blessings of the divine promise, "God shall wipe away tears from off all faces and turn away the reproach for being his people." Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."--Rev. 21:4,5.

Is it any wonder that the Apostle declares that each and all of these "peculiar people" should make it the first, the chief, practically the only business of life, "to show forth the praises [the virtues of character and plan] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light?" And the showing or the telling of these is the preaching of the gospel, whether it be done in public or in private, by word of mouth or by printed page. And this, the chief business of the peculiar people, begun now, will continue to be their business throughout the future, tho under more favorable circumstances, in the majesty of the Kingdom, with power to enforce the wise and just and wholesome laws, and with love and mercy to help and to succor the weak and the erring, and gradually to restore them, if they will, to all that was lost in Adam.

What a wonderful gospel! What a wonderful privilege to be permitted to engage in its proclamation in any manner! Truly, all of the peculiar people can appreciate the testimony of the great Apostle Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

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RELATIVE VALUES OF THE HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY TREASURES.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."--Luke 12:15.

THIS statement of our Lord reminds us also of the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, "Let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus." All that the Lord's people have and are should be consecrated to their most efficient use in the divine service, according to their understanding of the teaching of God's Word. As we reflect upon it, how manifest it becomes that all earthly riches which are not consecrated to God are only weights and hindrances to the Christian. And not only so: it is not enough that our all be consecrated to God as an acceptable sacrifice; for if all be consecrated to sacrifice, and yet never subjected to the flames of the

altar, of what avail is it, except as a broken vow to rise up against us in judgment?

Many, indeed, are foolish enough to think that abundance of possessions is the only thing worth living for; and when they are obtained they put their trust in these uncertain riches and forget God. Their time and attention are all engrossed and their interest absorbed in the accumulation and care of the earthly treasures, which shut out all nobler aspirations toward spiritual things. It is for this reason that the Lord cautions his people not to be overcharged with the cares of this life. It is right to be charged to the extent of our necessities, and also to the extent of the responsibilities of our stewardship in the Lord's service, to be provident and thoughtful, not only for ourselves, but also for others whom it may be in our power to assist; but to be charged is one thing, to be overcharged is quite another. To be overcharged is to permit corroding care and anxious solicitude to absorb our thought, our time, our interest, and so crowd out spiritual interests and spiritual aspirations.

In the discourse from which the above text is selected, our Lord was endeavoring to give to his disciples that amount of confidence in God which would enable them to cast all their care upon him, knowing that he careth for his children as a wise and loving parent, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. He drew illustrations from the sparrows, the ravens, the lilies of the field and the grass, showing that God had not forgotten nor failed in his care of even these comparatively insignificant things, then adding, How much more will he clothe and feed you, who are of more value than many sparrows. The very hairs of your head are all numbered, so minute is his knowledge of you. Do not be anxious about what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed; for your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. Seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added

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[supplied as needed] unto you. Sell that you have, and do good with it, as wise and faithful stewards of your consecrated talents, and fear no want of any good thing in consequence; for "no good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly."

What a blessed promise that is! Not only will he make all, even the adverse things, work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose, but he will not withhold any really good thing from us. Can we fully appreciate this tender, loving solicitude and watchful care for us personally? Can we understand how it takes cognizance of every interest, temporal and spiritual, and how, with wise and loving forethought, it maps out our present

course and guides our steps in view of those eternal interests which at present we cannot fully comprehend? Perhaps we cannot fully do so all at once; but let us take it into consideration, praying for a clearer vision of

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the love of God, and by and by the blessedness of these promises will dawn upon us more and more; and we will begin to realize more fully than ever before that, having placed our all upon the altar of sacrifice, subject to the consuming flames of the altar, we thenceforth belong to that blessed "little flock" to whom our Lord addresses these comforting teachings, and whom he exhorts to loving, patient faith, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Truly, those who follow the Lord's leading in this narrow way of sacrifice and of faith are only a little flock; for only a few thus apply their hearts unto instruction and wholly follow the divine direction. Consequently, only a few know the blessedness of the realization of the Lord's tender care. But to those who follow this leading there is a growing sense of his love which the daily walk with him deepens, confirms and sweetens as the years go by, and as experience makes plain the guidance of his loving hand. As one after another of the trials of life come, and we mark his overruling power, which caused even the adverse elements to work together for our good, faith takes deeper root and the character becomes more stable, sturdy and pleasing to God.

It is for this very purpose that the Lord permits us to be subject to the various vicissitudes of the present life, and that those who belong to the Kingdom of heaven suffer violence at the hands of an unfriendly world. There are lessons of immense value to be learned in this hard school of experience--lessons of faith, of fortitude, of heroism, of courage, of endurance, of meekness, of patience, of sympathy for the suffering, and of loving helpfulness to others. There are works of grace to be wrought out in us which only the hard experiences of life can accomplish. For instance, we would be inclined to lean too much to our own understanding, if we were not at times brought face to face with problems that baffle our skill. It is when we are "afraid to touch things that involve so much," that in our perplexity we come to him who has kindly said, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee," and ask him to undertake for us. Or we might be inclined to trust too much in the arm of flesh, if the arm of flesh had never failed us, and the disappointment driven us to the Lord to seek the shelter of his wing. Or we might learn to trust in uncertain riches, if moth and rust had never corrupted nor thieves stolen the little or much of our earthly

possessions. Or we might have been satisfied with earthly friendships and earthly loves, had not their loss sometimes left us alone with God to prove the sweetness of his consolation. Or we might be weak and imbecile, had not the storms of life swept over us and the very emergencies of our case nerved us to courage, endurance and Christian fortitude. In view of all these necessities to the development of character, the Christian can truly feel that whatever the Lord permits to come upon him will be made to work together for his good; and in this confidence he can peacefully sing,--

"If on a quiet sea toward home I calmly sail,
With grateful heart, O God, to thee, I'll own the favoring gale.

"But should the surges rise, and rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, which drives me nearer home."

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose in view of the Lord's promised care over all our interests, that he would in every case make things work together for our temporal advantage. There was at least one in the company to whom our Lord was speaking who seemed to interpret him thus, and who therefore requested his interposition on his behalf in the matter of an inheritance, saying, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me."

In reply to this request Jesus said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" and then followed the instructions concerning the superior value of the heavenly treasure, showing that the earthly things are not worth the strife to obtain them. Jesus had not yet come to judge the world, but referring to that time when he would be the divinely appointed Judge of all the earth, he showed that the searching scrutiny of that judgment would extend to all the minutiae of human affairs. Every selfish act, every injustice, every unkindness, every wrong thing, will then,--but not now, except in very few instances,--receive its just recompense of reward. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known...Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and

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that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

Men and women in their present selfish condition of mind and heart, and intoxicated with the spirit of the world, although thus forewarned, do not consider with what shame and confusion of face they will one day have to meet the record of the past, when the little mean acts which they supposed none they cared for knew of, and the unkind words to the defenseless which they thought no one else would ever know all rise

up to bear testimony against them. Such often overlook their own folly, and consider that the penalties will fall only upon the criminal class. But the Lord's judgment will be discriminating and exact; "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good or whether it be evil;" and "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

In view of this judgment to come, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall be established in his Kingdom, Paul says to all of the Lord's people who realize oppression or injustice or unkindness of any kind,-- "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord....Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

No, Jesus is not the Judge or divider of the earthly things now: that will be the work of the Millennium; and so far as the earthly things are concerned now, his people may suffer many injustices and difficulties of various kinds; but the Lord's counsel is to dismiss all anxious care concerning them, and, having food and raiment, to be contented, and wait for the great reward of patient endurance.

Meanwhile, let Christians see to it that they are rightly exercised by all the disciplinary experiences of the present time; let them learn the lessons of trust in God and all the other valuable lessons so necessary to fit them for the exalted position to which they are called; let them rejoice in the present favor and communion with God which is the privilege of all the saints, and, with steadfast faith, look forward to the rest that remaineth for his tried and disciplined people.

Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, and let your heart be there. Then disappointments, ingratitude and all the vexing trials of the present life which go to make up the daily cross can be borne with a comparatively easy grace. Your life consisteth not in the abundance of the things you possess: you, beloved, are not dependent upon these earthly things; the Lord is the portion of your inheritance; yea, you have a goodly heritage. (Psa. 16:5,6.) "Fear not, little flock"--fear not to carry out your consecration to the full, keeping your little all upon the altar of sacrifice, and subject to the consuming fire, trusting all of your future, both for the present life and that which is to come, to the loving care of your covenant-keeping God; and, by and by, in the glory of the Kingdom, you shall prove the superior value of the heavenly treasures when the victory of faith shall be fully realized. Praise the Lord for his abundant grace and his precious promises! M. F. RUSSELL.

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"TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME."

A correspondent sends us a published answer to the question,--"Since Christ gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Tim. 2:6), and since the great majority of mankind has not had the privilege of this testimony, how and when will it be given?" as follows:--

"Christ has already been 'testified' as a ransom for all, by his incarnation, in which he lived in our nature in this world; by the voice of God acknowledging him as his only begotten Son; and by the manifestation of his power in his behalf in raising him from the dead.

"The point involved in the question, as we understand it, is, How far is God under obligation (if we may so speak) to bring these facts before every individual

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of mankind? In answer to this let us ask further, Has not God done all that is necessary on his part, to give the world sufficient knowledge of the gospel in every age? It is his plan to work through men; and thus every one who receives light and truth becomes a debtor to his fellow men, to make known that light and truth to them. If he does not do this, and those within his reach live and die in darkness, who is responsible? Is not God's throne so far clear?...

"Again: it will doubtless be admitted that God has in mind just the requisite number to people this earth, and when this number have embraced the gospel, the call will cease, and the eternal state begin. But if all who have not heard the gospel are to have another chance, and have the gospel pressed upon them till they do receive it, there would be in the end a sufficient number to people several such worlds as this. Thus the whole course of events shows the plan of God's providence to be this: to gather out from each generation those whom the gospel reaches, till the requisite number of people are gathered out for his name, then establish the promised kingdom. And that the time has been so far prolonged is owing to the dilatoriness of men, not to any limitations of the provisions of the grace of God. URIAH SMITH."

Our correspondent wishes to know what we think of this interpretation of the text in question.

We think it very illogical and unsatisfactory.

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Really three answers are given, or three parts to the one answer, and we will review these in order,

separately.

(1) It is manifestly untrue and unreasonable to claim that Christ was or could be "testified as a ransom" BEFORE HE HAD PAID THE RANSOM PRICE, as this writer claims. Our Lord's own testimony is that he came into the world to give his life a ransom. The ransom was not given before Calvary, and could not be testified to truthfully until after that event. Indeed, while the laying down of our Lord's life, finished at Calvary, was the ransom-price, it was not presented to the Father or formally paid over "for us," until after our Lord's ascension. He ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. In the typical sin-offering for Israel, this presentation of his sacrifice as man's ransom-price to God was typified by the sprinkling of the blood upon the Mercyseat and before the Mercyseat.--See Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.

Besides, this wrong view excludes from testimony of any kind all except the Israelites; for the remainder of mankind were without God and had no hope. (Eph. 2:12.) Furthermore, the Apostle does not say that the ransom had been testified, but on the contrary he puts it future--to be testified in due time.

The testimony referred to in verse 6 is the explanation of the knowledge of the truth of verse 4, just as Christ a ransom for all is the explanation of the statement that God will have all to be saved (verse 4). The testimony must extend to all, in order that all may have the promised knowledge. Verse 7 agrees, also, declaring that the Apostle himself was even then engaged in giving this testimony. How unreasonable the claim, therefore, that Christ gave this testimony in full. The Apostle declares that this testimony "began to be preached by our Lord"--but it has continued by the apostles and all the faithful Church since and must continue until it has reached all and brought all to a knowledge of the truth.

(2) Respecting God's "obligation" to save few or many, or to testify the terms of salvation to few or many: He had no obligation originally; nor has he any obligations now except such as he has voluntarily assumed. But he has voluntarily, of his "grace," assumed some obligations;--toward Israel, toward the Church of Christ, and toward "all the families of the earth." As shown in our last issue, all of these obligations are set forth in the great Abrahamic Covenant. As shown, that Covenant is unconditional. It is therefore a first-class obligation. Moreover, it was sworn to by the Almighty. God wished us to know positively that he obligated himself; so that when the Law Covenant was added and still later the New Covenant was added (both added, as we have seen, for necessary and useful purposes) we might still know that neither of these could render void or "of none effect" the original, wide promise. (Gal. 3:17.) Hence God assured us

of the blessing of all through the Seed, by two immutable (unchangeable) things--his word and his oath.
--Heb. 6:18.

All men are to be "blessed" by being brought to a knowledge of God's gracious arrangements in Christ. All must be blessed with sufficient "light" to see Christ as the "way," the "truth," the "life" and the "door" to divine favor everlasting. The testifying of this to all "in due time" will be the blessing of all as provided for in God's oath-bound Covenant.

(3) The third answer is no less unreasonable than the others. In MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., page 170, we give figures to prove that several times the entire population of the world for the past six thousand years could be comfortably provided for on this planet. Anyone can figure it out for himself; there is no need for anyone to be deluded by the oft repeated nonsense that the earth is one vast cemetery, and that if the dead from Adam until now were all restored to being they would be unable to find even standing room.

Mr. Smith is the foremost teacher amongst "Seventh-Day Adventists," who hold that no one but Seventh-Day keepers will be saved; explaining that they are God's "little flock." Now put this claim (and the total known numbers of Seventh-day keepers, of the past and the present) alongside the claim above that--"God has in mind just the requisite number to people this earth; and when this number have embraced the gospel the call will cease and the eternal state begin."

How do those propositions harmonize? The present population of the world is estimated at above fifteen hundred millions, and yet these do not begin to populate this planet--there are millions of acres without an inhabitant. Mr. Smith teaches that the end of all hope is nigh, even at the doors, yet, according to his reasoning above, it will require Seventh-Day Adventists nearly a million years to convert enough people to their view of matters in order to properly let the gospel call "cease and the eternal state begin." Nor does he leave himself a loophole by claiming that God will exercise miraculous power to increase the number of Seventh-Day keepers, for he says again, "God has done all that is necessary on his part;" "it is his plan to work through men."

O! if Brother Smith and his zealous colaborers could only see clearly the full meaning of this one Scripture, --"The man Christ Jesus--gave himself a ransom for all--to be testified in due time,"--it would straighten out all their difficulties and introduce them to the antitypical Sabbath.

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How else could the oath-bound Covenant be fulfilled, --than by the Millennial reign of Christ and his "little flock," the "royal priesthood?" How else could

the benefits of the ransom be made applicable to "all" to "every man" and "for the sins of the whole world?" How else could our Lord ever be "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world? (John 1:9.) How else will he ever "draw all men unto [or toward] himself" than by the presentation to all of the same truths which now constrain or draw us? How many will so make use of the blessing--the light, the drawing and the knowledge--as to conform to the requirements of the New Covenant is another question entirely. But there is no question that the work of the glorified Church in the Millennial Kingdom will be the fulfilment of God's oath-bound Covenant. (Gal. 3:29.) But first the "little flock," the Christ (head and body), must suffer many things and enter into glory. All the "members of his body" must be "lifted up" to shame, and share their Lord's ignominy and all must also be "lifted up" to glory, to share his honor. Then, the Seed complete, its work will be glorious.

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

IS THERE NO HOPE FOR POOR JUDAS?

Question.--I have read the TOWER article (Apr. 15, '96) in which you give reasons for believing that Judas had many opportunities above others of his time and nation; and that hence, while the nation crucified our Lord "ignorantly" and may be forgiven, Judas sinned against light and has therefore no hope, and has died the Second Death--the penalty of wilful sin. But I find it hard to give poor Judas up. Am I wrong in this; or is it an evidence that I have more love than others?

Answer.--By reason of the fall our entire race has suffered depravity both of mental and physical tastes --likes and dislikes; and many are by heredity disposed to call the good evil, and the evil good. Christianity does not select the least blemished amongst men, but oftener the more blemished; the less blemished often feel a self-complacency and satisfaction which hinders them from coming to God as repentant sinners and realizing that they can be justified only through the imputed merit of Christ. But those who do come to Christ, and hear him, soon learn how imperfect are their own depraved conceptions, and seek and obtain his mind to thenceforth be instead of their own judgments. "We have the mind of Christ," says the Apostle--it is our "new mind," we are "transformed

by the renewing of our minds" so as to be able to "prove [know] what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God."--Rom. 12:2.

Your question indicates that however much you have submitted your judgment to God's will on some questions, you have not submitted on this point. The reason seems to be that you are deceiving yourself into thinking that your sympathy with Judas is the true love which the Scriptures everywhere enjoin as the essence of Christian character. But you are deceiving yourself. To love an evil thing is on a par with hating a good thing. Both are wrong; both are sinful; both are evidences that the depraved mind is not renewed, remodeled, transformed into the mind of Christ. As well might the drunkard or the libertine claim that his love of evil things indicates more true love.

The mind of the Lord, inculcated by his Word, teaches that we are to love the beautiful, pure, true, noble; we are to love (in the sense of sympathizing with) the weak, penitent and oppressed who are seeking for the paths of truth and righteousness; but we are to "hate iniquity" and "every false way" and all the meanness and sin which is wilful, against light and of the devil.

Cease to pride yourself upon your love for one of the most detestable characters known to the pages of history, of whom our Lord who so loved (sympathized with) the world that he laid down his life for it (--and greater love hath no man than this) said, "It had been better for that man if he had never been born." Adopt God's standpoint, as the Apostle says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, he that doeth righteousness is righteous [and approved of God], but he that practices sin [knowingly, willfully] is of the devil."

For our part we have no thought of ever becoming more loving than the Lord: we accept his definitions, and seek to be conformed mentally thereto--the image of God's Son. We want to love just as he loves and just what he loves, and we want to hate what he hates. Of him it is written, "Because thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore the Lord, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1:9.) "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?...I hate them with a perfect hatred."--Psa. 139:21,22.

We are glad that neither Satan nor Judas nor any other creature will ever be tormented to all eternity. We are glad that a full, fair opportunity for coming to a knowledge of the Lord and of the way of righteousness will be granted to every member of Adam's race; but we are glad that, on the contrary, all who rejoice not in the truth but rejoice in iniquity will be utterly

and everlastingly destroyed in the Second Death. We abominate Satan, who for over six thousand years has wrought unrighteousness and gloated over the evil and pain and sorrow which he has wrought, and who with clear knowledge of the redemptive work has for eighteen centuries opposed the Kingdom and the great salvation. The person who could believe in Satan's conversion after all this battling against the light and the truth has a perverse mind, very sadly blinded by the god of this world.

SEEN MORE CLEARLY.

Question (1).--In a recent number of the WATCH TOWER you show quite to my satisfaction that mother Eve was not reckoned as a separate individual, but as part of the body of Adam as much as before she was taken from his side, and that thus the one sacrifice, once for all, covered her in him. But now I want to ask two questions: Is not this presentation a little different from the presentation on the same subject in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., page 123?

Answer.--Yes; this statement is a little different from that in DAWN, and the next edition, now on the press, will show a few words of change on the page referred to. While the point is comparatively unimportant, and does not vitally affect any part of the plan of the ages, yet we spare no pains to present the truth as clearly and as fast as we see it. The trunkline of truth, the plan of the ages, is not only the best and safest route for the consecrated mind to travel in coming to a knowledge of the things which were, the things which are and the things which shall be, but, more than this, it is the only through route. Along this route, here and there, are side-tracks and switches which may require and must have straightening and alignment with the main track; but these are all "betterments," not impairments, of the road. But, anyway, we have never claimed for the DAWN verbal accuracy or infallibility. It is our enemies who cannot refute the general teaching of the divine plan, that seek to divert attention and arouse prejudice by crying, "Infallible!" The divine plan of the ages is so grand, that all the consecrated who see it realize that God is its author, whoever may be its promulgators, connected with the various steps of its presentation. Such rejoice with the clarifying of its every detail.

Changes in the language used in expressing the same thoughts have been made in several instances. (Notably VOL. I., pages 106, 107, 140, 157, 240, 279, 321 and foot notes of pages 124 and 288--the latter formerly an appendix. Also note addition of foot note

on page 150.) These alterations of language are all, we trust, beneficial to the readers. They were made necessary by reason of two things:--

(1) Enemies have tried to put a false light upon our words, and to pick out sentences or portions of a sentence to use against the truth and to misrepresent the general teachings of DAWN;--thus we have been misrepresented by some as being "Universalists," by others as teaching a second individual chance or trial for all of Adam's race, by others as being in agreement with their blasphemous doctrine that God is the author of all sin and wickedness.

(2) Friends have honestly misunderstood our teachings. Unused to reasoning on religious subjects, many failed to see the two distinct parts of the one salvation; (a) the part between Justice and the ransom given by our Lord Jesus for all mankind by which he "bought" the whole world, and became Lord and Judge of all, with the right or power to grant lasting life to whomsoever he will; and (b) the part of salvation which relates to the purchased race, and the terms upon which they may individually avail themselves of the grace of their Redeemer, and obtain from him the life-everlasting which he (by virtue of his ransom sacrifice) has the right to give to all who comply with the terms of the New Covenant.

Our constant aim is to have the teachings of the WATCH TOWER and MILLENNIAL DAWN so expressed, that, like legal documents, they cannot be misunderstood. That we have not always succeeded does not discourage us; for we find that the inspired words of Scripture are frequently wrested by false teachers, and misunderstood by God's honest children. The difficulty encountered by the legal profession in stating matters so that they cannot be misunderstood is witnessed by the frequent contest of Wills. A case in point is the broken Will of the noted lawyer-millionaire, Hon. S. J. Tilden. Yet, presumably, his Will was the most painstaking paper he ever prepared.

We cannot hope that the plan is yet so stated that a "wayfaring man" cannot misunderstand our meaning and enemies cannot misrepresent us. We trust that no false pride, nor false ideas of infallibility, will ever hinder us from declaring the truth, the whole truth, relating to God's plan, as he shall give us to see the truth.

Question (2).--Would the fact that, as pointed out in Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices, the Church, the Bride of the Second Adam, joins in his sacrifice, have any bearing on this question?

Answer.--No; for it is only after we have been "justified" by the ransom price that we are called to be his bride, joint-sacrificers and joint-heirs with Christ.

THE DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH.

Question.--It appears that a considerable number of Seventh-Day-Adventists are reading MILLENNIAL

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DAWN [The Lord be praised!] and are finding that their dates and theories are faulty. They are writing to the editor of the Sabbath Herald for help and further proofs. The editor sees what many of his readers do not see probably; viz., that the date of Jesus' birth, as clearly and forcibly set forth and proved in DAWN, VOL. II., utterly destroys the back-bone theory of Seventh-Day-Adventism in re the "Cleansing of the Sanctuary"--by showing as VOL. III. does, that they have not only misunderstood the nature of the "cleansing," but also the time of it, which they fix in 1844 instead of 1846 A.D.

The article referred to throws a lot of dust for the eyes of its readers, but really makes only two points, which I will thank you to answer.

(1) He claims that the date of Dionysius as given in foot note on page 54, DAWN, VOL. II., is incorrect.

(2) He claims that "two years before Augustus' death" Tiberius "was allowed the celebration of a triumph in Rome, and was then clothed by Augustus with PROCONSULAR POWER, which was understood by all the people as CO-SOVEREIGNTY with himself."

I see that the first point is of no consequence, as it no more bears on the subject than does the date of my birth. But the second point is of consequence; if it proves Tiberius to have begun his reign two years before the death of Augustus.

Answer.--(1) The foot note referred to is in error, evidently a slip of the editorial pencil or by the compositor. It should read, and will be found in later editions, as follows:--

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The year A.D. was fixed upon as early as the sixth century by Dionysius Exiguus and other scholars of that period, though it did not come into general use until two centuries later.

However, as you suggest, this has no bearing whatever on the subject, and might just as well have been the twelfth or any other century.

(2) The editor of Sabbath Herald finds his dates and reckonings all out of harmony with the testimony of Luke 3:1-3;--the only positive date given in connection with our Lord's birth and ministry, by which it can be connected with reliable Roman history. Like many others this editor has been misled by Josephus' unreliable dates, and having adopted them and fixed his theory thereon, as do many others, he

must needs cast some discredit upon Luke's statement. There is not a shadow of doubt as to when Tiberius began his reign (A.D. 14); but this editor (and many others), having a false theory and date to uphold, claims that Tiberius began to reign and that his reign dated two years before he was recognized as Emperor, two years before the great Augustus had vacated the office by death.

The so-called proofs of this, which you quote, are absurd, and find their only strength in the ignorance of his readers: the editor evidently thinks that the words "proconsular powers" will be misunderstood by his readers to mean imperial power--a totally different thing. That the fallacy and weakness of the argument may be seen we quote from the Standard Dictionary, the highest authority, the meaning of proconsular and proconsul, as follows:--

"Proconsular.--The dignity, office, or term of office of a proconsul."

"Proconsul.--A Roman official who exercised consular authority in one of the provinces, or as commander of an army--though not a Consul."

Illustration.--"Judea was henceforth to be incorporated into the province of Syria, with the Proconsul ...as supreme head under the Emperor."

So far from "proconsular powers" signifying that Tiberius was made the Emperor, or that he shared imperial honors with the Emperor, these words signify an officer under the Emperor. And, indeed, there were several Consuls and Proconsuls in the great Roman empire. Nor would the vain and ambitious Augustus Caesar, who changed the order of the calendar so as to perpetuate his name in one of the months with the most days and at the high noon of the year, be the kind of man likely to grant one mite of his honor or office to another, until death.

The fact is that students of chronology are quite at a loss for anything that will fix the date of our Lord's birth with positiveness, except it be this statement of Luke 3:1; and we accept it implicitly, as God-given, for our instruction. Besides, Luke was an educated man and shows himself to have been well acquainted with the general affairs of his time. He connected the beginning of John's preaching of the Kingdom of heaven at hand with the reign of Tiberius Caesar for the very purpose of locating or fixing the event chronologically; and it would be passing strange if he would purposely misstate the matter. There is no question, in secular histories, as to when "the reign of Tiberius Caesar" began; the only people to raise a question about it are those who, following the inaccurate records of Josephus, want to twist Luke's plain statement into harmony with a date two years earlier.

The beginning of the "Seventy Weeks" (490 years) of Israel's favor (Dan. 9:24) was so obscure and indefinite that the Jews could not and did not know

positively when to expect Messiah. No doubt this was of divine intention. Had the fulfilment of the time of this prophecy been apparent to the Jews, doubtless they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Only a few dates as far back as the beginning of those Seventy Weeks can be accurately fixed, and they by reason of notable eclipses recorded in connection with them.

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Recognizing the fulfilment of the events of the seventieth week, and getting the date thereof from Luke 3:1-3, we are enabled to reckon back and know exactly when they began, regardless of the inaccuracies of records and the multiplied disputations of chronologists.

The best answer to such criticism is the re-reading of the plain statements of MILLENNIAL DAWN. On this topic see VOL. II., pp. 54-72; VOL. III., Chap. 4.

FRIDAY, THE CLOSE OF OUR LORD'S 3-1/2 YRS.' MINISTRY.

Question. Mr. Totten writes as follows:--

"A brother writes us under date of Nov. 18, '96, --'By the way, have just ended a long correspondence with Russell; he has had to throw up the sponge on both the 3-1/2 year ministry and Friday crucifixion!"

Mr. Totten gives a few lines of comment on the above. Now as a personal favor I ask if your opinion on these matters has changed in the least from that presented in DAWN?

Answer. There is not a word of truth in the statement. It is "out of whole cloth" like Mr. Totten's Astronomical and prophetic misstatements exposed in our issue of May 15, '96.

We have not changed our opinion in the least from the presentation of these subjects in DAWN; we see not the slightest shadow of reason for any change on either subject.

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GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF CORNELIUS.

--APRIL 11.--ACTS 10:30-34.--

"Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."--Acts 10:43.

CORNELIUS, noted as the first adopted son of God from amongst the Gentiles, was a Roman soldier, the captain of a company quartered in Caesarea for the better preservation of order and the

enforcement of the will of the Roman government, which, at that time, controlled Palestine. It may be that he was the very same Centurion mentioned in Luke (7:2-10) as a worthy, noble and generous man, of whom Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;" and whose servant was healed as a reward of this faith. True, that Centurion was stationed at Capernaum, while Cornelius we find in Caesarea; it is possible, however, that these bands of Roman soldiers were moved about from place to place as a better means of awing the people with a small number of soldiers. It would certainly be very remarkable to find two such Centurions of so remarkable a character residing so near together. And we are to remember that a period of about six years must have elapsed between the time of our Lord's healing the servant at Capernaum and the events we now consider.

The date of Cornelius' conversion cannot be positively determined from history, but from prophecy we may locate it with great positiveness in the year 36, A.D., because there the "seventy weeks" of Daniel's prophecy terminated. Our Lord was baptised at the beginning of the seventieth week (Oct., A.D. 29), was crucified "in the midst of the week" (April, A.D. 33). The seventy weeks ended the special favors of the Jewish nation (Oct., A.D. 36). That date, therefore, was the earliest at which it was possible for the gospel to be sent to the Gentiles.

It would appear that Cornelius had been in an acceptable attitude of heart before the Lord for some time. We may reasonably infer, therefore, that God delayed the sending of the gospel message to him for some particular reason. That particular reason, we see, was, that the full period of the "seventy weeks" (of years) must be confined to Israel, as it is written, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week," altho he was to "cut short the work in righteousness" (so far as the nation was concerned) "in the midst of the week." The "many," to whom the covenant was confirmed for the remainder (3-1/2 years) of the seventieth week, consisted of those worthy Jews who, beginning at Pentecost, were specially taught, and thousands of them converted, during this remaining period of individual favor to the Jew. We may, therefore, presume that Cornelius, having been for some time in an acceptable condition of heart, the gospel went to him at the earliest possible moment--about Oct., A.D. 36.

We cannot properly speak of these experiences of Cornelius as a conversion or turning of his heart; for his heart was already in the right attitude, as was that of Saul of Tarsus. As the latter needed to have his knowledge corrected, so the former needed to have his knowledge increased; and then both needed to be accepted in the Beloved,--and to receive the spirit of adoption as "sons of God."

The testimony is that, at the time of receiving this

great blessing of the truth, Cornelius was in the right attitude of heart to receive it: he was hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and was fasting and praying for it. What a suggestion is here! If all people could be gotten into a condition similar to this described of Cornelius, we might expect the conversion of the whole world speedily. The great difficulty in the presentation of the gospel is the unreadiness of the hearts

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of those who need it. This is true, whether of the savages of Africa or the philosophers of India and China, or the self-satisfied ones of so-called Christian lands.

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They do not know the truth, and they cannot receive it, because their hearts are not prepared for it. And if the truth be received into any other than into a good and honest heart, it not only is not likely to bring forth a good harvest, but indeed may introduce a liberty (freedom from superstition, etc.) which may actually be unfavorable in its results. The constant effort of all, therefore, should be, not only to be in a proper attitude of heart themselves, but to see to it that those whom they approach with the truth are brought in contact not only with the knowledge and liberty which the truth carries, but also with its influence as a sanctifying and cleansing power.

In the vision granted to Cornelius the Lord commends (1) his prayerful attitude, which implied faith in God and a desire for harmony with him in righteousness; (2) his works of righteousness--his alms-giving, his endeavor to overcome selfishness and to copy divine benevolence. So we believe it is with all; whoever is in the right attitude of heart will be more and more moved to good works.

We have here also an illustration of divine methods; and we have every reason to believe that they are the same to-day. God did not miraculously fill the mind of Cornelius with a knowledge of the gospel and the details of the divine plan of salvation;--nor does he do this to-day, altho some of his children evidently so misunderstand his arrangement. On the contrary, the Lord made use of his servant Peter in communicating the truth, in teaching those who were ignorant of it. Men accordingly were sent a considerable journey to find Peter, and Peter journeyed with them the same distance in order to preach the gospel, rather than have any miraculous presentation of it.

The language of Cornelius, when Peter was come to his house, indicates an appreciation of the fact that the message was from God, and that Peter was merely the honored instrument. Cornelius, presenting himself and his household in the presence of Peter for instruction,

said, "We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Here was a proper respect for the servant of God as a servant of God and his Word; but also a full recognition that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from [our Father] above," and that the gospel itself is "neither of man nor by man."

It is safe to say that Peter, as well as Cornelius, received a great lesson from the Lord in connection with this visit. He was learning that, altho the divine favor and privilege of the gospel had been granted "to the Jew first," according to divine promise, nevertheless only true Jews could be acceptable with God, while "in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is [now] accepted with him"--through the merit of the sacrifice given "once for all" by him who has since been highly exalted and made "Lord of all."

Peter presupposes on the part of Cornelius just such knowledge as we would expect of an educated and influential man at that time, particularly if he were the Centurion of Capernaum who had personal contact with our Lord. He says, You have heard about this preaching of Jesus all through your country here, the matter is public, no one could live in this vicinity without coming to a knowledge of these general facts. They may have heard the facts misstated to some extent and misrepresented, but in a general way all know that our preaching is concerning Jesus of Nazareth: that he was anointed of God, the Messiah; that he received the holy spirit and with it power; and that he used this power in doing good and healing all oppressed of the devil (through sickness, etc.),--all of which, either directly or indirectly, are traceable to sin and thus to the author of sin, Satan.

Having briefly rehearsed the matters which Cornelius already knew, the Apostle rehearsed some matters which were not so generally known, but denied as incredible; namely, that the death of Jesus was not like the death of others, but was a sacrifice; that this sacrifice was acceptable with God as the ransom-price for sinners; and that God had "given assurance unto all men" (that the sacrifice was satisfactory and had been accepted on behalf of all men) by raising Jesus from the dead on the third day.--Acts 17:31.

We have heretofore seen that our Lord Jesus was not raised from the dead a fleshly being, a human being, but a spirit being, and that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." We have seen that, accordingly, no one could see him as the resurrected spirit being, except a miracle were performed, either by granting special powers to see a spirit being, or by our Lord's appearing in a body of flesh on certain occasions (just as angels had done previously) for the purpose of the better impressing upon the disciples the two facts; (1) his resurrection, (2) his change of

nature which prevented his being seen, except as he would specially "appear" or "manifest" himself. Thus, Peter here declares that the people in general did not see the Lord Jesus after his resurrection, but that God "showed him," unto "witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us."

Thus by these proofs of our Lord's resurrection God granted us the evidences of coming divine favor--proofs that Christ is empowered of the Father to be the Judge of all who are to be judged, the living (the angels who

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kept not their first estate and who are "reserved unto the judgment of the great day," and upon whom the death sentence has never yet been pronounced) and the dead (the world of mankind, "dead in trespasses and sins," and dead, in the sense that all are under the sentence of death).

The Apostle's discourse was orderly, and he next proceeded to show that all this was in harmony with what had been foretold respecting this long-promised Savior, Messiah. Then, completing his argument and bringing it down and making a personal application of it to his hearers, he showed that, the penalty of sin having been paid for all by the Lord Jesus, and all judgment of the sinners having been transferred to the hands of him who "bought us with his own precious blood," it followed that he had full power and authority to extend the terms and conditions of the New Covenant; namely, the remission of sins to all who believed in him as their Priest (Redeemer), their Prophet (Teacher) and their King (Ruler).

We are not surprised to find from the narrative that this man, whose heart was so ready for the truth, who was hungering and thirsting for it, fasting and praying to be in a condition for receiving it, was so ready that he appropriated the words of the Apostle as the bread from heaven and the water of life for which he had been hungering and thirsting. It does not surprise us, therefore, that God immediately, in view of his full consecration, accounted him worthy of "the spirit of adoption;" and not only so, but also gave him some of the outward manifestations or miraculous "gifts," similar to those granted to the believers on the day of Pentecost.

The Apostle Peter, as he subsequently testified to his fellow-disciples at Jerusalem, was astonished to see that God in every respect treated the converts from the Gentiles the same as the converts from the Jews; and dropping all prejudice Peter at once grasped the situation and did not hesitate to offer to Cornelius symbolic baptism as the evidence or pledge of his consecration to the Lord; assuredly gathering that whomsoever the Lord counted worthy of the holy spirit was worthy also of every other feature of the divine arrangement

for the household of faith. With us also should it be the same: whoever we may find truly believing the gospel of redemption and forgiveness of sins through Christ, and consecrated to God's service in Him,--such, wherever found, are to be esteemed as brethren and fellowshipped to the full, whether or not they have seen every item of the truth now due. Further knowledge will come to the consecrated, and, as a fruit of it, obedience in every particular may reasonably be expected.

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THE "CHRISTIANS" OF ANTIOCH.

--APRIL 18.--ACTS 11:19-26.--

"Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."--Acts 11:18.

ANTIOCH was one of the chief cities of the world at this time: it ranked with Rome and Corinth. It was the capital of the province of Syria. The gospel reached it as the result of the persecution which arose about the time of Stephen's martyrdom, in which Saul of Tarsus was one of the leaders. Some of those who had received the gospel at Jerusalem when "scattered everywhere," got as far away as Antioch, about 300 miles from Jerusalem. They did not put their lights under a bushel, but endeavored to "show forth the praises [virtues, glories] of him who had called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." They met with hearing ears and believing hearts, under the divine leading and blessing. They no doubt thus eventually realized that their persecutions were part of the "all things working together for good to them who love God;" and those of right mind surely rejoiced that by any means they were permitted to be co-workers together with God, and to be used of him in his glorious work. These laborers were not apostles, nor even notable ones amongst the Lord's disciples, so that it was not considered necessary by the writer even to mention their names; nevertheless

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we can be sure that however obscure amongst men, they were reckoned by the Lord as his jewels whom he will shortly gather, and who, numbered amongst those who turn many to righteousness, will shine as the stars for ever and ever. The testimony to their efficient work is, --"A great number believed and turned unto the Lord."

It is worthy of notice that believing is one thing and turning to the Lord is another thing. We fear that this distinction is too often forgotten, and that too

many are satisfied merely to get their friends to believe some of the good things of the gospel of our Lord Jesus, and do not press the matter on to the only legitimate and proper conclusion--a complete turning away from sin and the world; a thorough turning of every sentiment, hope, ambition and desire "unto the Lord," and into harmony with his divine plan. Let us remember the statement, "devils also believe;" and let us not rest satisfied with efforts merely to convince the head without convicting and regenerating the heart.

Many speak of the Church at Antioch as "the first Gentile Church" and of "Gentile Christians" and "Jewish Christians." All this is a mistake: there is not and never was a "Gentile Church," nor a "Gentile Christian." We might just as well speak of a "heathen Church" or a "heathen Christian," for such is the meaning of these expressions. There was a Jewish Church under Moses, but there was never a Jewish Christian Church, and there never will be. The way may have been smoother for a Jew to pass out of the partial light of the Law Covenant into the new light of the Gospel Covenant, than for the Gentile to pass from the outer darkness of heathenism into the full light of the gospel; but, nevertheless, there was a positive transfer in both cases. Christianity is not a blending of the gospel with Judaism, nor is it a blending of the gospel with heathenism. Our Lord declared that he would not put a patch upon the Jewish system and call it Christianity, nor put the new wine of the gospel into the old wine skins of Judaism; but that, on the

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contrary, he established a totally new thing; and that those who would enter his Kingdom must first be begotten again, and ultimately be born again before they could share it.--John 3:3-8.

While we would contend earnestly for the truths and facts of the gospel, we do not wish to be hypercritical as to words and names. If, therefore, any have used the terms "Jewish Christians" and "Gentile Christians" merely through mistake of language, and have had the apostolic thought in mind, namely, that there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, but ye are all one [a new one--a new Church] in Christ Jesus," we have no desire to quarrel with such, nor to be captious; and yet we do respectfully urge upon all such the unwisdom of using terms which of themselves, and without particular private explanation, are misleading.

The gospel was preached at Antioch at first, properly, to the Jews only; yet, when the due time for it to go to the Gentiles arrived, the Lord's providence opened up the way and showed his servants that Cornelius was not an exceptional case, but that the gospel was to be preached in all the world for a witness,

for the purpose of gathering his little flock from all kindreds, nations and tongues who should have an ear to hear it and to whom he would send it.

The progress of the interested at Antioch was a refreshment to the central company of believers at Jerusalem, and forthwith appreciating the fact that they would need instruction in the truth, and that the Lord would be pleased to continue to use human instrumentalities to this end, they at once dispatched Barnabas on a missionary tour. Barnabas, as a good, faithful servant of the Lord, was greatly rejoiced when he found the condition of matters at Antioch, yet, apparently, he found a condition of things to meet which he himself lacked certain qualifications. Of a loving and kind disposition, his visit no doubt was very helpful to them, but he apparently discerned that they needed instruction as well as exhortation, and immediately he thought of Paul, the wonderful Christian logician, and of how ably he could present the gospel in its various features to those Grecians of a philosophical turn of mind. Accordingly he sought him and found him and brought him with him to Antioch. The results showed the wisdom of the course, and no doubt it was entirely ordered by the Lord. A year's stay in Antioch under the able teachings of Paul and under the loving ministries and exhortations of Barnabas resulted most favorably: not only was the church of believers well developed, but the multitudes who assembled received considerable instruction also, and thus the knowledge of the gospel was greatly spread abroad.

Some have surmised that the name "Christian," first attached to the Lord's people at Antioch, was applied in ridicule. But it seems to us that the evidences all point to the contrary, and indicate that this was the name which the believers adopted for themselves, by which they would be known to outsiders. Had the name been a disreputable one we might have supposed it to be applied in ridicule; but since the basis of the name Christian is the word Christ, and since the word Christ signifies Messiah or the Anointed (of God), it must have been accepted as a most honorable name, or who would think that a divine anointing could signify anything dishonorable in the eyes of any man, Jew or Gentile.

This adopted name "Christian" indicates the healthy condition of the Church, and testifies to the sound instruction which they had received from Paul and Barnabas. When later another company of Christians began to split up into factions, some calling themselves followers of Peter, some followers of Paul, some followers of Apollos, the Apostle reproved them for this, assuring them that it was an evidence that their views in general on the subject were fleshly, carnal, worldly and not spiritual. He told them that it was an evidence that as yet they were "babes" in spiritual things, and pointed out to them that neither Peter,

nor Paul, nor Apollos, had died for them, and that at very most they were only servants of the Lord Jesus, who had redeemed them and who had sent them the blessing of the truth, using such instrumentalities as seemed to him good. (1 Cor. 3:3-23.) What evidences we have all around us that the carnal or worldly mind prevails very largely to-day,--that very many who have named the name of Christ are merely "babes" in spiritual comprehension. The evidences of these conditions may be found in the fact that one says, "I am of Wesley," another, "I am of Calvin," another, "I am of Peter," and that in general the believers of the Lord Jesus are split up into parties and factions-- Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc.

Moreover, it is not true, as some claim, that these names are merely forms and that they signify nothing. They do signify much: they imply that those who brand themselves with these names acknowledge various the rules of various parties and factions, and that they are all more or less in bondage to human systems and traditions of men, and have failed to a large extent to realize the individual "liberty wherewith Christ makes free" all those who have come to him, and who are united to him only. Nor do we with many advocate the removal of these dividing fences of human creeds merely to construct of them a "union" fence, doubly strong, around the whole company of believers in Christ. On the contrary, we deny the propriety of any human fences, and hold that each individual Christian is to be united and bounden only to the Lord and to his instructions, and not to others, few or many. All the truly consecrated and truly united to the Lord will find themselves in fellowship with all others similarly united to him, and the bondage between these various members (the bonds of love and of common submission to the one Head and to all of his arrangements) will be the only bondage necessary to the complete operation of this body of Christ, according to the directions of his Word.

Let us each make it our highest ambition and aim to be Christians in the fullest sense of that word. To truly be a Christian implies a union with Christ; it implies a submission to him as our Head, it implies a share with him in the anointing of the priesthood for the work of sacrifice and of self-denial in this present time; it implies also an association with him in the anointing of kings and joint-heirs in the coming Kingdom. Let us take and let us keep this holy name, and it alone; and let us make sure that we do not take this holy name in vain.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

REV. Lyman Abbott, D.D., the now widely known "Unbeliever," was engaged by the "Hicksite Quakers," of Philadelphia, to deliver a lecture, and the Y.M.C.A. hall was secured for the purpose. The Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. concluded from all that he could learn that Dr. Abbott is an "Unbeliever," and that his use of the hall would not be in the interest of Christianity and the objects of the Y.M.C.A. and cancelled the engagement. We quite endorse his judgment, altho we well know that such a view of matters will be considered narrow by all "unbelievers." If Satan presented himself in human form, well dressed, as a liberal lecturer on "Higher Criticism," well fortified with "cunningly devised fables," he would find numerous defenders and plenty of willing hearers with "itching ears;" but if our Lord or the Apostles Paul or Peter presented themselves as exponents and defenders of the Law and the Prophets, and especially of the cross of Christ as the center of the Gospel and the power of God and the wisdom of God, they would find few attentive listeners. How we see fulfilling the word of the Lord by the mouth of the Apostle,--"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own desires shall they gather to themselves teachers,--having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."--2 Tim. 4:3,4.

The same question is causing a disturbance among "Christian Endeavorers." The next convention of this society is to be held in San Francisco, Cal., in July, and as it has been discovered that a prominent Evolutionist and higher critic otherwise known as "modern unbelievers," has been assigned a prominent place in connection with the appointments for public addresses, it is concluded that himself and others of like unbelief will endeavor to use the opportunity to make a good impression for their cause upon these "Young People." A religious press controversy has sprung up, and considerable heat has been developed on both sides.

This question must yet "shake" Christendom thoroughly; and no doubt we will surprise many when we declare that, in our understanding of the Word, the vast majority will be sifted out as "unbelievers"--so much so that to many it will appear that "the old

fogy believers in miracles, and in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures," have been shaken out;--because the masses will accept the Evolution-and-unbelief theory.

As usual the adversary will endeavor to becloud the real question by sophistical statements. It will be claimed that the Evolutionary or "unbelievers" theory is the true, the moral, the logical, the enlightened view; and no doubt some will even claim that it is the Scriptural view. Those left, faithful to the Bible, will be the theologically "hard" and "tough" and "unreasonable," covered all over with barnacles of human error concerning election, foreordination, predestination and eternal torment, and their false beliefs will not only injure their influence, but will tend to further discredit the Bible, which, more than ever, will be charged with the inconsistencies of every misbelief. And these in turn, realizing the effort to overthrow their faith in the Bible as the Word of God, will not only hold it the faster but also hold the tighter all the human falsehoods and inconsistencies attached to their faith in the name of the Bible, during the "dark ages." Nor can we hope that many of these will get free from these shackles of error until the fall of Babylon (Rev. 18:1-4) opens their eyes to the true situation.

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However various the forms which the question may take, it will nevertheless still be--for the cross or against the cross; soldiers of the cross or enemies of the cross of Christ,--believers in the ransom or deniers of the ransom. All the so-called "higher critics," or "unbelievers" in the Bible, are of logical necessity believers in Evolution; and all believers in Evolution are of logical necessity deniers of the fact that a ransom was given for sinners by our Lord, for they claim that none was necessary. Denying original sin by a fall, and denying a ransom from the condition and penalties of a fall, they are denying the very center of the gospel--the cross,--that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he rose for our justification. Hence also they deny justification by faith and through the precious blood. (Rom. 5:1,9.) Hence, by whatever name such "unbelievers" are known, as deniers of the very essence of Christianity they are not Christians, --not believers in Christ in the only way in which belief in him is genuine according to God's Word. Instead, they are "the enemies of the cross of Christ."-- Phil. 3:18.

"In the cross of Christ we glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

The "Hicksite" branch of the Quakers, for which

Dr. Abbott is to speak, utterly repudiates the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement--the ransom. This is in keeping with our observations above.

* * *

France has begun the manufacture of a new quick-firing gun--the "Casnet." It is claimed that it will throw a shrapnel shell, loaded with 300 bullets, five times a minute, a distance of about four miles. Other "Christian nations" must similarly prepare to do murder wholesale, and Germany has already begun work on a somewhat similar weapon. The time for turning all this energy to useful arts of peace is not yet, but it is near, thank God.

* * *

The Cretan war question is only a part of the Turkish question; and our remarks on the latter in our View of Nov. 1, '96, apply in general to all with which Turkey is related. We do not expect "a general European war which will destroy present civilization" --that destruction is not due yet; but we do expect, now or soon, such a reorganization of Turkey's affairs as will open Palestine and permit the return of the Jews as settlers--forbidden by Turkey since 1891.

* * *

The Arneblatt, an Austrian military journal, describes a new murder-weapon (for use upon fellow beings of other "Christian (?) nations" and against savages, but not, we may presume, to be used against the Turks, so long as they can pay the interest on their bonds). What an amount of human ingenuity now employed on instruments for murder will be changed to new channels--to bless the already "groaning creation," when the Prince of Peace shall take control and cause wars to cease unto the ends of the earth!--Psa. 46:6-10.

Here is a description of this weapon of destruction:--

"An engine of 16 horse power actuates a four-wheeled rubber-tired cycle, carrying two rapid-fire guns. These two guns, mounted on pivots, one in front, the other in the rear, can each describe a semicircle, the motion being effected automatically.

"The discharge is controlled by the motor mechanism itself, and can take place as well when the cycle is in motion as when it is at rest. The number of shots fired per minute can be varied from 50 to 700. The cycle carries 500 projectiles for each gun.

"The attendant, seated on the cycle between the two guns, has only to train them and then start his engine. He is protected in front and behind by shields, fixed to the guns.

"The cycle as a whole is also protected against bullets, and even against small artillery projectiles. Besides, the mechanism of discharge, acting automatically, keeps on working, even after the attendant is disabled.

"On a good, smooth road this cycle can go at a speed of forty-five miles an hour, so that it could distance any other kind of artillery. We can hardly imagine the effect that fifty or a hundred of such cycles would produce when all in action at once."

* * *

The Glasgow Herald (Scotland) gives a lengthy and detailed account of the Meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery on March 2, at which the terms of union with the United Presbyterian Church were discussed. We note the growing sentiment favorable to a partial union with the civil government; based upon the erroneous assumption that the kingdoms of this world have become Christ's Kingdom, and that he is the King. Oh! how changed the world's affairs will be when Immanuel's reign has really been inaugurated: "When the Kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations." "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is done in heaven" is still the prayer of those who know the King's Word.

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The following utterance of Dr. Ross Taylor was approved by the Presbytery: Both churches agree that--

"The great principle of national religion, the principle, namely, that as Christ was King of Nations, all nations were bound to own him and to have regard to his authority in the making of their laws and in the shaping of their procedure, and not only so, but that all were bound--nations and rulers--to recognize the Church of Christ and to promote its interests in every way consistent with its spirit and enactments. That was the position which they maintained with regard to

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national religion, and that, he was glad to say, was a position in which their United Presbyterian friends in the conference which had been held thoroughly agreed with them. They were at one on the points as to the duty of nations and rulers to recognize the Church of Christ and to promote its interests in every way consistent with ITS SPIRIT AND ENACTMENTS."

* * *

The spirit of federation is growing rapidly in Great Britain, as the following from the London Daily Chronicle

(March 6) shows:--

"On Monday night the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress will receive at the Guildhall probably as many as 3,000 delegates and representatives of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches which meets in the City Temple, and in the Memorial Hall on the following three days of next week. This is not simply the first meeting in London of the National Council. Practically it is its first formal meeting. Originating in Nov. '92 as a 'Free Church Congress,' with a lamentably meagre attendance, the movement as a whole illustrates how tremendous may be the development of a very simple proposal.

"Thomas Law, organizing secretary, was able to report an enormous growth in the number of local Non-conformist councils and county federations, the influence of which it is the object of the National Council to focus upon the religious, social and perhaps even the political life of England. Since last year the associations have increased with still wilder impetuosity, not merely scores but hundreds of them having been surprised into useful existence, in almost an incredible way. On Tuesday morning this National Council will assemble with the commanding authority of delegates to the number of 1,200, and 'personal members' probably exceeding that number, representing over 10,000 English evangelical congregations. The churches represented include the Congregationalists, all the Baptist communities, all the Methodist 'Societies,' the Presbyterian Church of England, the Free Episcopal Churches, even the Society of Friends, and a host of minor religious bodies--Unitarians, however, being excluded as not conforming to the strict interpretation of the constitution."

* * *

The Pope, whose representatives have for some time past been specially blessing the Spanish war ships as they left for Cuba, found that Spain did not get victory as a result of his blessings, and now changes his course and poses before the world as the advocate of peace and liberty--sending a letter to the Queen of Spain urging peace and very liberal laws for Cuba and Porto Rico.

* * *

The following extracts from a recent speech by Lord Salisbury, premier of Great Britain, shows a clearer view of general affairs than most people get. It shows the wisdom of the confusion of the world's language for the period of the reign of sin and death; and that present tendencies toward one language might work eventual ill, were it not that the Kingdom is near at hand. The London Spectator says:--

"He remarked on the singularly rapid spread of the English race and the English language over the surface of our planet, and expressed the belief that what is said in that language will before long be intelligible, and not only intelligible, but actually understood, over almost all the world. And he insisted that this might turn out to be either a great blessing or a great curse, according to the spirit in which those who mold the convictions of the English-speaking races choose to guide the formation of those convictions. It is, in fact, a sort of reversal of the effect which the confusion of tongues,--which is said to have fallen upon the different families of the human race in the vain attempt to build a tower intended to scale the heavens,--was supposed to have produced. In Lord Salisbury's view the difficulty which different races have found in mastering each other's language has not been by any means an unmixed evil. It has served as a kind of non-conducting medium to limit the mischief which irresponsible and mischievous talk so often produces.

St. James has told us that 'the tongue can no man tame.' But what no man can tame may yet to some extent be deprived of its poisonous influence through the difficulty it finds in penetrating the speech of another people of a quite different race. For example, we Englishmen have no doubt missed the point of perhaps nine-tenths of the French witticisms produced at our expense, while the French have missed the point of even a greater number of foolishly contemptuous phrases in which Englishmen have poured forth their ill-advised conviction of their own immense superiority to Frenchmen. Had this non-conducting medium never existed, can it be doubted that the irritation of France against England and of England against France would often have been far greater than it has been? ...Let English become something like a universal language, and we shall soon find that the velocity with which either clever or ignorant ill-nature propagates its mischievous influence over the world will be indefinitely increased. With the electric telegraph working in a speech universally understood, words of hasty wrath will have a far more deadly effect than they have now, and we may find ourselves at war before we have had time either to define our purposes or explain our meaning. In short, as Lord Salisbury truly said, the universal currency of the English tongue will produce either a good or a bad effect, just in proportion to the wisdom or the folly, the self-control or the license, of the English-speaking races....But if Englishmen learn to scream, and Americans to bluster, and public opinion to discharge itself violently in muddy geysers of boiling passion in every separate Colony and State, then the universal spread of English may prove a great calamity and some day issue in a great catastrophe."

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THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD--ITS VALUE.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto God and life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue."--2 Pet. 1:2,3
--Reading of Sinaitic manuscript.

THE FIRST question coming to us in connection with these words of exhortation is, To whom were they addressed? Are these the instructions given to sinners? Is this the way by which sinners are to approach to God? No. These instructions are addressed to those who are already justified through faith in the precious blood of Christ, as indicated in the preceding verse. They are addressed--"To them who have obtained like precious faith with us [the apostles] through the righteousness of our Lord and Savior,* Jesus Christ."

The suggestion clearly is that to become believers in Christ Jesus--even justified and fully consecrated believers--is not sufficient; there is to be a progress in the life just begun which will continue as long as we are "in this tabernacle," and, if faithful, be completed in "the first resurrection." The thought of the Apostle is not year by year revivals with year by year backslidings, but rather a continued progression in the new life. This thought is quite in contradiction of the experiences of very many who assume the name of Christ, which, alas! are too often expressed in the lines of the hymn:--

"Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I found the Lord?
Where is the soul-reviving view of Jesus and his Word?"

The prevalent idea amongst this class of Christians might be termed alternate subtractions and additions of grace and peace. They first get a blessing, then lose it, then find it again to lose it again, and thus continue. There is a logical reason why this course is so prevalent, and why so few know anything about the multiplication which the Apostle here mentions-- "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you." The reason is that the majority of Christians lack a knowledge of those things which are necessary to preserve to them the grace and peace found through their primary faith in the Lord as their Redeemer; and much more do they lack a sufficiency of knowledge to multiply their grace and peace. The vast majority occupy the position mentioned by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 3:1) "I, brethren,

could not write unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal--even as unto babes in Christ;" "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."--Heb. 5:12-14.

*Reading of Sinaitic MS.

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An error on one subject often leads to many errors on many subjects; and so it is in this case: the doctrine of eternal torment as the penalty for the fall, from which only believers will escape, has distorted the judgment and misdirected the efforts of many of the Lord's people. With some of the most earnest the first thought is personal escape from eternal torment, and naturally the second thought is to help as many others as possible to escape such an awful eternity. With this thought as the mainspring of conduct, we cannot wonder that by such chief attention is paid to "saving sinners" and bringing them into the condition of "babes in Christ." But after they become babes comparatively little is done to develop them in the knowledge of God, that they may grow up into the full stature of manhood in Christ. As babes they are continually fed upon the milk, and hence are unused to the strong meat, so that when they do attempt its use, they are more likely to be choked by it than to be strengthened.

The Apostle points out the proper course by which the believer, having made a proper start, shall continue onward and upward in his Christian development--multiplying his grace and his peace. It is all-important, however, that he begin right, that he be truly begotten "by the word of truth," "the faith once delivered unto the saints"--which the Apostle here terms "precious faith." This is not the faith promulgated by the higher critics. Their faith is far from precious. Their faith denies the fall, denies the ransom and all necessity for it, and consequently denies the resurrection based upon that ransom. Their faith consists in believing in their own judgments as the criterions of what is truth and what is error, and in doubting the testimony of Moses and the prophets, of the Lord and the apostles. Such a faith is not the "precious faith," is not "the faith once delivered unto the saints." And those who are building upon such a faith are not of those here addressed by the Apostle, and we need not expect that either their grace or their peace will be multiplied. We trust, however, that the majority of our readers are of those who can sing with the spirit and the understanding also,--

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand: all other ground is sinking sand."

The true foundation, upon which we should build,
is,--faith in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ,--faith that his sacrifice for sin was once
for all a full and complete ransom-price for Adam and
all his posterity, so that all of these, as in due time
they shall be brought to a knowledge of Christ, may,

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if they will, obtain cleansing and eternal life under the
gracious terms of the New Covenant. It is those who
build upon this foundation that may hope to multiply
their grace and peace. How?

The Apostle answers--"Through the knowledge of
God, and of Jesus our Lord." At first it may occur to
some that this has but a slight meaning, and that it
simply signifies that we come to know that there is a
God, and that there is a Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
But the knowledge of God means far more than this to
the advancing and developing Christian: to him it
means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and
with the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ,"
which is a full and clear representation to us of the
mind of the Father. We are to grow in this knowledge
by studying the Word of God, by discerning through
that Word the principles which govern the divine conduct,
as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power
operate. These are progressive studies. Something
may be learned the first day of our Christian experience,
but the end of the first year should show considerable
progress in the knowledge of the divine mind;
the second year should show us a still further increase,
and so on.

As our intimate knowledge of the divine plan and
character increases, so must also our grace increase; for
those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step
by step, with that which they see of the divine character
will soon lose interest in such knowledge, while
those who have the interest which leads to further and
further study must of necessity be growing in grace
continually. And as they grow in grace, so also will
they grow in peace; for peace also is a progressive
thing. We had peace when first we found the Lord
and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who
have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan
and character have found their peace to be an ever-increasing
one; and those who have advanced some distance
in the good way can speak of it in the language
of the apostles and realize it in their hearts as being
"the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

The Apostle, continuing, assures us that through
this knowledge of God is imparted to us as by divine

power "all things that pertain unto life and godliness."
What an assurance! This statement of the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction reminds us of the words of our Lord, "This is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.) To know God, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an intimate acquaintance with "him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue." It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of his gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with his graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to "comprehend with all saints what is the length and the breadth, the depth and the height of the love of Christ which passeth [human] understanding." (Eph. 3:14-19.) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord.--2 Cor. 3:18.

The thought here brought to our attention is well illustrated in the modern art of photography. In photography there is necessary first of all a sensitized plate upon which the picture is to be reflected. Not any or every plate will serve such a purpose, but only one which has been specially prepared. This corresponds to the preparation of our hearts through repentance and justifying faith toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This first step is necessary before we can receive upon our hearts the impress of the divine character, its glory and virtue or strength. The second step is to bring the sensitized plate into good range with the features which are to be impictured upon it. This represents the proper attitude of heart; viz., full consecration to the Lord, and a desire to have his will to be our will and to have his character represented in our lives. The third step is the removal of all obscurity, all darkness, allowing the light to shine fully in upon the features to be copied. This finds its counterpart in the knowledge of God, which, as the light of truth scatters the darkness of error and sin and gives us clearer views of the divine character, and thus permits it to impress our prepared hearts and to stamp thereon his glorious character-likeness. Fourth, the sensitized plate must then be subjected to acids in order to the clearer development of the likeness. This also finds its correspondence; for our hearts, after we have gotten a clear view of the Lord, and been freely impressed with the glories of his character, require nevertheless the "fiery trials" of life, which, like the acid,

only tend to develop the likeness the more perfectly. Fifth (for the correspondence continues), it is a well known fact that although photographs may be taken without the use of the precious metals, gold and silver, yet only when these are used will the photograph retain its color without fading. As heretofore seen, gold represents the divine nature, and silver represents the truth; and only in proportion as the likeness of our Lord is fixed in our hearts upon the basis

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of the truth and the divine nature can a lasting likeness be hoped for.--Rom. 8:29.

The world in general, of course, "knows not God," and very evidently the great mass of professing believers know very little about him. The Apostle Paul explains, that Satan, "the god of this world," is particularly interested in hindering any from obtaining the light upon the Lord's character and plan necessary to impicture it upon their hearts. He declares, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ (who is the image of God) should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.) Here we see the constant and irrepressible conflict--the battle of darkness against the light, as our Lord explained it in his day, saying, "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." But all who receive and rejoice in and obey the light are the "children of the light;" and after the image of the Lord has been impressed upon their hearts, such become light-bearers to others and so shine forth upon all with whom they come in contact, reflecting the light which is shining upon them from the divine source unseen and unappreciated by the world.

At present the influence of these lights is but small in comparison with what it will be hereafter. Now, the Lord's people are like lights set upon a hill which cannot be hid, and yet their influence upon the world is comparatively small. It is still true of the

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body of Christ as it was true of the Head, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." But of the by and by it is written, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" "The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams." This will be the great Millennial day; and as a result of the shining forth of the elect Church, we are assured that all darkness will disappear and the light of "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."

Proceeding, the Apostle assures us that, in order to the attainment of this intimate knowledge of God which multiplies our grace and peace and gives us all

things that pertain to life and godliness, God has "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises."

Looking about us, we find that the majority of our fellow-Christians in the world, even of those who have the "precious faith" and trust in the "precious blood," must be "babes" in even elementary knowledge; for evidently they do not know much concerning these exceeding great and precious promises. If we would inquire of them with reference to these promises, the vast majority would answer,--Our hope is that by the grace of God, if faithful, we shall escape eternal torment and get to heaven. And many would add, If I can get just inside the door of heaven, it will be all I could ask or hope for.

What? Do they know nothing of the "exceeding great and precious promises" mentioned by the Apostle? Alas! apparently very little. But what are these promises, and who have knowledge of them?

Only those who are following in the pathway which the Apostle here marks out; who multiply their grace and peace, through an ever-increasing, intimate knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,--those who are seeing more and more clearly the divine character and plan, and whose hearts are in a susceptible and impressionable attitude, and upon which is being fixed more and more distinctly the image of God's dear Son, who is the express image of the Father. (Rom. 8:29.) Before these, shining out as helps by the way, in letters of light, are the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word, which to other hearts are unilluminated, dark and almost meaningless.

Which and what are these promises?

Oh, they are so many and so precious that it is difficult to know which would rank first. Perhaps first of all is the precious promise, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Another is, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;" in harmony with which is the prayer, "Father, I will that these may be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory." Another is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Another is, "They shall be mine...in that day when I make up my jewels." Another is, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Another is, that we are "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Another is, that we are "Begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Another is, "To him that overcometh

I will give power over the nations"--authority, dominion as "kings and priests unto God" to "reign on the earth." Another is that these kings and priests will reign to bless, as it is written, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Another promise is that Israel according to the flesh shall yet obtain mercy and blessing through the mercy of these kings and priests of the Gospel age.--Rom. 11:32.

Finally, all of these exceeding great and precious promises are summed up by the Apostle in his declaration that, through this knowledge of God and

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through the influence of these precious promises, it is God's will that we who by nature were children of wrath even as others "might become partakers of the divine nature." Oh, what a rich promise is here! How exceedingly great and precious! Who could have thought such a thing? Our highest thought might possibly have been perfection of the human nature, the earthly image of God, or perhaps, as some have sung, we might want to be angels and with the angels stand. But although angelic nature is higher than human nature, our God has not been content with offering to the "elect" Church angelic nature, but in the riches of his grace and wonderful provision he has far outdone the highest flight of human fancy and has promised that the overcoming Church, the "little flock," to whom it is his good pleasure to give the Kingdom, the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be exalted to share the divine glory and divine nature of her Lord, as well as to share his heavenly Kingdom.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: we cannot comprehend why our great Creator should exalt to his own nature such poor, helpless creatures of the dust as we by nature are. But this and all the other gracious promises exhibit to us more and more the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths, of the love of our God, which surpasses human knowledge.

In view of what we already know of our Creator, especially as revealed to us in and through our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus, shall we not, as those who have come to see something of his glorious character, "press toward the mark" (Phil. 3:14) for the attainment of all that he may be pleased to reveal to us concerning himself, that thus we may be more and more partakers of his spirit, more and more conformed to his likeness, more and more acceptable, and by and by be actually and everlastingly accepted in the Beloved, to the full realization of all those blessings which God has in reservation for them who love him, and of which now we have the exceeding great and precious promises?

Such promises and such knowledge properly inspire our hearts to love, obedience and self-sacrifice, that we may please him who has called us to his own

nature and fellowship; and, as the Apostle says, "He who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [the Lord] is pure."

It was to this intimate knowledge of or acquaintance with the Lord and its reward that the Apostle Paul referred, saying,--"That I might know him and [experience] the power of his resurrection [the First or Chief Resurrection, by] being made [fully] conformable unto his death [--which full surrender is possible to those only who know him well and have drunk in his spirit]."--Phil. 3:10.

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THE BLESSED PEOPLE OF GOD.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."--Matt. 5:3.

IT IS only when, as faithful and obedient children of God, we reverently turn the sacred pages of his holy Word and read them as a loving epistle from our faithful God, full of wisdom and counsel and wholesome instruction, that we gather from it all the refreshment of divine grace contained in it. Thus, for instance, in the first lines of our Lord's sermon on the mount, heavenly love breaks forth in showers of blessing --"Blessed," "blessed," "blessed are ye!" Who are the blessed ones thus addressed? Are they the holy angels who do always behold the Father's face? Truly they are blessed; but these words were not addressed to them, but to the redeemed sons of men--to men rescued from the fall, whose feet were taken out of the miry clay and set upon a rock, and in whose mouth is put the new song of praise and thanksgiving for redeeming love and grace.

"Blessed are ye!" Do the blessings belong to all who have ever to any extent tasted of the favor of God? Do they belong to the pardoned sinners who, after being pardoned and cleansed, like the nine lepers of whom the Lord spoke, return not again to give God the glory? Do they belong to those who do not follow on to know the Lord,--who decline to be led of his spirit while they continue to partake of the spirit of the world? Do they belong to the proud and lofty-spirited ones, to those at ease in Zion, to the self-satisfied, the selfish, or those who in any form regard iniquity in their hearts? Ah, no! Any such who read these lines must read therein their own condemnation; for, while they are benedictions to the faithful, they are also solemn warnings to the unfaithful. The benedictions are for the poor in spirit; for those who mourn because iniquity

abounds; for the meek (the teachable and humble);
for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness;
for the merciful; for the pure in heart, the peacemakers,
and the reviled and persecuted for righteousness'
sake; for those whom the Lord calls "the salt of the
earth" and "the light of the world." Blessed, yes,
blessed are ye of the Lord of hosts! Yours is the Kingdom
of heaven; you shall inherit the earth; you shall
be comforted; you shall be filled with the spirit of God;
you shall obtain mercy; you shall see God, and shall be
called the children of God; your reward in heaven is
great; you shall by and by be as a city set on a hill
that cannot be hid. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad;"

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for these heavenly benedictions are upon your heads.

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What refreshment and joy are here for all the faithful
sons of God who feed upon his Word, who lean in
simple faith upon the promises and obediently walk
after the spirit of God. Observe again the conditions
of this blessing: they are not such as we cannot comply
with: they are not conditions of absolute perfection
which we cannot attain while we are in these imperfect
bodies; but they indicate a reaching out after that
perfection,--a hungering and thirsting after the righteousness
of God, a mourning for all that comes
short of that righteousness, especially in self, but also

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in others, and a consequent inharmony with the general
spirit and course of this present evil world. And together
with the heavenly desires and aspirations there
must be a meek and contrite spirit--a pliable, teachable
disposition. "Blessed are the poor in spirit"--the
lowly in mind, the studious, teachable ones. Such the
Lord can and will lead by his spirit into the paths of
righteousness, and finally into the glory of his Kingdom:
--"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

O that our dull souls may awake more fully to all
that is implied in this promise of the Kingdom! Let
us meditate upon it more and more, until the glorious
hope inspires to faithful endurance of hardness under
all circumstances as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. How
large a place did the things pertaining to the Kingdom
of God occupy in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles!
Indeed, the whole message of divine inspiration
contained in the New Testament was briefly comprehended
in that expression of our Lord--"This gospel
of the kingdom." The entire work of this Gospel age
was to be the preaching of this Kingdom,--"This gospel
of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world,

for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [the harvest of the age] come." (Matt. 24:14.) This gospel--this good news--of the coming Kingdom of God, with all that pertains to it, was the constant theme of the Lord and the apostles:--"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom." And he commissioned his disciples, saying, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."-- Matt. 10:7.

We read nothing in the New Testament of any departure on the part of the early disciples from this blessed theme of the gospel of the Kingdom to the preaching of a mere lifeless morality, or of politics, or of any other theme; but the prospective Kingdom of God, its sure foundation in Christ the Redeemer, its universal dominion, its unlimited authority, its righteous character and requirements, the holiness that alone can inherit or enter into it, and the glory and blessedness to come in it and through it, were constantly held before the people to the exclusion of all side issues.

This is the Kingdom to be inherited by the poor in spirit; for only the poor in spirit--the humble, teachable ones--can submit to the discipline and training necessary to fit them for it. The heady, the high-minded, the proud, the self-conscious and self-righteous have no promise of the Kingdom, and cannot inherit it, nor enter into it; for "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." (Rev. 21:27.) So, altho in the present age many of these are esteemed of men as the aristocracy of the earth, they will not be the aristocracy of the new dispensation; but the poor in spirit will reign with Christ for the blessing of all the families of the earth. And even now, in God's estimation, these constitute the embryo Kingdom, and God is in the midst of them, and his law is established in their hearts. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." "Tho the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off." "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house [the temple] that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?...but upon such a one will I look, upon the poor, and him who is of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word."--Psa. 34:18; 138:6; Isa. 57:15; 66:1,2.

This is the Kingdom class, the temple class, the beloved of the Lord with whom he is pleased to dwell. Like their Master, they are often lightly esteemed among men of the world, and perhaps despised among the multitudes who professedly are the Lord's people,

but whose hearts and minds are still engrossed with worldly things; but they are the prospective kings and priests of the new dispensation, and their lowly estate in the present life is only their necessary discipline to fit them for the glory and service of the time to come. These are the living stones now being shaped, chiseled and polished for their places in the glorious temple of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Blessed indeed are the poor in spirit with such a heritage! M. F. RUSSELL.

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PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

--APRIL 25.--ACTS 12:5-17.--

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."--Psa. 34:7.

FOLLOWING the history of the early Church, we now come upon another period of persecution. The former persecution seems to have passed by the principal ones of the Church entirely. It manifested itself against ordinary believers rather than against the apostles and public ministers. The result, as we have

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seen, was the spread of the gospel by those who were "scattered abroad everywhere." The persecution now considered was directed against the apostles. Both persecutions were from the adversary and his faithful, but were such only as God saw best to permit, and such as would work out some good in connection with his plan.

During the reign of the Roman Emperor Caligula the Jews were kept in a considerable ferment by reason of his repeated attempt to have his statue set up in the temple, with altars for the worship of himself. While the Jews were so busy in defending their own religious liberties, the infant Christian Church was left comparatively unmolested; but now Caligula was dead, and a very different personage was his successor, and the Jews having a respite from troubles of their own, had good opportunity to cultivate their animosity against the followers of the Nazarene. King Herod Agrippa, having been obliged to cooperate with the Emperor's plans, had made himself more or less obnoxious to his subjects, the Jews; and he now sought to conciliate them, by persecuting the Christians. This Herod Agrippa was a worthy successor to his uncle, who had murdered John the Baptist, and to his grandfather, Herod the Great, who murdered the infants at Bethlehem. His first object was personal aggrandizement

and the perpetuation of his own family in the kingdom. His public acts, on the one hand, were intended to continue him in favor with the Emperor at Rome, and on the other hand, to gain as much favor as possible from the people whom he ruled as king,--as representative of the Emperor.

The persecution began with the killing of the Apostle James. Seeing that thereby he gained the favor of the Jews, Herod thought it the cheapest method by which to regain popularity with his subjects and proceeded to take Peter also. What a sad blow this must have been to the early Church! James and Peter were apparently the principal leaders in the affairs of the Church at Jerusalem, as they two with John, the brother of James, were the most prominent amongst the apostles while our Lord lived. We can imagine the consternation --James already dead, Peter seized and imprisoned and his execution held over merely because it was the week of Passover, and because according to Jewish custom no one could be put to death during that week. The manifest, if not declared, intention of Herod was that Peter should be killed in some manner immediately after the close of the Passover week. Here we pause to notice a strange commingling of religious formalism with the spirit of murder: the spirit of murder was in Herod and in the Jews, yet both for the time restrained themselves in order to symbolize by the Passover ceremonial a cleansing of the heart and life, a purification toward God. There is a lesson here (for all who will take it) to be on guard lest the outward and formal observances be an utter contradiction of the real condition of the heart. While obedience to the Lord in outward observances is eminently proper, it is still more important that the thoughts be pure and good.

By this time the number of Christians in Jerusalem was evidently considerable, notwithstanding the number that had emigrated on account of persecution; and it does not at all surprise us that we are informed that these everywhere were praying to God on Peter's behalf. There were evidently no church buildings in use by the Christians up to this time: they gathered in convenient places, and quite probably there were several of these in Jerusalem. The earnestness of these prayers is evidenced by the fact that they were kept up all night, and evidently for the entire week of Peter's imprisonment; for he was not delivered until the very last night, and, when delivered, it was some time in the "fourth watch," which began at three o'clock in the morning, and he was knocking at the "gate" of Mary's home, where prayer was being made, before sunrise.--Verse 13.

We cannot know just why the Lord permitted the death of James and spared the life of Peter; yet, doubtless,

both events exercised a beneficial influence upon the Church. Possibly, indeed, there may have been growing in the Church a lack of appreciation of these apostles whom the Lord had so highly honored as his mouthpieces and channels for blessing the Church. The martyrdom of one would cause his loss to be seriously realized, the imprisonment of the other would and did draw forth the sympathy, love and appreciation of the whole company; and after they had prayed so earnestly for his deliverance, we may be sure that Peter was more than ever beloved by the Lord's flock. At all events, the death of one and the sparing of the other, we may be sure, were parts of the all things that worked together for good to those who loved the Lord.

Meantime, Peter had been delivered to four quaternions of soldiers (i.e., four relief guards of four soldiers each): two of these watched in the outer courts of the prison, while two of them were chained to Peter in the cell. Thus, seemingly, every precaution had been taken against his escape. He had been delivered once before from the prison into which he had been thrust by the Sanhedrin, but now he was under military guard, probably in the Tower of Antonio, and chained to soldiers who knew that under Roman usage his escape would mean their death. The entire week had been spent in prayer on his behalf, yet the Lord had not delivered him, and each day seemed to add to the earnestness of the prayers, and to the necessity for the deliverance; yet knowing the circumstance it was difficult to judge

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in which way the Lord's providence would be interposed on Peter's behalf, if at all. Since the Lord had seen best to permit the death of James, they must have reasoned that they could not be at all certain that Peter would be delivered from death. How great and how far-reaching were the blessings of that week of trial and of prayer, of drawing near to the Lord and of realization of complete dependence upon him, we may surmise. The Lord was pleased in his providence to spare Peter to the Church, but he was also evidently pleased to be inquired of by the Church on this subject.

However, even on the last night of his imprisonment, though he expected that the next morning Herod would call for him to deliver him up to death, notwithstanding all this, "Peter slept." His noble, courageous heart was fixed upon the Lord, he trusted in divine wisdom and divine power and divine love, and was assured that nothing would be permitted to happen that would not be in some manner overruled for good. Hence, committing his all to the Lord, he was able to rest sweetly in sleep. Here was the appropriate order of things: the one directly involved so sweetly resting in the Lord's grace and love that he was free from

trouble and fear, while the Church in general, though not so directly and personally concerned, were so full of loving interest on behalf of a brother that they prayed without ceasing day and night on his behalf. What they asked we are not told, but what they should ask under such circumstances we may well know from our Lord's own prayer (Matt. 26:39-42): whatever they asked, in propriety must have included the thought and the expression--Thy will, not ours, O Lord, be done.

When the angel awakened Peter, loosed his fetters, opened the strongly barred gates of the prison and brought him forth into the street, he left him, having accomplished his mission. Peter, amazed and bewildered, could scarcely realize at first whether it was a reality or a vision; but as he got his senses collected he comprehended that God had wrought for him another wonderful deliverance from the hands of his enemies--Herod and the Jews. But he neither went back to taunt the soldiers, nor was he filled with self-admiration and self-confidence, so as to shout his deliverance on the way; but considering the matter carefully he concluded that his proper course would be flight to some other city, as the Lord had directed, saying, "When they shall persecute you in one city flee to another." But as a true under-shepherd he had too deep an interest in the Lord's people who were so earnestly praying for him, to leave them without some explanation: so, going to the house of one of the friends of the cause, he communicated to them the fact of his release, sent word to the leaders of the cause in the city--"James, and the brethren"--and then fled to another place. This James was the brother of our Lord, while the James who had been killed was the Apostle, the brother of John. The fact that James and the prominent brethren were not at the house of Mary and her son John-Mark would seem to corroborate the thought that the meeting at the latter place was only one of many in Jerusalem.

The narrative of Peter's knocking at the door and the interruption of the prayer meeting, with the announcement of the answer of the prayers in a most remarkable manner, is all told with a beautiful simplicity, and indicates to us the loving spirit of fellowship and brotherhood which existed in the early Church.

The Golden Text carries a great lesson of its own in connection with Peter's deliverance. The Scriptures give us clearly to understand that the angels of God are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14.) Very seldom have they been manifested to any as in this recorded instance; yet they are present as the representatives of the Lord to do any needed work for us according to his will. But we are to understand that the angel of the Lord was with James who was killed, as truly as with Peter who was delivered; and that the deliverance of God's people is not always such as can

be appreciated by the natural senses. Sometimes the angel of the Lord is present with us and grants sustaining strength to endure a trial from which we are not delivered. Such was our Lord's case: we read that an angel appeared unto him and strengthened him. Such was probably the ministration of angels to James in his time of sore distress, when his life was yielded up to a murderer. Such also have been the experiences of many: the angel of the Lord has stood with them and has strengthened where he was not authorized to deliver. It is recorded that many Christian martyrs were so upheld and blessed, that even in the midst of persecution, torture and flames, they were able to sing praises to the Lord. It is related of Bishop Latimer that when bound to the stake he said to Bishop Ridley, speaking with great equanimity respecting his own suffering, "We shall light such a candle, by God's grace, in England this day, as I trust shall never be put out again."

How it enlarges the confidence of a Christian to realize that whilst earthly powers may be in opposition, and whilst he may be really of himself powerless to resist adversaries, and whilst in addition to the flesh and blood adversaries he may realize that he battles also with spiritual wickedness in exalted places--against Satan and his minions of darkness--yet that, on the other hand, "greater is he that is on our part than all that be against us," and that all the heavenly hosts are subject to the divine will and may be employed for the advancement of the divine cause according to divine wisdom.

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PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR.

--MAY 2.--ACTS 13:1-13.--

WITH this lesson we leave the parent Church at Jerusalem, and the later Church at Antioch, and start with the Apostle Paul upon what is termed the first missionary tour. Really, however, nearly all of the work thus far done might be said to be of the nature of missionary work. Our Lord's work amongst the Jews was in the nature of a missionary work. The work which began with the day of Pentecost amongst the Jews was in the nature of missionary work. The work done by those who were scattered abroad as the result of persecution in Judea was in the nature of missionary work. The Church at Antioch was itself a mission Church. And so the missionary journey of the Apostle Paul should not be considered in the light of

special mission work, as that term is used to-day (not a mission to savages and barbarians), but rather as a part of the whole work, which the Lord was pleased to specially bless and use in the establishment of the truth in various quarters distant from Jerusalem.

In a previous lesson we saw the progress made by the Christians at Antioch under the instruction of the holy Spirit through Barnabas and Paul. And this is corroborated by the testimony of this lesson that the Church at Antioch was in a healthful condition, spiritual and full of zeal for the spread of the gospel. It had in it by this time several persons of ability and full consecration whom the Lord was pleased to use in connection with its ministry; and the time had come when Paul and Barnabas could be spared to go elsewhere, to start others in the good way; and the holy spirit indicated that this should be done. How this was indicated we are not informed, and we will not speculate concerning it. Suffice it that the Church understood the directions of the holy spirit and obeyed them, Barnabas

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and Paul being agreeable also. Barnabas is mentioned first in the record because up to this time he had the more prominent position, as being older than Paul in spiritual things and perhaps also older in years. While Paul was "a chosen vessel" unto the Lord, prepared for a great service, it had not yet been fully manifest that he was the Lord's choice to fill the place of Judas, the twelfth apostle.

Apparently Barnabas and Paul were sent forth at the expense or charges of the Church at Antioch, and hence went forth as their representatives, as well as representatives of the Lord. The importance of the matter was appreciated, and the dependence of the mission upon divine blessing was recognized in the fasting and prayer and outward manifestation of appointment by laying on of hands. This laying on of hands was not by way of giving authority to preach, for Barnabas and Paul had already been teaching in various quarters for some years, and had been teaching the Church at Antioch for over a year: it was therefore merely a ceremony by which the missionaries and the Church undertaking their support took cognizance of each other as representatives and represented in this special work about to be begun. But while accepting the commission of the Antioch Church, as its representatives, the missionaries specially recognized that they were sent forth by the holy spirit.--Verse 4.

They had not gone far before they began the work which lay so near to their hearts;--the preaching of God's message, of good tidings of great joy, of reconciliation effected by the precious blood of Christ. They did not go to heathen people, but went to sow the seed of the Kingdom in already prepared

soil: they went, first of all, as in every place, to the Jews who for sixteen hundred years had been under the law as a school-master to prepare them to receive Christ. The pious Gentiles who were "feeling after God, if haply they might find him," and who had some knowledge of the God of Israel, frequently attended these Jewish synagogues, and hence in going to these the missionaries, Barnabas and Paul, were reaching the best prepared and most religious element in every place.

The liberality of the management of the Jewish synagogues is attested by the fact that the gospel got a ready hearing in all of them up to the point where they realized that the message was likely to produce a division in their midst. If the Jewish synagogues and Christian churches to-day were conducted on a similarly liberal basis, and gave opportunity for the presentation of any subject that could be presented from the Scriptures and in harmony with the Scriptures, the present missionary work of disseminating the present harvest truth would be very much simplified. While to-day we are less subject to the violent persecution, on the other hand we are seriously handicapped by prevailing conditions and sectarian bondage.

John-Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, is here introduced to us; not as a third laborer in the special work of ministry of the truth, but as an assistant or servant to Barnabas and Paul. In this as in every place the Scriptures, while teaching that all believers are "brethren" and "fellow-heirs," nevertheless repudiate entirely the thought entertained by some to-day that all brethren are exactly on an equality in every matter. Very properly Mark did not say--"If I cannot go on an equality with Barnabas and Paul, I will not go at all." Very properly he did say that if there is any opportunity for service, if by any means I can render

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any assistance in the journey and affairs of these whom the holy spirit has indicated as special representatives, I shall be most glad to serve them, and thus serve indirectly the Lord and his cause. And there were opportunities, as there are always opportunities for those who have a will to serve the cause; and no doubt Barnabas, and especially Paul, received many helps from their younger brother who had become their servant chiefly from his desire to serve the cause of Christ. No doubt also their opportunities for public ministry of the truth were enlarged and broadened by his helpful assistance in secular affairs. Paul especially constantly needed a helper, because of his thorn in the flesh, his weak eyes.

Mark's faithful service continued for some time, but for some reason (verse 13) not stated he left the work, and we may judge very nearly lost his privilege and opportunity in connection with it. No one knows

how much he may have lost of spiritual blessing and privilege by his failure to continue with Paul. The disagreement, whatever it may have been, apparently extended to his uncle Barnabas, and eventually led to the separation of the latter from Paul. However, years afterward John-Mark apparently saw things in a different light, and again joined Paul's company. He seems to have ultimately become a true yoke-fellow, very highly appreciated by the great Apostle. (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11.) Here is a suggestion to all of us that, no matter what may be the door of opportunity for engaging in the Lord's service, faithfulness to it is essential to progress; and there is a further lesson that if we find that we have erred and been unappreciative of our privilege the best thing to do is to repent thereof and seek a renewal of the opportunities, and to attest our loyalty by fresh and increased earnestness.

The gospel heralds continued on their journey through the Island of Cyprus, until at Paphos they came in contact with a new experience. There Satan has a special servant, a spirit-medium, a sorcerer, and false teacher. This man had ingratiated himself with the chief government official of that place, and when the latter was being reached by the gospel message the sorcerer opposed it, realizing that there can be no harmony between light and darkness, between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of demons, and that if the deputy governor became a follower of Christ and imbued with his spirit, he would be proportionately out of harmony with spirit mediumship and sorcery and all the evil works of the flesh and the devil. It was a peculiar case, such as apparently had not previously been presented; it was a contention between truth and error and the servant of truth and the servant of error. It was just such a case as was needed to bring forward the Apostle Paul's grand traits of character: opposition only made him the stronger by arousing him fully to the necessity of the case. More than this, although he had already been made the recipient of certain "gifts" of the holy spirit, he was now specially imbued with divine power, as is here indicated by the Greek text; and acting under the direction of this holy power which possessed him, he pronounced against Elymas the scathing rebuke and sentence of blindness, recorded in this lesson.

The deputy, who was evidently honest-hearted and sincere in his desire to know the truth, was thus convinced of the truth, and embraced the gospel. From this time onward Paul takes his place as the chief one in the work: hereafter it is Paul and Barnabas or Paul and his company. It is quite probable that it was a failure to recognize the Lord's leading in connection with the Apostle Paul and his leadership as an apostle of this branch of the work, and through family sympathy with his uncle Barnabas, that John-Mark here deserted the work.

The spiritual lesson here, for us all, is (1) that the Lord himself is at the helm and directing his work, and that each and all of us should continually look to him for the guidance of his work and to note how he is leading the various members in the body (1 Cor. 12:25-31); (2) the lesson teaches us the Lord's will respecting the promulgation of the gospel; for altho unfortunately the Golden Text chosen is spurious--not found in old manuscripts (Mark 16:9 to end, being omitted by all old manuscripts--See also Revised Version), --nevertheless, the same thought, that it is the will of God that the gospel should be preached everywhere, is abundantly taught in other places (Matt. 28:19) and enforced by this very lesson under consideration. We see from it, too, that while certain servants are chosen and indicated by the Lord for certain special services, yet others are permitted to serve as did Mark, and still others may serve the Church at home, as did Simeon and Lucius and Manaen, and that still others--the entire Church--are privileged to cooperate in the matter of sympathy, love, prayers, hospitality and financial sustenance.--Rom. 12:6-13.

Circumstances have since greatly changed, and we are not to be confined to exactly the same methods of procedure now as then; but the inherent principles are the same. We neither wear the same kind of clothing, nor travel in the same kind of vessels, nor are we supported in exactly the same manner. But with all of these variances the same service is now due to be performed; namely, the preaching of the gospel to all who have "ears to hear." With the gospel presented on the printed page, and with present mail and rail facilities, a very much larger number may become public missionaries, going from place to place, holding up the

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lamp of life, carrying the good tidings from door to door. The same agencies make it possible for those who must remain at home and who can use the mails to thus go about doing good, preaching Christ and his Kingdom and its righteousness. Others in turn can go about preaching orally as well as circulating the printed page --"every man according to his several ability." (Matt. 25:15.) We who are living to-day have special opportunities and privileges for ministering the truth to others. Our responsibility is correspondingly large, and our faith and love and zeal should be correspondingly shown; for he who loves much and who has many opportunities will surely do much for him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

District of Columbia.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I have just received a letter from our beloved Brother Lundy, in which he tells me that you are preparing a tract for the Hebrews. I am so delighted over the news that I cannot keep myself from writing a few words. May the Lord bless you and develop in you a true, sincere and earnest love to his people which he formed for himself to show forth his praise (Isa. 42), and who through the erroneous teachings of the apostate church were led to believe that Christianity is only another form of idolatry, and blasphemed and rejected the "only name given among men whereby we must be saved," and the great blessings of the gospel.

Tell my dear brethren boldly and lovingly of the true Christian creed: We trust in the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe (1 Tim. 4:10); that "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11); that we Christians do not make the law of God void, but establish the law (Rom. 3:31); and that The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth.

Yours in the love of the Lord and his people,

CHAS. S. LABOFISH.

Ontario.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER RUSSELL:--I have been intending for some time to write you, but hitherto have had nothing new to add to the same old story of the amazing love of God for man. I am still holding on the same place of anchor--the ransom for all, the rock Christ Jesus. For the past six years I thought, like Elijah of old, that I was the only one in this place that cared for God, and that (typically speaking) many were seeking my life; but the good Lord has shown me that I was mistaken. During last Summer brother Wiltze moved to this town, and we at once met regularly for communion and study. Through him I learned that one of the members of the official board of the Methodist church with me when I resigned from the board and withdrew from the church was now reading DAWN and quite interested in its teaching. This brother had the DAWN at the time I left the church, but on the advice of the Minister he laid it away as a dangerous book. I called to see him and found both him and his wife much interested. After that they met with Bro. Wiltze and myself until they removed to near Boston, and I am informed that they meet regularly with the brethren in Boston. This greatly encouraged us to persevere in the work.

Two weeks ago I stepped into the butcher shop of a stranger to me to purchase a piece of meat, and while getting it ready he asked me if my name was Anger. I said, yes. He said he had heard of me as a reader of MILLENNIAL DAWN and that he had also been reading it. I asked, How do you like its teachings? His reply was that it was the only satisfying explanation of the Bible and the plan of salvation. His wife came in, and I was introduced to her. She was very enthusiastic, and I learned from her that her father had been a reader and believer of DAWN and its teachings for eight years, that her brother and sister and others of the family were also believers. On my way home I called upon her father and found him strong in the faith, and another daughter as enthusiastic as the father. After exchanging views for some time I invited them to come to our meetings at my house, and the next afternoon the daughter and her husband came out and we had a profitable time. I should have mentioned that before I knew of these brothers and sisters a son of the brother above mentioned had also become a believer, and was meeting regularly with us and is making rapid progress in the truth.

One week ago to-day our little company numbered eleven, all but three of whom I believe are true believers, and the others not real opposers. To-day there were only five present, but one of them was a new convert to the old gospel. And so the Lord is leading and we are rejoicing and beginning to understand why he has prevented us from closing up our affairs in this town in order to get out of it over a year ago. Some time ago we came to the conclusion that the Lord had a work for us to do here, but we could see no opening, for the ministers had effectually closed the door against us by warning their people to avoid us as dangerous persons to talk to on religious subjects, as hot-headed persons, religious cranks and disbelievers in God's Word. When these things came to us, we rejoiced that we were accounted worthy to suffer with Jesus, for in his day he was regarded very much the same by the religious people of that time. "Blessed are ye, when men shall speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matt. 5:11.) But none of these things move us, for we know in whom we have believed, and that he is more than all they who are against us.

It is a strange thing that our opposers do not try to show wherein we have retrograded in life and action, but put forth all their efforts to show what a fearful thing it is to leave the church. To leave the church is a sure passport to perdition, and a man must be bad when he leaves the church, altho he neither swears, deals falsely with his neighbors or in any way deviates from the best standard of correct living, but on the other hand has an increased love for and faith in God's Word, diligently studies it to find out God's perfect

will and earnestly strives daily to bring his life and conduct to harmonize with that Word. Yet herein is

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the evidence that human nature is still the same, perverted and unregenerated and far below the standard of perfect human nature.

What a glorious reality is the religion of Jesus Christ!--glorious in its contemplation, glorious in its possession, glorious when we can get but one to espouse it, yet more glorious in its after-fruits, when we (the Church) shall have the privilege of instructing, guiding, controlling and leading our friends (now enemies) back to righteousness and to God during the space of a thousand years. We are content to do the Master's will in any way it may be required, and are rejoicing at the prospect of the progress of truth, and if need be are willing to suffer for it. May God keep us humble, willing and obedient.

Your brother in Christ, an ardent follower of the Lamb,
J. E. ANGER.

Texas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--It has been a long time since I wrote to you, tho I have often thought of doing so. I was indeed pleased to learn of the opportune and powerful support received by the Society, and that it will be well spent is a foregone conclusion with me. In the TOWER you strike the keynote; you are building on the Rock, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How easy and natural for our poor race to err now! Thank God, most of them know not what they do! In Feb. 15 issue you make so clear the flood that is sweeping away what little faith nominal Christians have. It illustrates, "Take away from him that hath not, and give to him that hath;" or, as expressed in Luke 8:18, margin, "even that he thinketh that he hath."

I want to call your attention to the last chapter of Micah, and invite your criticism on my applications. [We think the suggestions are good.--EDITOR.] Verse 1 seems to apply to the true Church; vs. 3 is a picture of the present unbearable corruption in governments and the operation of trusts; vs. 4 refers to the nominal church; verses 5 and 6 are addressed to the "little flock," as in Luke 21:16; vs. 7 is uttered by them, as is vs. 8. And here is where it seems to me a partial darkness and confusion comes over them, so that she that is the enemy could bring a reproach. I would also like you to notice vs. 15--the going out of Egypt as a type of entering the Millennium.

Your brother in the faith, E. C. LEIGH.

Iowa.

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:--Received the books with thanks, and the brother is earnestly seeking the truth. Please send me a few more tracts. It does me good to find one who will receive the truth, and I praise the dear Lord for allowing me that privilege of service.

I think sometimes it is because I am so unworthy that the Lord don't use me more. In my early life I lived a devoted Christian for some years, then there came a time when I was measurably thrown out of Christian society, and I became cold, neglected duty and was what is called a "backslider," tho I never felt like denying the Lord who redeemed me. But seven years since, through the providence of our dear Lord, a brother handed me the DAWN to read, and it awakened me to greater love than I ever enjoyed before.

Since that time I have tried in my weak way and through much affliction to do what I could. I fear I lost my place in the Bride company when living away from Christ; but, if I did, I will continue to serve him to the best of my knowledge. His service is all-glorious to me, and I will be his in some capacity. Please tell me briefly what you think of me. I study the Word all that I am able, and try to do all the good I can.

With much love to all the saints, I remain, your sister in Christ, M. C. _____

[REPLY:--Yours is at hand, and we are glad to hear from you again. Have sent the tracts requested, and rejoice with you that it has been your privilege to find at least one eager for the truth.

You ask what we think of your case. From what you say of your Christian experience and the present

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attitude of your heart, we should say, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:33-37.) The Apostle calls attention to some who were not able to go out in the midst of the battle as he was, but were loyal to the truth and rejoiced in the privilege of being the companions of some who were so used. And this, dear sister, has certainly been your case since you have come to a knowledge of the present truth. You have not lacked in sympathy for all the other members of the body, esteeming it a privilege to suffer with them if you could not do so for them. And as in David's day those who remained with the stuff received equal share of the spoils with those who went to battle, so we believe that you and all of like experience will receive share in the glories which await the overcomers.

That during a considerable portion of your life you were in a backslidden condition is to be regretted; but the fact that the Lord sent you the truth was a distinct evidence of his love for you, and that you had not fallen away beyond recovery. We have no doubt that as you look back you will be able to recognize that much of your languor was caused by lack of knowledge of God and his Word, and consequently your mind was not sufficiently awakened to the necessity for active service; and even if you had tried to teach the truth you would have been unable to do so, because you did not have it yourself. Hence, we are sure that, if you ask it, the Lord will forgive all the shortcomings of the past; in fact, we have no doubt that you have already done so, and that he has granted full forgiveness. All who are truly seeking to do the Lord's will can doubtless look back over the past years of their life and realize that they omitted many things they might have done. If it were not so, it would prove either that they have failed to grow, and have a low standard of excellence, or that all they did was perfectly done (which of course is impossible, for there is none righteous, no, not one). Herein lies the value to us of the robe of Christ's righteousness, covering all our imperfections, so that our best endeavors may be acceptable in God's sight as tho perfect.

Therefore, dear sister, we encourage you to renew your hope and confidence; do with your might what your hands find to do; let your daily life be a witness for the Lord and an example of holiness; and, when you can do nothing more, "Stand." (See Eph. 6:10-18. --EDITOR.]

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